



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Template for  
Local Authority Report  
to  
The Schools Adjudicator  
from**

**Rotherham Local Authority**  
to be provided by  
**31 October 2024**

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by  
31 October 2024 and earlier if possible**

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## Introduction

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 the annual report to the Secretary of State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. Paragraph 3.30 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. Paragraphs 6 and 3.30 of the Code require that each local authority publish its report locally.
2. **This year's report must cover the 2023/2024 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2024.**
3. Please note that, in response to feedback on the previous template and in the light of consultation with a group of local authorities, changes have been made to various sections of this year's template.

## Guidance on completing the template

4. We have included all the guidance on completing specific parts of the template in this section. There is no requirement for local authorities to include the introduction and the guidance in their published reports, but they are free to do so if they wish.
5. We should be grateful if in completing questions which ask for information about primary and secondary schools and/or pupils, local authorities would follow the approach to classification of schools used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release<sup>1</sup> and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002<sup>2</sup>.
6. The Code sets out some minimum requirements on the contents of each local authority report stating that each must cover as a minimum "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."
7. The Department for Education's aim through the annual reports from local authorities is to understand how well the admissions system is working nationally, rather than to hold individual local authorities to account. By understanding the effectiveness of the system, including outcomes, the Department hopes to identify areas where the admissions system is working well and areas where it could be improved. With that in mind, when the template asks, "how well does the admission system serve the needs of

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<sup>1</sup> [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

children,” the Department appreciates that it is asking local authorities to make a subjective judgement, in the understanding that everyone’s experience with the admission system will be different. The Department encourages local authorities in responding to the open questions and spaces for open comments to set out challenges that are proving difficult to overcome.

8. Guidance on specific questions and/or meaning of specific terms in this report:

- a. “in-year admissions”: This means admissions (that is children admitted to a school and not applications for places):
  - i. to a year group which is not a normal point of entry for the school concerned (for example to Year 2 for a five to eleven primary school); and
  - ii. after the end of the statutory waiting list period (31 December) to a year group which is a normal year of admission for the schools concerned (such as Year R and Year 7).
- b. Not applicable means that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

9. We welcome all comments that local authorities make in the comment boxes and we aim to reflect those comments in the Annual Report, but we ask for the comments to be entered under the right headings. Section 3 invites comment on any other matters not specifically addressed in this template if local authorities wish to do so. The views expressed in previous years also remain a matter of public record.

10. We ask that where possible, you return the template in Word instead of PDF formatting. A number of you have commented on the formatting of the template and we have tried to make it as accessible as possible, but we are aware that some local authorities use different versions of Word.

11. Where questions request a comparison with the previous year, any new local authorities formed as a result of reorganisation should note this on the form.

## Information requested

### Section 1 - Normal points of admission

#### A. Co-ordination

Which of the following best describes the level of challenge for your **main admissions round in 23/24 compared to 22/23?**

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Much less challenging</b>	<b>Less challenging</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>More challenging</b>	<b>Much more challenging</b>
Reception	X				
Year 7			X		
Other relevant years of entry	X				

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

Primary numbers have dropped for first point of entry, so we had less oversubscription in the first round of offers. We had a lot of late applications this year which saw more oversubscribed schools but there is sufficient availability.

The total number of Primary School (Reception / Foundation Stage 2) places offered this year in Rotherham is 2,561 with 95.7% of children having been offered a place at their first preferred school. In total, 99% have been offered one of their three preferred schools.

Year 2-3 transfers were straightforward this year, oversubscription only from late applications.

For applications received for children to attend Year 3 in a Junior School in September 2024, 100% have been offered a place at their first preference Junior School.

Y6-7 – high numbers again for this year group and half of our secondary schools were oversubscribed. Some schools have lengthy waiting lists and we held several days of appeals.

In total, over 3,400 school place offers have been made to pupils in Rotherham – 3,161 (92%) of which were for their first preference school. In all, 97.4% of pupils in Rotherham have been offered a place at one of their three preferred schools this Year.

**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 applicable

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 applicable

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 applicable

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**?

- Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable

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

**C. 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 at **normal points of admission**?

- Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable

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

2023/24 Academic Year

Primary Phase Transitions (early years provider to school, infant school to junior school and primary school to secondary school) – 95.8% of placements agreed on deadline date of the 15th February.

Secondary/Post 16 Phase Transitions (secondary school to post 16 institution or apprenticeship including YR 14) – 79.1% of placements agreed on deadline date of the 31st March.

## Section 2 - In-year admissions

**A. Which of the following best describes the overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions in 23/24 compared to 22/23?**

Phase	Much less challenging	Less challenging	No change	More challenging	Much more challenging
Primary				X	
Secondary				X	

If you wish, please explain the factors that have changed the level of challenge for your in-year admissions:

We continue to receive a high number of in-year transfer applications.

