

Title: West London Free School

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Annex A: Impact assessment – Section 9 Academies Act Duty

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

There are several maintained schools, Academies and FE institutions within a 2 mile radius of the planned permanent site of the West London Free School, which may be impacted by the establishment of the WLFS. As part of their consultation, WLFS have been proactively seeking the views of all primary schools, all secondary schools (maintained schools, Academies and Independent Schools) and all further education and sixth form institutions within a 5 mile radius of the proposed site. They have also written to the Directors of Children's Services at Hammersmith and Fulham, Brent, Camden, Ealing, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Richmond, Wandsworth and Westminster.

Catchment area

WLFS' admissions policy is fully compliant with the admissions code. If the school is over-subscribed, priority will be given in the following order:

1. looked after children and children with a statement;
2. 10% (i.e. 12 places) by musical aptitude;
3. 50% by straight-line proximity; and,
4. the remaining by random allocation within a 1-3 mile zone and a 3-5 mile zone.

During the process of developing their Admissions Policy, WLFS had several meetings with the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The policy was amended in December, in response to a request from the Director of Children's Services as Hammersmith and Fulham, Andrew Christie. He asked the group to consider changing the oversubscription criteria from 33% on straight line distance to 50%. LBHF felt that this would ensure that more LBHF children and, in particular, more children from the deprived LBHF estates would be included.

WLFS admissions closed at the end of January, and the Trust has had 457 applications for the 120 places available. The group's stakeholder engagement strategy has been based on the 50% of pupils by straight line proximity being met from the Ravenscourt Park ward and the other wards that

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make up the central ward of LBHF, namely Addison, Avonmore and Brook Green, Fulham Reach, Hammersmith Broadway and North End.

Feeder primary schools

There are 10 primary schools in close proximity to Ravenscourt Park, and these could potentially be feeder schools for WLFS. We do not consider there will be any negative impact on those schools by the WLFS proposal, as it does not offer any primary education.

Nearby maintained schools and Academies

The curriculum offered by the WLFS will be distinct from that of other state schools in the borough, offering provision which the proposers feel will complement what is already available within the local area. A high proportion of the schools within a 2 mile radius of the proposed West London Free School are independent schools – only 44% of the secondary school population of LBHF are attending state schools (up from just 38% in 2006) - and most of the nearby state schools are oversubscribed. With the opening of the Hammersmith Academy in September 2011, there will be 9 state secondary schools, plus the William Morris Sixth Form, in LBHF at the time the WLFS is due to open.

The West London Free School will help to address basic need pressures across the secondary estate. These pressures are set to continue up to and beyond 2014-15. By 2016-17, the projected shortage of secondary places in LBHF without the WLFS is 1339 places.

The WLFS will be situated in the **London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham**, but will also potentially attract children from the **London Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing**.

The **London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham** (LBHF) has responded to the WLFS' formal consultation, expressing their support for the establishment of the WLFS and saying that they are confident that the creation of WLFS and the Hammersmith Academy will encourage greater numbers of families to choose local LBHF secondary schools. While this could impact on surrounding provision, surrounding boroughs are also facing projected shortages of secondary places, so freeing up places for local young people will have a positive impact on parental choice in those areas. The council has worked closely with WLFS throughout the process, and the WLFS have responded positively to the council's advice around shaping the school's proposed admissions arrangements. The Department wrote to LBHF on 29 November, seeking its views on the West London Free School proposal. Officials followed this up with LBHF on 14th February and a response has now been received. In their letter to the Department, LBHF reiterate the support for the establishment of WLFS which they have expressed in response to the consultation. LBHF have carried out detailed place planning work, assessing the impact of their plans to expand local secondary provision by 7 forms of entry on provision in both LBHF and neighbouring boroughs. They aimed to deliver these additional places through the new Hammersmith Academy and through BSF. The calculation of the number of additional forms of entry that would be needed was based on an assumption of a decrease in out of borough students seeking places in LBHF schools. Given that the reality has

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been that local demand has increased and the expected drop off in out of borough demand has not materialised, LBHF is now facing additional place pressures. Therefore, LBHF consider the possible establishment of the WLFS as being a fortunate development for the borough, as it will relieve the pressure on secondary school places in LBHF schools. LBHF's Equality Impact Assessment concludes that the WLFS proposal will 'increase the opportunity for children in the borough to access education, and further deliver the Council's Schools of Choice agenda'.

