Office of the
Schools
Adjudicator

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

TO

THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR

FROM

Rotherham Council

30 JUNE 2011

Report Cleared by …… Dorothy Smith, Senior Director Children and Young People's Services

Date submitted …….. 30th June 2011

By……..David Hill, Manager School Organisation Planning and Development

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SECTION 1

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR IN WHICH THE REPORT IS MADE - 2010 - 2011

Please complete using data/information for the period 1 September 2010 to date of report

NOTE: This template is designed to be filled in electronically – boxes can be expanded as necessary.

Fair Access Protocol

Code 4.9 a) (i) how well the Fair Access Protocol has worked and how many children have been admitted to each school in the area under the protocol;

NOTE: The Code at 3.44 requires (1) each local authority to have a Fair Access Protocol and (2) all schools and Academies to participate in their LA area's protocol

a) Please confirm that the LA has a Fair Access Protocol that has been agreed with all the relevant schools in its area (relevant schools are all maintained schools and academies).

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No	

If NO please explain:

(We consult annually on the admission arrangements which includes the Fair Access Protocol – All schools and Academies have signed up to the protocol)

b) Give your assessment of how well the Fair Access Protocol has worked since 1 September 2010. In particular in placing children, the co-operation of schools and Academies as well as any other issues you have had in implementing the protocol.

The protocol has been successfully used to place pupils from the Authority's 'Pupil Referral Units' back into mainstream, also for the 'managed move of pupils with challenging behaviour between Secondary Schools and for the placement of 'Looked after Children'. The protocol has been less relevant for the transfer of pupils between Primary Schools as there are fewer pupils who fall into the relevant categories. We have few refugee/homeless/traveller children and numbers placed are low.

c) In Appendix A, please record for each school the number of children considered to be placed in (column O) and those actually placed in

(column P) to the school under the protocol between 1 September 2010 and the date of this report.

Infant Class Sizes

Code 4.9 a) (ii) whether primary schools are complying with infant class size legislation

Are all Primary Schools in your area complying with infant class sizes?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No	

If NO please comment and also include the number of schools where qualifying measures are being taken:

NOTE : Primary Numbers are increasing and whilst we have managed to comply with the class size legislation; predictions are that this may become a real issue as primary numbers are rising unequally across the authority.

Admission Appeals

Code 4.9 a) (iii) the number of admissions appeals held for each and every school in the area, and the number of appeals that were upheld.*

* Every school includes: community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation, Academies, city technology colleges and city colleges for technology of the arts.

For the period 1 September 2010 to the date of this report please insert in Appendix A the following for each school:

- column Q - the number of appeals held;
- column R - the number of appeals upheld; and
- column S - the number of appeals pending from the date of this report.

Code 4.9 a) iv the extent to which the local authority and appeal panels in the area complied with the requirements of the Appeals Code, with reference to ensuring the timeliness and transparency of appeals, effective communications with parents and any other relevant matter.

NOTE: other appeals panels have a duty to provide you with information on appeals (Section 88Q of Schools Standards and Framework Act).

Has your independent appeals panel complied with the requirements of the Appeals Code?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No	

If NO please explain including non-compliance and action taken:

Have all other appeals panels for own admission authority schools complied with the requirements of the Appeals Code?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No		Don't Know	

If NO or Don't Know please highlight any issues raised and if you have been unable to obtain information:
(The Local Authority manages/clerks all the appeals for all the other Admission Authorities within Rotherham Authority - this includes the Academies and Aided Schools. This ensures compliance with the Appeals Code of Practice)

SECTION 2

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR WHICH STARTS AFTER THE REPORT IS MADE – 2011-2012:

Code 4.9 b) (i) the extent to which admission arrangements for schools in the authority's area serve the interests of children in care, children with disabilities, children with special educational needs and service children.

NOTE: You may wish to point out if specialist staff from within the Council has contributed to this report and highlight any problems that may have occurred.

Children in care: The 'Looked after Placement Officer' is now located within with the admissions team and pupils are placed within the admission policy at the appropriate local school over and above the admission limit as necessary and in accordance with our published policy and within the statutory timescales.

Children with disabilities: The 'Admissions team works' closely with the 'SEN Assessment Team', the 'Looked after Placement Officer' and also the staff seconded from the Health Authority who advise on the needs of pupils with disabilities. The 'Admissions team' works closely together with these teams to ensure that parents/carers are able to obtain a place for their child at the school of their choice.

