

MARCHBANK FREE SCHOOL: Impact Assessment

1. Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 (later as amended by the Education Act 2011) places a duty on the Secretary of State to take into account what the impact of establishing the institution would likely be on maintained schools, academies, institutions within the further education sector and alternative provision in the area in which the institution is (or is proposed to be) situated. Any adverse impact will need to be balanced against the benefits of establishing the new school.
2. We have carried out an impact assessment (see the table 1 below) which concludes that the impact of Marchbank Free School on other special schools in Darlington and the surrounding area is minimal. [REDACTED]:
3. Darlington Borough Council, who strongly back the free school proposal, wrote to the Department in support of the Marchbank Free School and have committed to place 16 pupils at Marchbank in 2013/14. The group did not approach neighbouring local authorities as part of their section 10 consultation.
4. Our assessment concludes that Marchbank Free School will have a minimal overall impact on the surrounding schools and that it is appropriate for the Secretary of State to enter into a funding agreement with the trust on the basis that:
 - the school will reduce the number of out of borough or costly private placements and reduce the distances pupils will need to travel for their education; and
 - the additional school will give parents greater choice and will offer something different to existing schools in the area.

Table 1: Impact Assessment for Marchbank Free School

School name	School type	Distance from free school site (miles)	Age range	Number of surplus places	LA	Special Needs	Ofsted grade	Impact rating
Beaumont Hill School (EVAT)	Academy Converters	2.6	2-19	n/a	Darlington	1) SLCN, 2) ASD, BESD, Moderate Learning Difficulty, PD, SLD	Good	Minimal – The free school is unlikely to affect the long term viability of the school.
Walworth School	Community Special School	6.4	4-11	-11	Durham	1) BESD	Good	Minimal – The free school is unlikely to affect the long term viability of the school
Westlands School	Community Special School	12.2	5-19	17	Stockton-on-Tees	1) ASD, BESD, 2) Moderate Learning Difficulty	Satisfactory	Minimal – The free school is unlikely to affect the long term viability of the school
Holmwood School	Community Special School	15.0	4-11	n/a	Middlesbrough	1) BESD, 2) Moderate Learning Difficulty	Good	Minimal – The free school is unlikely to affect the long term viability of the school
Mowbray School	Community Special School	17.2	2-16	n/a	North Yorkshire	1) SLCN, 2) ASD, BESD, Moderate Learning Difficulty, PD, SLD, SpLD	Good	Minimal – The free school is unlikely to affect the long term viability of the school

Note: Attainment data is not available.