Given the ethos and curriculum of the WLFS, it is likely that the Free School will have an impact on local **independent schools**, by drawing pupils who may otherwise have been educated in the independent sector. The impact on individual independent schools is likely to be marginal, and the effect is positive in that the WLFS will increase the choice available to parents of state non-selective, non-faith, co-educational provision. Choice is currently much more a feature of the quite substantial local independent school sector than in the relatively small state secondary sector in the area.

The nearest secondary school to the proposed West London Free School is the new **Hammersmith Academy**, sponsored by the Mercers', which is also due to open in September 2011. Hammersmith Academy will be a non-denominational, all-ability, co-educational secondary school for 11-18 year olds, specialising in Creative & Digital Media and IT. The school will start with 120 Year 7 pupils and 120 year 12 students, and is situated 0.03 miles from the Palingswick House site. As the school is not yet open, there is no relevant information available from Ofsted. The Mercers and the board of Governors have expressed concern about the impact that the WLFS will have on their school, particularly given that the WLFS' permanent site is inside Hammersmith Academy's priority admissions area. They have also expressed concern that the WLFS' 10% admissions by musical aptitude will undermine the creative element of the Academy's specialism. However, officials consider it likely that demand for places at the Hammersmith Academy will significantly exceed the places that they can offer, given the secondary place pressures in the area and the number of first and second preference applications the Academy has had (at around 170). While the Hammersmith Academy is similar to WLFS in that it is a non-denominational, non-selective mixed secondary school, its ethos and specialism is distinct to that of WLFS and, as such the establishment of both new schools will be positive in terms of broadening parental choice and driving up standards in other schools across the area. The Principal Designate of the Hammersmith Academy is confident that the Academy will fill all its places on first and second preferences, even if a few pupils choose to take up a place at WLFS instead, so the impact on HA is expected to be neutral or, at worst, a marginal impact on the profile of its students. The impact is more likely to be felt by other local schools which may lose pupils to both new schools.

The next nearest state secondary school is the voluntary aided **Sacred Heart High School for Girls**. Sacred Heart is a Roman Catholic school for girls, with 813 pupils aged 11-16 which specialises in Maths and Computing. The school is very high-performing, achieving 94% A*-C including English and

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maths in 2010 and judged outstanding by Ofsted in 2009. It is heavily over-subscribed every year, and under a third of students come from Hammersmith and its surrounding areas, with the remainder coming from a wide geographical range of primary schools. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. About half of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds and, in particular Irish, Polish, Philippine and Mediterranean European heritages. Given the school's curriculum focus, girls-only education and deep-rooted Catholic ethos, it is unlikely that the WLFS will have any significant impact on the school. If the school were to lose any pupils to the WLFS, it is very likely that the school would remain oversubscribed and would fill its places.

The knock-on impact of the WLFS is more likely to be significant for other local schools, which are operating in a challenging context and / or are underperforming. The following schools fall into this category.

It is possible that the WLFS will attract pupils who would otherwise have attended the **Phoenix High School**, an outstanding mixed community school with a science specialism, which achieved 44% A*-C in 2010 and is situated 1.4 miles from the proposed WLFS. The Phoenix High School serves a culturally diverse community within a challenging context. Students start in year 7 with levels of prior learning which are significantly below those typically found nationally. A significant proportion of students arrive after the start of the traditional school year, with around a tenth being refugees or asylum seekers. Around 50% of students speak English as an additional language, and nearly two thirds of students have learning difficulties and / or disabilities, mainly relating to behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The opening of WLFS could affect the intake of the Phoenix High School, which is performing very well in difficult circumstances, by attracting some parents away from the school. Having said that, the Phoenix High School has shown itself to deliver outstanding results with pupils whose prior learning levels are significantly lower than average. The introduction of the WLFS may have some marginal impact on pupil numbers and the profile of the intake, but the school is on an upward trajectory and has filled its places in the last couple of years, and should continue to attract pupils regardless.