A greater number of children are being referred for placement through the FAP as they are being left without a school place due to applications being refused. (332 referrals in 2023-24 compared to 85 in 2022-23)

## **B. Looked after children and previously looked after children**

- i. How well does the **in-year admission** 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 applicable

- ii. How well does 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 applicable

- iii. How well does the **in-year admission** 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 applicable

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

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable



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:

Challenges exist for out of area placement of children in care, particularly those who have an EHCP or in Key stage 4. Delays are put in place by schools, consultations are often lengthy and require significant input and regularly return stating they cannot meet need. Escalation strategies and consideration of secretary of state direction have been used to support admission but this often leads to children being not in school for prolonged periods of time.

### 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 well  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable

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 well  Not well  Well  Very well  Do not know

iii. Please give examples of any 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:

EHCP processes that determine whether a setting is named fall to the following: 20 week assessment process, annual review process (transitions/change of placement), mediation/tribunal process.

Performance on 20-week timeliness for 23/24 academic year: 72% of EHCP assessments (422/586) were issued within statutory deadline.

Performance on annual reviews timeliness for 23/24 academic year: of the 2206 reviews completed in the 23/24 academic year – 41.7% (919) were completed within the 12 month timescale of the previous review. Out of the 2206 annual reviews, 1361 required an amendment. Of those amended plans, 21.7% final amended plans were issued within 12 weeks of the review meeting and 70.2% were issued outside of that timescale.

Performance on mediation: of the 30 cases that went to mediation for section I only (name of placement), 4 were overturned prior to or during mediation in relation to placement.

Performance on tribunals: of the 29 cases that went to tribunal for section I only (placement), 11 were overturned by the LA and placement agreed (38%), 4 were withdrawn by parent (13.8%), and 14 are currently in progress with no resolution (48.2%).

There can be reluctance from admission authorities to offer and admit children with SEND- this is challenged robustly by the LA but leads to applications taking longer to be resolved than is needed.

#### **D. Fair access protocol**

What proportion of the state-funded mainstream schools in your area have said that they agree to the local authority fair access protocol?

##### **Primary**

Between 0% and 49%

Between 50% and 74%

Between 75% and 89%

Between 90% and 99%

100%

##### **Secondary**

Between 0% and 49%

Between 50% and 74%

Between 75% and 89%

Between 90% and 99%

100%

If you have below 75% for either phase, please explain why:

Not applicable.

- i. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	7	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	32	117
Total	39	117

- ii. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

Higher level of refusal by admission authorities in year.  
Increased migration to borough.  
Greater patterns of parental preference leading to oversubscription in some areas.

- iii. How well do you consider children referred to the Fair Access Protocol are served in in your area?

Not at all well  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable

- iv. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above:

Protocol was revised for September 2024 through extensive consultation with school leaders. This is leading to children spending less time out of school as most placements are resolved well within the statutory 20 day period.

## E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children<sup>3</sup>

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024 to maintained schools for which the local authority is not the admission authority to admit children (including children looked after by the local authority but resident in another area)?

<sup>3</sup> It is important that only Directions to maintained schools are included here. Numbers of Directions to academies are already held by the Department.

Total number of children	Of which, looked after	Of which, not looked after
0	0	0

## F. Other points on in-year admissions

- i. For the schools for which the local authority co-ordinates in-year applications, in the year between 1 Aug 2023 and 31 July 2024 did you receive

- Significantly fewer applications than last year  
 slightly fewer applications than last year  
 about the same  
 slightly more than last year  
 significantly more than last year

- ii. For what proportion of **primary** schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2023/2024 academic year

- Between 0% and 24%   
Between 25% and 49%   
Between 50% and 74%   
Between 75% and 100%

- iii. For what proportion of **secondary** schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2023/2024 academic year

- Between 0% and 24%   
Between 25% and 49%   
Between 50% and 74%   
Between 75% and 100%

- iv. If you wish, please provide any comments about how **well in-year admissions** works for children who are **not** looked after or previously looked after and/or do **not** have SEND:

Very well. We co-ordinate admissions for all but 3 of our schools. Applications are sent through to schools with a request for a response within 10 school days which allows a few days to chase any outstanding decisions or for more complex cases.

v. If you wish, please provide any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised (you may wish to include here any comments about cases where it has not proved possible to find places for children):

We closely monitor applications for children who are new to our area and, if applications are unsuccessful, the children are picked up and referred through for placement via our Fair Access Protocol (which has been recently revised following consultation with schools).

### **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?

### **Section 4 - Feedback**

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2025.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2024