



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Rotherham Local Authority

to be provided by

30 June 2020

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**Please email your completed report to: osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk
by 30 June 2020 and earlier if possible**

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Introduction and guidance on completing the report – Revised April 2020

1. Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) requires every local authority to make an annual report to the adjudicator. The Chief Adjudicator then includes a summary of these reports in her annual report to the Secretary for State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. Paragraph 3.23 specifies what must be included as a minimum in the report to the adjudicator and makes provision for the local authority to include any other matters. This is a revised template issued in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. This template requests local authorities only for:
 - a) information about how admission arrangements in the area of the local authority serve the interests of looked after children and previously looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including any details of where problems have arisen;
 - b) an assessment of the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols and co-ordination in their area, including how many children were admitted to each school under them.
3. We would be grateful if local authorities would follow the approach used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release¹ and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002².
4. Local authorities are, of course, free to comment on any other matters not specifically addressed in this template if they wish to do so under section 3. The views expressed by local authorities in previous years also remain a matter of public record.
5. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2020**.

¹ [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

² [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

Information requested

Section 1 - Normal point of admission

A. Co-ordination

i. How well did co-ordination of the main admissions round work?	Not well	A large number of small problems or a major problem	Well with few small problems	Very well
Reception				X
Year 7				X
Other relevant years of entry				X
ii. Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish: The process went relatively smoothly considering Covid 19 impact for Reception and Y3 offers.				

B. Looked after and previously looked after children

- i. How well does the admissions system in your local authority area serve the interests of looked after children at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

- ii. How well do the admissions systems in other local authority areas serve the interests of children looked after by your local authority at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

- iii. How well does your admissions system serve the interests of children who are looked after by other local authorities but educated in your area at **normal points of admission**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

- iv. How well does the admissions system in your local authority area serve the interests of previously looked after children at **normal points of admission**?

³ 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

v. Priority in admission arrangements for 2021 for adopted children previously in care abroad. Please comment on the use of a priority in admission arrangements for a child adopted who was previously in care abroad if you wish.

vi. If you wish to please give any examples of good or poor practice or difficulties which exemplify your answers about the admission to schools of looked after and previously looked after children at the **normal points of admission**:

Almost all our LAC access chosen setting at normal points of admission both in and out of authority.

C. Special educational needs and disabilities

i. Please provide any comments you wish to make on the admission of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities at the normal points of admission:

In the last year we have had one concern at the point of admission regarding an academy's abilities to meet a child's unassessed SEN needs at the point of admission. This was pro-actively managed via an admissions planning meeting and the issues were resolved with pro-active support offered from Inclusion Services. This has been the only issue of this kind in the last year.

Section 2 - In-year⁴ admissions

A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

⁴ By in-year we mean admission at the start of any school year which is not a normal point of entry for the school concerned (for example at the beginning of Year 2 for a five to eleven primary school) and admission during the course of any school year after the end of the statutory waiting list period (ie 31 December) in normal years of admission.

Please provide any comments on the co-ordination of **in year admissions** if you wish.

No change, we still co-ordinate all in-year applications centrally through the admissions team for all schools except two secondary academies. All applications are made via the local authority admissions team.

B. Looked after children and previously looked after children

- i. How well does the **in-year admissions** system serve children who are looked after by your local authority and who are being educated in your area?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁵

- ii. How well do the **in-year admission** systems in other local authority areas serve the interests of your looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁶

- iii. How well does your **in-year admissions** system serve the interests of children who are looked after by other local authorities but educated in your area?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁶

- iv. How well does your **in-year admissions** system serve the interests of previously looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁶

- v. If you wish please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions** for looked after and previously looked after children:

The impact of year group is more significant, in year admissions for Y6, Y10 or Y11 pupils can on occasions be more challenging with schools sometimes raising concerns around the admission application and proactive escalation to multi agency meetings may be required and bespoke additional support can be required to support the child's needs and facilitate the admission process. This is

⁵ 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

⁶ 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

more common when the LAC has increased need, particularly those with no EHCP but significant additional needs (frequently SEMH), some delay to admission can occur on occasions in placement until a multi agency meeting has taken place and additional support agreed.

For previously LAC it is more complex, as they do not have the support of the Virtual School, as corporate parent, in the same way. As such, where there are additional needs, school place offers can on occasions be delayed for 'in-year' moves until a multi agency meeting has taken place and additional support agreed.

C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

- i. How well served are children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have an education health and care plan that names a school when they need to be **admitted in-year**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁶

- ii. How well served are children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education health and care plan when they need to be **admitted in-year**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Don't know

- iii. Please give examples of good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions** for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities:

We have examples of good practice in relation to admissions planning meetings to ensure that support is available for the child and the school at the point of admission.

- iv. If you wish please provide any comments about **in-year admissions** in respect of other children:

D. Fair access protocol

i. Has your fair access protocol been agreed⁷ with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

- Yes for primary
 Yes for secondary

ii. If you have not been able to tick both boxes above, please explain why:

iii. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020?

Type of school	Number of children admitted	
	Primary aged children	Secondary aged children
Community and voluntary controlled	2	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	1 Also 1 pupil referral unit	5 Also, 6 pupil referral unit and 1 withdrew to elective home education
Total	4	12

iv. How well do you consider hard to place children are served by the fair access protocol in your area?

- Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable⁸

v. Please make any relevant comment on the protocol not covered above if you wish.

All schools/academies take part in the Primary and Secondary Fair Access Protocols. The protocol has evolved in Rotherham and provides an effective solution in the child's best interests given the range of expertise of school and LA staff attending the meetings to contribute to the decision making process.

For secondary, schools and academies work collaboratively to try to offer places for young people via a first tier partnership model. Cases that cannot be resolved at partnership level are referred to the strategic Fair Access Panel (second tier with partnership and LA representation). These cases inevitably have significant levels of support required for the youngster e.g. social care, transient families, SEMH needs, etc. The LA has worked with schools/academies to agree placement and offered alternative provision for some youngsters where this was felt the most appropriate educational provision for them.

⁷ An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted.

⁸ 'Not applicable' would mean that there were no hard to place children for which the protocol was required.

For primary, panels are convened with Headteachers from the local planning area, LA Officers and other appropriate professionals attend to ensure a local solution. One particular case this year for a child who was moving into our area, it was felt necessary and with the agreement of Headteachers to hold a wider multi-agency meeting involving colleagues from another LA area as part of the Fair Access Panel meeting, this ensured that the needs of the child were appropriately met given they were new to the area and the complexities of the case and headteachers were able to make an appropriate decision with all the information available.

E. Any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised if you wish.

Refusals of a place below PAN or where there appears to be a place available, with schools stating they are unable to meet need due to budget/staffing/resource issues or constraints, challenging behaviour (under 3.12 of the admissions code) etc. These applications then become protracted to resolve as a result of awaiting appeal.

It is hoped that a new revised Admissions code will clarify accepted grounds for refusal eg defined challenging behaviour, other acceptable grounds for refusal.

Section 3 - Other matters

Are there any other matters that the local authority would like to raise that have not been covered by the questions above?

We acknowledge this is a much streamlined report template compared to previous years given current circumstances but feel it has covered the most critical areas of admissions.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2021.

We feel the amount of time to complete the report is sufficient and allows us the to engage wider colleagues effectively to give a wider education perspective on Admissions particularly in relation to the admission of LAC / SEND pupils etc.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to Lisa Short at OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk by 30 June 2020