



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

**Template for
Local Authority Report
to
The Schools Adjudicator
from
Calderdale Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2024**

Report Cleared by: Name Richard Morse

Job Title School Organisation & Access Manager

Telephone number 01422 392501

Email: richard.morse@caldedale.gov.uk

Date submitted: 30 October 2024

By: Name Joanne Atkins

Job Title Senior School Organisation & Access Officer

Telephone number 01422 392617

Email: joanne.atkins@calderdale.gov.uk

Website: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#)

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

Contents

Introduction

Guidance on completing the template

Section 1 - Normal points of admission	5
A. Co-ordination.....	5
B. Looked after and previously looked after children.....	5
C. Special educational needs and/or disabilities	6
Section 2 - In-year admissions.....	7
A. Overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions.....	7
B. Looked after children and previously looked after children	7
C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities	8
D. Fair access protocol	9
E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children	11
F. Other points on in-year admissions	11
Section 3 - Other matters.....	13
Section 4 - Feedback.....	13

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 Release¹ and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002².
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

¹ [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

² [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?**

Year Group	Much less challenging	Less challenging	No change	More challenging	Much more challenging
Reception			√		
Year 7			√		
Other relevant years of entry			√		

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 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**:

Looked after children and previously looked after children are given the highest priority as per the requirements of the code. There were no issues at the 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:

The SEN team in Calderdale work together with parents to decide which school is suitable to meet a child's needs where an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is in place.

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			√		
Secondary				√	

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

The Local Authority co-ordinate in-year admissions for all secondary schools and the majority of primary schools in Calderdale. However, some own admission authority schools opt to manage their in-year admissions independently. These schools do not all consistently inform the Local Authority of every application and its outcome, which can result in students being left without appropriate school placements.

A primary concern is the inconsistency in how places are offered or refused. The Local Authority has noted a significant number of applications being declined under section 3.10 of the school admissions code, due to concerns about potential challenging behaviour exhibited by the child. Since there are no specific criteria regarding the definition of challenging behaviour, schools may refuse admission if a child is perceived to have caused any disruption at their previous school. This situation has led to an increase in cases being referred to the Fair Access Panel and has extended the timelines for processing applications. Additionally, schools are often waiting for information from previous schools and may delay responses to applications when no information is forthcoming.

Another concern is the rising numbers of students being withdrawn from the school roll to pursue elective home education (EHE). There has been a marked increase in cases where students who are EHE subsequently seek admission to mainstream schools. While their applications are processed in the usual manner, the preferred schools frequently deny admission due to concerns about challenging behaviour. Furthermore, the previous schools involved may also decline to admit these students, necessitating referrals to the Fair Access Panel.

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:

In-year applications for looked after children are processed in the same manner as all other applications. The school will consider these applications as a higher priority in line with their oversubscription criteria. However, if the school has reached capacity or the child presents challenging behaviour, the application may be declined, and the applicant will be informed of their right to appeal. If the child is without school provision the virtual school's team will consult with the relevant school and if necessary, would seek a formal direction.

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:

In-year applications for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an education, health and care plan are processed in the same manner as all other applications. The school will consider these applications in line with their oversubscription criteria. However, if the school has reached capacity, the application may be declined, and the applicant will be informed of their right of appeal. If the child is without school provision, then they may be referred to the fair access panel and a place allocated through the FAP.

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:

- 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	1	1
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	3	12
Total	4	13

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?

There has been an increase in the number of children referred to the Fair Access Panel on the grounds of challenging behaviour that do not meet the threshold and therefore should have been dealt with through the normal in-year process. This not only disrupts the operational efficiency of the Fair Access arrangements but also results in delays in the timely admission of these children to schools.

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:

Fair Access meetings are held fortnightly for secondary schools. This has worked well to ensure that pupils for whom the Local Authority are having difficulty securing a place for are offered a place as quickly as possible.

The Fair Access meetings for primary schools are organised on an ad hoc basis due to the lower volume of referrals.

While schools have committed to engaging with the Fair Access Protocol when approached for pupil admissions there are instances where they express reluctance to admit. Schools are requesting a detailed explanation for their selection and are seeking the opportunity to participate in an additional meeting to present their rationale for why they believe their school may not be the most suitable environment for the child. This is leading to significant delays in the timely enrolment of vulnerable pupils who require a school place.

E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children³

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)?

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%

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

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:

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):

Some schools have established a notional limit for admissions in-year which is significantly lower than the published admission number that was in place when that year group started in year 7 and also below the capacity for pupil admission declared to the Department for Education in funding agreements. In certain instances this notional limit is less than the actual number of students currently on roll.

As a result other schools may find themselves becoming the only in-year option available to parents. This all leads to an increase in the referrals to Fair Access Panels and a rise in the number of appeals. The Local Authority has requested that schools reassess their positions and align their notional admission number more closely with the admission number for each cohort at the time of entry unless there has been a significant change of circumstances. The absence of a clear limit on in-year admissions makes it challenging to confirm the availability of places to parents.

There are also continued difficulties securing school places for Year 11 pupils. Schools are reluctant to admit regardless of the circumstances of each case.

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?

The process for summer born pupils to be admitted outside of their chronological year group is confusing for parents and schools. The process is included within our coordinated scheme, but these cases take up a significant amount of time each year. Where a parent has preferenced several own admission authority schools and each makes their own decision, it can result in inconsistencies. Parents do not have any guarantee of a place at the original school(s) preferenced and therefore if a request for a child to be admitted outside of their chronological year group is allowed at one school, if they are not successful in gaining a place it may not be possible to offer an alternative in the year group they would like.

It would be helpful if the school admissions code was updated to clarify the process, for the benefit of parents and admission authorities alike.

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