



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Essex County Council

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:				
<p>Essex County Council finds that, other than there may be system related issues in our own LA or with other LAs, the co-ordination processes work very well.</p> <p>For each future admission rounds we continue to feel that a specified mandatory data sharing date for all LA's would assist in streamlining the co-ordination processes further.</p>				

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

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

- 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 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**:

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:

We feel that the fact the dates for finalising EHCPs (particularly for children transferring from Year 6 to Year 7, being 15 February) does not work in tandem with the key dates of the mainstream admissions processes can lead to confusions in the allocation process. This means that the mainstream admission offers are being finalised at the same time as EHCPs and schools can find themselves being placed over PAN due to the finalising of an EHCP after the finalising of mainstream allocations.

We feel that moving this date should be explored by the DfE. For example, a final date for EHCP of 31 January would correspond with the start of the mainstream allocation processes, therefore allowing for all final EHCP decisions to be accounted for and avoiding the need for schools to go over PAN.

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

A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

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

Direct applications to schools for secondary in-year admissions continues to be a positive process, as all admissions and related questions families have for the school can be handled by the same party. As all Essex secondary schools are their own admissions authorities, this is a logical method of administering the in-year admission processes.

For primary phase in-year admissions the LA remains the admissions authority for many schools and it remains the view that a co-ordinated approach is in the best interest of all families.

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

during the course of any school year after the end of the statutory waiting list period (ie 31 December) in normal years of admission.

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.

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 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:

There are some rare situations where schools raise concerns about the admission of a child with SEND (but without an EHCP) and their ability to meet the needs.

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

Year 11 admissions can be challenging due to it being an examinations year. We also find some occasions for Year 2 and Year 6 admissions where there is a reluctance to admit prior to SATS.

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

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

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	110	N/A
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	155	20
Total	265	20

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.

There remains a lack of clarity over the definition of 'challenging behaviour' and it would be useful for greater definitions of what constitutes this in the School Admissions Code.

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

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?

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

Section 4 - Feedback

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

Thank you for completing this template.

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