



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Template for  
Local Authority Report  
to  
The Schools Adjudicator  
from**

**Calderdale Local Authority  
to be provided by  
31 October 2025**

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by  
31 October 2025 and earlier if possible**

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## 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 2024/2025 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2025.**
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 Release<sup>1</sup> and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002<sup>2</sup>.
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

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<sup>1</sup> [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

<sup>2</sup> [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 24/25 compared to 23/24?**

| 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:

Co-ordination in the main admissions round worked well and all applicants were offered a school place on national offer day in accordance with the relevant oversubscription criteria. Co-ordination with other local authorities worked well and all deadlines were met for the exchange of information.

#### 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 24/25 compared to 23/24?**

| <b>Phase</b> | <b>Much less challenging</b> | <b>Less challenging</b> | <b>No change</b> | <b>More challenging</b> | <b>Much more challenging</b> |
|--------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Primary      |                              |                         | √                |                         |                              |
| Secondary    |                              |                         | √                |                         |                              |

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

The number of in-year applications in 2024 has slightly decreased compared to 2023. However, there remains a significant number of pupils being refused admission under section 3.10 of the School Admissions Code, primarily due to concerns regarding potential challenging behaviour, particularly within the Secondary sector.

The Local Authority continues to review cases where disagreements arise over the challenging behaviour thresholds, however several cases have been referred for consideration under the Fair Access Protocol.

In some instances, schools refuse to make decisions on applications due to delayed information from previous schools. The School Admissions Code clearly states that such delays are not justified reasons for withholding a decision. Despite this, some schools continue to delay the process.

A significant number of pupils currently being electively home educated are seeking admission back into mainstream schools. Applications are handled through the standard process; however, securing a placement for these pupils can be challenging. Schools often have reservations related to possible challenging behaviour, concerns that the child was withdrawn to circumvent permanent exclusion, or a reluctance to readmit pupils who have previously attended their school due to safeguarding concerns. A substantial proportion of these cases have been referred to the fair access panel for further consideration.

There is a lack of clarity over own admission authority schools' capacity to admit pupils in-year. Some schools have established a notional limit for in-year admissions that is lower than the intake at the normal point of entry in year 7. This restriction on in-year admissions is not consistent with the School Admissions Code and can prevent in-year movement. Additionally, it hampers the Local Authority's ability to accurately confirm a school's available places with parents, restricting parental preference and potentially leading to an increased number of appeals and referrals to the fair access panel. It also complicates the detail that is submitted in the Authority's SCAP return each year.

## 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 and previously looked after children are processed in the same manner as all other in-year applications. However, these applications are given the highest priority in accordance with the oversubscription criteria. If a school declines to admit an applicant, they will be informed of their right to appeal. In cases where the child is without school provision the Virtual School team will consult with the relevant school and if necessary, will 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 2024 and 31 July 2025?

| Type of school                            | Number of Primary aged children admitted | Number of Secondary aged children admitted |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Community and voluntary controlled        | 3                                        | 3                                          |
| Foundation, voluntary aided and academies | 2                                        | 23                                         |
| Total                                     | 5                                        | 26                                         |

- ii. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025 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. Some applications did not meet the threshold for challenging behaviour and therefore should have been dealt with through the normal in-year process.

- 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:

For the 2024/25 academic year, Secondary School fair access meetings were conducted on a fortnightly basis, with a different headteacher panel participating every eight weeks on a rotating schedule. This arrangement was effective in ensuring that pupils for whom the Local Authority faced difficulties securing placements were offered places promptly. However, there were delays in schools completing the enrolment process, and numerous refusals following the meetings, which led to extended negotiations before schools agreed to admit pupils.

In response to these challenges, consultations were held with all secondary schools. For the 2025/26 academic year, the frequency of fair access meetings has decreased to monthly, with representatives from all secondary schools attending each session.

Primary fair access meetings will continue to be held on an as-needed basis.

## E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children<sup>3</sup>

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025 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 2024 and 31 July 2025 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 2024/2025 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 2024/2025 academic year

- Between 0% and 24% ☐  
Between 25% and 49% ☐  
Between 50% and 74% ☐  
Between 75% and 100% ☒

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<sup>3</sup> 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):

There are 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 and admission arrangements, 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.

It would be beneficial for the School Admissions Code to clarify that schools must determine an official admission number for all year groups, with any deviations requiring a formal approval process. This approach would ensure that parents and the Local Authority are clearly informed about the school's capacity to admit additional pupils and prevent schools from citing other issues / prejudice as a reason to refuse admission when places are available and avoid practices of covert selection.

## **Section 4 - Feedback**

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2026.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2024