The Health Authority staff advise on the placement, equipment, accommodation requirements etc. of children with disabilities and all pupils are appropriately placed in accordance with parents/carers choice. Building adaptations and specialist equipment is sourced through the appropriate channels.

The removal of DFE Access Initiative grant funding to assist with adaptations is a major concern.

Children with Special Educational Needs: Similarly the 'SEN Team' liaises with the admissions team and pupils are again admitted to the appropriate school, this may be over and above the admissions limit if necessary

Service Children: The Authority has few service children who require a school place. We only had one pupil this year who was accommodated in their preferred school.

Code 4.9 b) (ii) the effectiveness of co-ordination.

NOTE: You may wish to report on the authority's assessment of the effectiveness of any scheme for co-ordinating:

a) the admission of pupils to **LA schools** in September 2011

The co-ordination of admissions to all LA area schools has been very successful.

b) the admission of pupils in the authority's area to **other admission authority schools** in September 2011.

We co-ordinate school admissions with the Academies, V.A. Schools and the five neighbouring authorities.

SECTION 3

FOR ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN DETERMINED IN THE APRIL IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE DATE OF THE REPORT IS MADE (determined by 15 April 2011 for admission in September 2012):

Code 4.9 c) (i) a statement of whether or not admission arrangements for maintained schools in the area complied with the mandatory requirements of this Code and admissions law.

NOTE: All non-compliant admission arrangements must be corrected. All mandatory requirements can be changed by the admission authority. Any other non-compliant issues must be referred to the OSA.

Are you satisfied that the admission arrangements for all maintained schools in your area are fully compliant with the Code?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No	

If YES please provide a statement to confirm this:
We are satisfied that the admission arrangements for all maintained schools in our area are compliant with the DFE Code of Practice on School Admissions.

If NO, please specify what action you are taking:

Using column T in Appendix A, please identify those schools that you have identified with problems now or which you have referred to the OSA, or may be referring to the OSA by the 31 July 2011.

SECTION 4

OTHER MATTERS:

<u>Admission Forum</u>

Code 4.9 d) (i) details about the current membership of the Admission Forum for the area

NOTE: Please list the bodies represented and the number of representatives in each category. Do **NOT** give the names of members.

Community Schools: 2 members (1 Primary and 1 Secondary)

Voluntary Controlled Schools: 1 member

Voluntary Aided Schools: 3 members

Academy: 1 member

Church Dioceses: 2 members

Parent: 1 member

Community Representatives: members, including …

One representative of the Early Years Nursery (voluntary) sector
One representative of the Black and Minority Ethnic community

Is the Admission Forum writing a report?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	✓

If YES is the report attached or has it been sent separately?

Tick as appropriate:

Attached		Separately	

If separately please provide the date the report will or has been sent to the OSA?

DATE:

Please confirm whether the Admission Forum has seen, or will see, a copy of this LA report.

Tick as appropriate:

Has seen		Will see	✓

Free School Meals

Code 4.9 d) (ii) the proportion of children currently on free school meals at each school in the area.

NOTE: The data provided by the Local Authority to the DCSF in January 2010 has been "cleaned" and is included in Appendix A.

If the data for 2011 is significantly different from 2010 please state how it differs.

	2009-2010	2010-2011
Free Meals (min – max)	7415 (7273 – 7560)	7564(7469 – 7678)
Average take up of those entitled	72.9%	72.7%
Average take up against NOR	18.34%	18.81%

The increase in free meal entitlement of approximately 149 is insignificant across 120 schools, although individual schools may see an increase it is likely this will be following the normal pattern of free meal entitlement.

The take up against NOR has increased as (1) a consequence of improvements to the school meal take up (4.5% increase on actual meals and 2.1% points increase in all school NI52 calculation) (2) reduction in NOR accentuating the increase in meal take up when converted to percentage against NOR.

Using and interpreting the data, please comment on whether the allocation of school places meets parental preferences for those children on Free School Meals.

The correlation of data for free meals and school preference is not available, however, it would not be possible to give reliable data as eligibility for free meals for children entering the system is not known until children enter primary school in September and free meal claims have been made and assessed.

Code 4.9 d) (iii) any other matters which affect the fairness of admission arrangements for schools in the area.

