



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Bristol Local Authority

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				Yes
Year 7				Yes
Other relevant years of entry				Yes
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**?

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.

- 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.

It would be helpful to admission authorities to have further guidance on the appropriate documentation to confirm status.

- 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**:

In Bristol we have a designated admission officer as a point of contact for CIC. This enables us to liaise at all points to ensure that Social Workers and Foster Carers are completing the stages of the admissions process and we can chase up to ensure that deadlines are met. We can also quickly answer any queries. Co-ordination ensures that the CIC are the highest priority and we can react quickly to any changes of circumstances.

In other local authorities this varies and sometimes we are not able to speak to one contact in admissions, meaning there are multiple conversations with professionals, however some authorities have adopted the model that Bristol uses and this is useful where a relationship is built.

We have had experience of other local authorities involving their Virtual School as part of the admission process.

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:

In line with the SEND COP the LA consults with schools as to whether they can meet the needs of children and young people with EHCPs. Schools complete a comprehensive form to demonstrate if they can meet needs and if not why not. Typically schools collaborate with the LA to facilitate school places for those with an EHCP and engage in discussions if parental preference is for a school (even when first indicated that they cannot meet need). Where a young person has additional needs supported at the school based stages of the SEND COP schools accept pupils within the usual admissions arrangements.

Partners have recently embarked on a sufficiency project to increase the number of specialist placements available across the city. Partners have worked across the local area to together to increase with places beginning to be available from October 2020.

Section 2 - In-year⁴ admissions

A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

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

As mentioned in previous reports, we feel it would be beneficial to parents and schools if local (within local authority area) co-ordination was re-established for in-year admissions.

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?

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 (ie 31 December) in normal years of admission.

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

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

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:

The local authority maintained admissions service are timely in dealing with applications for in-year admissions and deal with these very well. We do sometimes have lag in admitting CIC to schools that maintain their own admissions processes. We are finding this particularly with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Some schools are difficult about admitting in-year where they have to exceed the admission number and this involves time spent negotiating.

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 is a more mixed picture for children seeking a place in-year. The large increase in children being issued with EHCPs combined with a local of places in

⁶ 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

specialist provision can make securing an appropriate place difficult for some children and young people.

There have been a number of occasions when children have moved to Out Of Area (OOA) care placements and LA SEND teams have not been timely in adopting OOA EHCPs, making it difficult for Bristol SEN/The HOPE Virtual School to make timely admissions for these children. Bristol has on occasion challenged process using legal letter as follow up.

Some OOA schools are not as responsive to Bristol SEN in accepting consults and this risks pupils becoming CME. In contrast, there are some other LA SEN departments who actively speed up the 3 week consult.

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 agreed⁷ 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 2019 and 31 March 2020?

Type of school	Number of children admitted	
	Primary aged children	Secondary aged children
Community and voluntary controlled	7	2
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	9	34
Total	16	36

⁷ 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 applicable⁸

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

Although the Fair Access Protocol and system in Bristol works reasonably well, in some cases children are not admitted to / do not start at the school in a timely way after a Fair Access Panel has identified that a school has to admit under the locally agreed Protocol(s).

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?

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

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