Other schools the WLFS is likely to have an impact on include the state boys school, the **Henry Compton School**. The Henry Compton is a specialist maths and science college for boys aged 11-16. The school is relatively small, with 578 pupils. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and most speak English as an additional language. There is high student mobility and a high proportion of students have special educational needs and / or disabilities. The school was judged good by Ofsted in 2010, and achieved results of 36% 5 A*-C including English and maths in that same year. While these results represent an improvement when compared with the previous few years, the school's performance is very close to the Key Stage 4 floor standard and it is likely that Henry Compton will lose pupils as a result of the creation of new secondary places at the WLFS and the Hammersmith Academy. As a relatively poorly performing boys school, it is possible that parents who may have sent their children to Henry Compton will be attracted

to the WLFS. However, as Henry Compton is the only all boys state school in the area, it is also possible that parents will continue to want the choice of an all boys school and send their children there. While it is clear that this school, a relatively poor performer, may lose pupils as a result of the establishment of the West London Free School, schools such as these are always vulnerable to losing children when additional school places become available elsewhere. The extent of the impact is difficult to assess, but it is possible that a number of pupils may be lost to the Henry Compton School, which may impact on its long term viability. As the only state boys school in the vicinity, Henry Compton does provide a distinctive offer, so officials consider it unlikely that the impact of WLFS will be significant enough to threaten the future viability of the Henry Compton School.

The headteacher of the **Hurlingham and Chelsea School** has responded to the WLFS' consultation, stating that the Free School explicitly undermines the existing family of schools and their achievements. They are concerned that pupils will be lost to other schools in LBHF, destabilising other schools. They also feel that the Free School is advantaged compared with other schools because of the way it is running its admissions in the first year and because of the capital investment it will receive. Hurlingham and Chelsea is a co-educational community school which was rated 'good with outstanding features' by Ofsted in 2008. The school achieved 49% A*-C including English and maths in its 2010 GCSE results (from the 76 GCSE pupils on roll). Hurlingham and Chelsea is a smaller than average school with a diverse ethnic composition and students drawn from a wide geographical area. The local authority issued the school with a formal closure notice in 2006, and while this was later withdrawn, the school roll has been falling ever since. While it is possible that the WLFS will have a marginal negative impact on the school roll at the Hurlingham and Chelsea, the school is around 3 miles from the proposed West London Free School site, so officials think it is likely that any future fall in the school roll will be primarily due to the general trajectory the school is on, rather than being a result of the WLFS. Given these falling rolls, there is a chance that any loss of pupils to the WLFS will affect the longer term viability of the school, however as set out with Henry Compton above, schools such as these are always vulnerable to losing children when additional school places become available elsewhere and the establishment of WLFS will give greater choice for parents and drive up standards in schools across the area, which should result in a positive impact overall.

The London Borough of Hounslow believe that the WLFS will have an impact on provision in Hounslow and the choice available to Hounslow residents. Whilst they forecast a need for additional places, the east of the borough from which the WLFS might attract children is not the area with the highest birth rate increase. Nevertheless, Hounslow state that the WLFS may help them to meet the additional need for places which will arise from the middle of the decade onwards. The small size of the WLFS, coupled with the temporary location for the school mean that LBH believe that it is unlikely to provide significant numbers of places to Hounslow pupils in the short term. The nearest secondary school, the Chiswick Community School currently has a high proportion of out of borough students and it is possible that the WLFS

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would provide local places for some of the LBHF students, so enabling greater access to Chiswick Community for parents from Brentford where there is no co-educational secondary provision. WLFS' permanent Palingswick House site is significantly closer to the Hounslow border, which could result in more Hounslow residents accessing the school. Hounslow believe that some Chiswick residents will be eligible for a place at the school under places allocated by distance and by places allocated by random allocation, which could have an impact on the Chiswick Community School (CCS).

