

## **Title: The Priors School**

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### **Annex A: Impact assessment – Section 9 Academies Act Duty**

1. Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 places a duty upon the Secretary of State to take into account what the impact of establishing the additional school would be likely to be on maintained schools, Academies and institutions within the further education sector in the area in which the additional school is (or is proposed to be) situated.

Any adverse impact will need to be balanced against the benefits of establishing the new school.

#### **Background**

2. It is important to consider this assessment in the context that Priors is an established, existing school in Warwickshire. Therefore we are not examining the impact of a completely new school upon provision in the area, although it is planning to expand to admit up to 30 additional pupils. There are 6 maintained primary schools within a 5 mile radius of the school, which existing Priors pupils would be most likely to attend if the Priors application is not approved. All, except the most distant, were rated as Good in their last Ofsted inspection. The most distant school was rated as satisfactory. None of the schools in this radius are in Special Measures. All of the schools have surplus places, totalling 16% across the 6 schools within a 5 mile radius.

3. Demographic evidence shows that there is no basic need in the area and data from Warwickshire and Northamptonshire County Councils shows surplus places across the counties. The number of surplus places is forecast to reduce substantially in the next few years, although it is unlikely that there will ever be a shortage of places unless there are some school closures. However, despite the lack of basic need this is clearly a community driven proposal and demand for the type of provision the school offers has kept it open for the past 15 years.

4. Some local schools have raised concerns around the proposed Free School and its expansion plans. They do not believe that there is sufficient demand for places and are concerned that their own schools will suffer. Specific comments received as part of the Academy Trust's consultation process raised concerns about surplus places, pupil numbers and sustainability, consultation, use of tax payers' money, standards, premises and parental choice.

5. Having analysed the locations of pupils who have expressed an interest and the spread of schools in the immediate vicinity, and taking this into account with the relatively small increase in pupil places, we believe the impact will be minimal. The planned additional places at this Free School will total 30, spread across all 7 year groups. Impact is likely to be felt by 5 different schools over a 5 mile radius and is likely to constitute the loss of

around 5-6 pupils from each school spread over all year groups. However, nearby schools are also small, village primary schools and so any reduction in pupil numbers and subsequent funding will be more keenly felt than in larger schools.

6. The Priors Free School has a clear and strongly stated intention of improving to become an Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' school. This aspiration, once achieved, will increase competition and should encourage an improvement in standards across local provision.

#### **Information on neighbouring schools within a 5 mile radius:**

##### **St Lawrence C of E (VA) Primary School.**

This school is located 2.6 miles from the Priors School and has 150 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 182. It is a voluntary aided mixed school, taking children from age 4-11 and has a Church of England religious character. In 2010, 92% of children gained Level 4 at Key Stage 2. The most recent Ofsted report for this school (June 2011), judges the standard of education at the school to be Good.

Both the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors have expressed concerns about the Free School proposal including standards, surplus places, admissions, use of tax payers money and the consultation process.

**Impact – marginal** given that the school currently performs better than Priors and has a similar religious character.

##### **Boddington Church of England Voluntary School**

This school is located 2.7 miles from the Priors School and has 63 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 70. It is a voluntary controlled mixed school, taking children aged 4-11 and has a Church of England religious character. Whilst no data is available for 2010, due to small numbers, the most recent performance data shows that in 2008, 86% of children gained level 4 at Key Stage 2. The most recent Ofsted report for this school (June 2010), judges the standard of education at the school to be Good.

The Chair of Governors has expressed concern about short timescales for the consultation process but was otherwise neutral about the Free School proposal.

**Impact – marginal** given that the school currently performs better than Priors and has a similar religious character.

##### **Byfield School**

This school is located 3.2 miles from the Priors School and has 70 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 105. It is a mixed, community school, taking children from 4-11 and has no religious character assigned. No data is available for the last 3 years. The most recent Ofsted report for this school judges the standard of education at the school to be Good.

There are no recorded concerns from this school.

**Impact – marginal** given that the school currently performs better than Priors.

#### Staverton Church of England Voluntary School

This school is located 4 miles from the Priors School and has 80 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 105. It is a mixed, voluntary aided school, taking children from 4-11 and has a Church of England religious character. Whilst no data is available for 2010, due to small numbers, the most recent performance data shows that in 2008, 92% of children gained level 4 at Key Stage 2. The most recent Ofsted report for this school (Dec 2009), judges the standard of education at the school to be Good.

There are no recorded concerns from this school.

**Impact – marginal** given that the school currently performs better than Priors.

#### Badby School

This school is located 4.4 miles from the Priors School and has 125 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 141. It is a mixed, community school, taking children from 4-11 and has no religious character assigned. In 2010, 44% of children gained Level 4 at Key Stage 2. However the 2 previous years show results of 88% in 2009 and 79% in 2008. The most recent Ofsted report for this school (Dec 2008), judges the standard of education at the school to be Good.

There are no recorded concerns from this school.

**Impact – marginal** given that the school currently performs better than Priors.

#### Woodford Halse Church of England School

This school is located 4.5 miles from the Priors School and has 314 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 361. It is a voluntary controlled mixed school, taking children aged 3-11 and has a Church of England religious character. In 2010, 62% of children gained Level 4 at Key Stage 2. The most recent Ofsted report for this school (Nov 2008), judges the standard of education at the school to be Satisfactory.

The Chair of Governors has expressed concerns about surplus places and the short timescale for the consultation process.

**Impact – marginal** given that the school is very similar to Priors in terms of standards and ethos, is large enough to accommodate the loss of some pupils whilst still remaining viable and there are a number of other schools with spare places, nearer to it than Priors, which might be more attractive to parents than Priors given their higher standards.

#### Secondary and FE institutions:

7. There is unlikely to be any impact on local secondary and FE institutions. This would not become a feeder school for any particular

secondary school in the area, or outside the area and all Priors pupils are likely to move up to secondary education in the local area. It should not have any impact on either the secondary schools therefore, or the FE institutions in the area.

### **Local Authority**

8. Warwickshire County Council is keen to emphasise that while it is supportive of the Free School policy in principle, it does not believe that there is a need for additional places in this area and would stand by the decision it made in 1996 to close the school.

### **Conclusion**

9. The conversion of the existing provision of 30 places from the private funded sector to the state funded sector is likely to have minimal impact on the local provision, since most of the children in those places are funded through fundraising. The present Priors school does not perform as well as the nearest 5 primary schools, and although the school has clear aims to become an outstanding school, it is unlikely that many parents would wish to relocate their child at present. The planned expansion while doubling the size of the existing school, represents only 30 additional places. Our analysis is that the children who fill those additional places in due course will be spread across all 7 year groups, constituting only an additional 4-5 places per year group, and come from all 5 of the schools in the surrounding 5 mile area. Consequently, the impact on each of those schools will be very small and will not threaten the future viability of any of those schools.