NOTE: Please identify any issues not covered elsewhere on this template.

The biggest challenges facing the Rotherham Authority are:

1) The number of in-year transfer requests received by applicants from the E.U. Community who have recently settled within the authority. These applicants are putting enormous pressure on local schools and where alternative schools (within statutory walking distance) are offered they are unwilling to travel and non-school attendance is becoming a major issue.

2) We have an increasing number of FS 2 appications which is impacting on a number of primary schools. Class size legislation makes it difficult to accommodate all pupils in their preferred local primary school.

SECTION 5

OTHER ISSUES REQUESTED IN ADDITION THIS YEAR BY THE

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION.

Choice Advice

Please complete with reference to Choice Advice provided to parents applying for a secondary school place for the 2011/2012 school year.

Appendix 5 of the Code requires local authorities to provide an independent Choice Advice service that is focused on supporting the families who most need support in navigating the secondary school admissions process (paragraph 5). Choice Advice must be independent and free from any potential conflict of interest between the need of the local authority to allocate places and the advice that parents receive (paragraph 8). As a minimum, local authorities must ensure that Choice Advisers are not in the same management chain or reporting lines as the local authority's admissions staff (paragraph 9).

a) Please confirm that your local authority has an independent Choice Advice service in place.

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No	

b) Please explain how you ensure the independence of the Choice Advice provided (for example, the Choice Advice service may be situated in the Parent Partnership service or Family Information Service).

Choice Advice Service is located within the Business Support Section of Children and Young People's Services, under the Director of Resources, Planning and Performance. The Admissions Service is under a different Directorate and therefore managed independently and separate to Choice Advice.

b) Are your Choice Adviser(s) in the same line management chain or reporting lines as staff on the admissions team.

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	✓

Choice Advice must be targeted at those parents who most need support with the secondary school admissions process (paragraph 10). Local authorities and Choice Advisers should market their service to ensure that they reach the families most in need of their support and that other relevant agencies and professionals are aware of the service they provide (paragraph 11). Choice Advisers should be proactive in reaching 'hard to reach' parents and should develop good links with organisations that may be able to refer parents to them (paragraph 12).

d) Please explain how you ensure Choice Advice reaches those parents who are most in need of it.

Information on Choice Advice is available with the Admission to Secondary School Booklets, and also on the Authority's website. The Admissions Service is in a position to refer parents in need of assistance to the Choice Advice Service.

e) Describe how Choice Advice has contributed to the fairness of the admissions process.

Choice Advisors are available to assist parents who experience difficulties with the admissions process and those who have not submitted and application close to the deadline can be targeted to provide information/advice assist them through the process.

Local authorities may provide Choice Advice at the primary school admission stage and for in-year applications (paragraph 5).

f) Choice Advice is offered at the primary admissions stage?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	✓

g) Choice Advice is offered for in-year applications?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	✓

It is good practice for Choice Advisers to provide support during the appeals process, particularly to those parents who accessed Choice Advice at the application stage.

h) The Choice Adviser provides support during the appeals process?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	✓

i) If no, do you plan to provide support during the appeals process in future?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	✓

Transport

Admission authorities **must** explain clearly whether or not school transport will be available, and, if so, to which schools and at what cost (if any). Are details of the availability and cost of home to school travel and transport clearly set out in the composite prospectus?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No	

If No, please provide an explanation

SECTION 6

OTHER ISSUES REQUESTED IN ADDITION THIS YEAR BY DEPARTMENT.

6TH Forms

Paragraphs 1.42 to 1.45 of the Code provide guidance on applications for Year 12 and transfer from Year 11.

Do you have any 6th forms within your Authority?

Tick as appropriate:	Yes	✓	No	

If Yes, how Many? 8

Have you considered the admission arrangements for 6th forms in line with recommendations of the Code?

Tick as appropriate:	Yes	✓	No	

Are you going to take any further action with regard to these arrangements?

Tick as appropriate:	Yes		No	✓

If Yes, please specify what action you are taking:

Aptitude

Paragraphs 2.78 to 2.82 provide guidance on partial selection by aptitude.

Do you have any schools which select pupils by aptitude for a subject?

Tick as appropriate:	Yes		No	✓

If 'yes' how many?

If yes, do you check the tests that these Schools use to ensure that they are

compliant with law?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	