Chiswick Community School is a co-educational 11-19 school with 1250 students, plus 250 in the sixth form. The school is a specialist technology college, which has recently become a foundation school. The school was rated satisfactory by Ofsted in 2008 and has since had a monitoring visit where it showed some improvement. 60% of students achieved 5 A*-C including English and maths in 2010. A high proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. The school has a gender imbalance with over 60% of learners being boys. The school has extended services, including community access and adult learning, study support and holiday activities. While CCS is an improving school, it has had difficulties over the last few years and it is quite possible that it may lose students to the WLFS. However, Hounslow Borough Council views this as potentially positive, as it will free up co-educational secondary places for parents in Brentford who do not currently have access to such places. Given the lack of co-educational secondary provision in Brentford and the projected need for places in both Hounslow and LBHF, it is reasonable to expect that the CCS will still fill its places. As such, the impact of WLFS on CCS is likely to be neutral or even positive, given the improved choice available to parents and the fact that the new Free School will encourage all schools locally to raise their standards.

The London Borough of Ealing have responded to WLFS' formal consultation, expressing their concern about what would happen if the WLFS failed to secure its temporary and permanent sites. They are worried that if the school were unable to open as planned in September 2011, children would need to be found school places out of the normal round of admissions and seek reassurance from the group that they will not offer places until the sites are secured.

The Chair of Governors at **Acton High School** (AHS) has written to the Permanent Secretary expressing his concern about the establishment of the Hammersmith Academy and the West London Free School, and asking that the Secretary of State consider the impact of establishing these schools on AHS before taking a final decision. AHS is a co-educational 11-16 community school in Ealing, situated 2 miles away from the proposed permanent site of the West London Free School. The school was rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2009 and achieved 51% A*-C, including English and maths, in 2010. The school faces exceptionally challenging circumstances due to very high levels of student mobility throughout the year; this has had a significant impact on attainment, but results have improved over the last few years. One in six of their pupils currently come across the borough boundary from Hammersmith,

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and they expect the new Hammersmith Academy to have a significant impact on their roll. AHS' concerns about the WLFS are that the school may open in Acton (as was originally planned) leading to a significant impact on their roll if this were to happen, as well as a concern that there will be a surplus of places if the Hammersmith Academy and WLFS both go ahead. They cite the example of Elthorne Park High School, which opened close to AHS 10 years ago, following which they lost one fifth of their school roll. This led to AHS having a large number of short-term students and children with SEN, which affected results and the reputation of the school started to suffer. They also question the value for money of increasing the number of school places in the area. While it is possible that the AHS will lose some pupils and face another rise in short-term pupils as a result of the establishment of the WLFS and Hammersmith Academy, this is outbalanced by the increased choice for parents and the likely improvement in standards across the board. AHS has a brand new building, and is rated 'good' by Ofsted, both of which will help reduce any loss of pupils to the new schools. Furthermore, the projected pressure on secondary places across the local boroughs will mean that the places at the school will be needed, and the establishment of the WLFS will encourage the school to further improve its performance to attract pupils.

FE institutions

The WLFS have consulted the 3 post-16 institutions within a 5 mile radius of the proposed West London Free School on what impact establishing WLFS would have as part of their formal stage 2 consultation. The WLFS does not intend to offer sixth form places until September 2014, so the immediate impact of the WLFS will be neutral. Once the WLFS sixth form does open, the intention is for it to offer the International Baccalaureate.

The nearest post-16 provider to the WLFS is the **William Morris Sixth Form**, a 16-19 school with 819 pupils situated 0.92 miles from Palingswick House. The school plans to increase its size and facilities over the coming years. Half of the pupils come from six main feeder schools, with the remainder coming from a very large area and over 100 schools. Students are from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and over half speak a first language other than English, with Somali and Arabic being the most common. The school has a very inclusive approach, supporting many students to learn English and preparing them for future learning. There are a wide variety of courses on offer, including a very wide choice of AS and A-Levels, GCSEs, BTECs and foundation learning courses, but not the IB which WLFS intends to offer. The impact of the WLFS is likely to be marginal but the choice of state provision at post-16 will be broader, so improving choice for young people.

