



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Dorset Local Authority

to be provided by

30 June 2021

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**Please email your completed report to: osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk
by 30 June 2021 and earlier if possible**

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Introduction and guidance on completing the report

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.

2. This template requests the same information as that set out in the revised template we sent on 15 April 2020:

- a) information about how admission arrangements in 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 should 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. In the template last year we did not ask about the determination of admission arrangements because of continued constraints on local authorities. Again, we have not asked for that information this year, but we intend to return to this area in future years given the importance of determination and checking compliance of all admission authorities. It is a key role for the local authority's leadership to encourage schools to determine arrangements in line with the provisions in the Code.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2021**.

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:

This was the first time that a school with a random allocation process had to invoke the procedure as they were oversubscribed. There was a need to ensure that the correct processes were undertaken to ensure transparency. However, the Admissions Arrangements of the school were not sufficient in detailing the processes and ensuring families could necessarily understand and feel comfortable with the transparency of the process.

This year in the Year 9 round, there were significant levels of local children not submitting applications in the on-time round, and this has frustrated the processes as few places have been available in the later rounds due to out of catchment demand.

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

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

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**?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable³

v. Priority in admission arrangements for 2022 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, please give any 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

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:

There continues to be challenges around children who are undergoing an EHCP production process during the national offer day window. There is a balance of offering places to PAN with mainstream applications and whether, if it is known the family have asked for a specific school, allocating a place to prevent a school having to go over number at a later date.

Section 2 - In-year⁴ 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 (31 December) in normal years of admission.

A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

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

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 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 applicable⁵

- iii. How well does your **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 applicable⁵

- 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 applicable⁵

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: -

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 applicable⁵

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

- 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 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: -

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 agreed⁶ 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: N/A

- iii. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	7	22
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	12	59
Total	19	81

⁶ An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted.

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 applicable⁷

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

There is a tension between the right of a parent to move and safeguarding when the existing school and agencies have significant concerns around a family moving schools in year.

There has been an equal challenge of some schools refusing and referring to IYFA when a child is struggling at school and perhaps needs a fresh start, whilst automatic placement can be challenged by schools on an IYFA criteria.

The new Admissions Code should help with one of these issues but the other issue may become more challenging.

E. If you wish, any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised: -

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 2022.

⁷ 'Not applicable' would mean that there were no hard to place children for which the protocol was required.

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Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk by 30 June 2021