



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Cornwall Local Authority

to be provided by

30 June 2021

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www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator

**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:

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 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:

There have so far been limited numbers of admission authorities including this priority and none where it has been applied. All admission authorities will be reminded to include this to comply with the Code from September 2021.

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**:

The admission to school at normal points of admission works very well, ensuring our looked after and previously looked after children are given priority of allocation.

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:

Unfortunately, although many schools do have excellent practice, there are still too many instances of the families of children with SEND perceiving that their child is less welcome and gaining the impression that their son or daughter will be a burden to staff and detract from the education of others.

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 (31 December) in normal years of admission.

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

The Local Authority continues to co-ordinate applications for all except one secondary school and considers that central co-ordination is vital in terms of safeguarding and ensuring transparency and fairness in the admissions process. The changes to the Code from September 2021 which place a time-limit on responses to in-year applications will be positive for children and families however there are concerns around the LA's capacity to meet the targets, particularly where we are reliant on schools' responses to requests which in some cases are very delayed.

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:

School admissions for children without an EHCP

On the whole, this is very good. Where schools say there is no capacity, school admissions either in County or outside of County, challenge this – and where possible get the child on roll in a timely manner. Where a school of choice is not a possibility, they help to find a school that is. Neighbouring Local Authorities have been particularly helpful and direct multi-agency Planning for Success meetings which have to be held within 5 days of naming a school.

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

School admissions for children with an EHCP

Often the children that move away from their local area have the most complex needs and so a specialist care setting and/or specialist education setting is required to meet a range of needs.

Getting the right education can take time as the statutory process means that the SEN service for that area, works alongside the 'home' SEN service to consult with possible provisions; sometimes independent commissioning is needed and where there is no response to this, a bespoke timetable is needed in the interim. This time period perhaps should be viewed as an investment in a long-term plan that works, rather than a knee-jerk reaction to ticking a box and saying that a child with complex needs is on roll and attending somewhere – as this action may result in further changes and instability for the child who has been taken from everything and everywhere that is familiar to them.

The Cornwall Virtual School now receives an email notifying of any in-year school application prior to allocation, for consultation. This is helpful in early identification of any issues with the proposed school placement.

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

- 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:

We look forward to the publishing of the national review of SEND due summer 2021 in the hope that this will address a number of system issues in relation to: national expectations of SEN provision; inspection frameworks rewarding inclusive practice; and, greater financial clarity. This will support the LA's activity with schools so that increasingly all act in the way that the best currently do.

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:

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	2	1
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	13	27
Total	15	28

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:

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

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

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

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?

Delayed entry for summer-born children continues to be an issue without the promised legislation changes to back this up. Whilst issues are small in number they are however time-consuming for the Local Authority and schools and can cause unnecessary stress for families.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2022.

Thank you for completing this template.

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