The next closest post-16 provider is the **Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College**, a large college (which takes in the former Ealing Tertiary College), with a site in Hammersmith which is 1.04 miles from the WLFS. The college was judged satisfactory by Ofsted in a recent inspection (in January 2011), having faced a period of significant turbulence and poorer outcomes for students. Success rates are low for learners ages 16-18 on intermediate and advanced level programmes. The college serves a diverse population, with 83% of the college's learners belonging to minority ethnic groups. Over

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70% of the college learners do not have English as their first language. The college as a whole has 3,086 full time learners ages 16-18 and 887 part time learners in that age bracket. The relatively small and very academically focused sixth form at the WLFS is unlikely to have any significant impact on the Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College. While WLFS sixth form may attract some students from the college in the first couple of years (when the sixth form is being introduced prior to the first year 7 students in 2011 reaching sixth form age), it is likely that the WLFS sixth form will generally fill its places through pupils staying on for the sixth form, with only a small number of places available to others each year. Demand for the types of courses offered by the Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College will remain strong, with the only possible impact being a positive one in terms of raising standards in competing A Level courses.

The other further education institution within a 5 mile radius is the **LEAP Service college**, an independent specialist day college run by the National Autistics Society. The college offers a programme of education including academic, vocational, life-skills and leisure curriculum areas for children on the autistic range. A range of subjects are available, including ICT, horticulture, horse riding, sports, independent living skills, music, pottery, art and drama. The college was rated inadequate by Ofsted in 2005. Given the very specialist provision offered by the college and the completely different curriculum offer which the WLFS would provide if established, officials consider the impact on the LEAP Service college to be neutral.

Conclusion

Taking into account the projected shortage of secondary places in the coming years, and the relatively small size of the West London Free School, the impact on individual schools is likely to be negligible other than for relatively poorly performing schools, where the impact is likely to be more significant. Given that the West London Free School is only planned as a 4FE school and that it is common for London residents to travel across local authority boundaries to attend a school of their choice, it is unlikely that the West London Free School will have a significant impact on any particular provision across the borough or in neighbouring boroughs, even when combined with the impact of the new Hammersmith Academy. The London Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham and Hounslow have confirmed that this is their view.

The loss of pupils to a poorly performing school needs to be balanced with the positive impact that the WLFS will have in improving parental choice by widening the number and type of places available in local secondary state provision, and by driving up standards in surrounding schools. Both of these features are key aims of the Free Schools policy and we would expect the WLFS to drive up standards in schools across the board, improving standards for all young people in the area.

Given all this information, we consider that the impact of establishing the West London Free School on maintained schools, Academies and FE institutions in

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the surrounding area is outbalanced by the positive impact that the school will have on parental choice and in driving up standards in nearby institutions.

List of nearest schools / FE institutions

LBHF – London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

K & C – London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Name of institution	Age range and pupil numbers	Dist. from WLFS, LA
Hammersmith Academy	11-19, co-ed (opening Sept 2011)	0.03m LBHF
Sacred Heart High School	11-16, girls 813 pupils	0.63m LBHF
William Morris Sixth Form	16-19, co-ed 819 pupils	0.92 m LBHF
Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College	16-99, co-ed Unknown	1.04 LBHF
Chiswick Community School	11-18, co-ed 1194 pupils	1.2m Hounslow
Fulham Cross Girls' School and Language College	11-16, girls 599 pupils	1.3m LBHF
The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial RC School	11-18, boys 943 pupils	1.36m K & C
Phoenix High School	11-18, co-ed 943 pupils	1.4m LBHF
Henry Compton Secondary School	11-16, boys 568 pupils	1.43m LBHF
Holland Park School	11-18, co-ed 1314 pupils	1.79m K & C
Burlington Danes Academy	11-18, co-ed 892 pupils	1.84m LBHF
Leap Service – the National Autistics Society	16-99, co-ed Unknown	1.89m Ealing
Ealing Tertiary College	16-99, co-ed Unknown	1.91m Ealing
Acton High School	11-16 1184 pupils	2m Ealing

Given the minimal impact on those maintained schools, Academies and institutions within the further education sector set out above, officials believe that the impact on those further away will be even smaller, and this is supported by the views expressed by the Boroughs of Ealing, Hounslow and LBHF. The WLFS expect to fill all their places with pupils from a radius of ½ mile or less of the school. |