



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report
to
The Schools Adjudicator
from
Nottingham City Council Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2024

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by
31 October 2024 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 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 | | X | | | |
| Year 7 | | | | X | |
| Other relevant years of entry | | | | | |

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

With the increased capacity for Reception year groups, we've been able to accommodate more parental preference offers. Additionally, the available capacity after offer day has made handling late decisions more efficient. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that schools remain sustainable despite declining enrolment numbers.

Year 7 intake continues to present challenges. There have been more pressures with OAA's working with us to ensure sufficient capacity to meet demand in areas of the city. Although we are able to make offers to all children who apply on time, the real challenge lies in accommodating inward migration and handling the high volume of late applications. This has also had impacts on appeal outcome with panels allowing high number of appeals based on OAA's not understanding their appeal responsibilities, combined with difficulty having alternative places to suggest to children.

Additionally, we face ongoing issues with OAA's not adhering to timelines, delaying decisions, and sharing information promptly. This lack of timely information sharing impacts our coordination, despite clear legislative requirements for OAA's to prioritise it.

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**:

Virtual School Head Comment: The priority of looked after children and previously looked after children in school admissions at the normal points of entry is widely known and supported, we therefore do not tend to experience any issues with admissions for this cohort of children at 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:

Nottingham City follow a clear protocol of pupils with EHCP's transitioning schools. Any transition requires a statutory EHC annual review, following which formal consultations are made to school. Pupils and parents will receive their preferred choice of mainstream school, however due to limited capacity within specialist schools, those preferencing specialist school are not always able to access their preferred school place.

Pupils with specific needs can access support of specialist services to support transition between schools, for example, Autism Teachers will support visits to new settings, prepare visual resources, and support receiving schools. This service is accessible to pupils with and without EHCP's.

The service maintained their high performance in line with national standards in issuing transition EHC plans for young people transferring from primary to secondary at 98% and from secondary to post 16 at over 95%. This does however represent a slight reduction in performance on previous years (performance was 99% and 98% respectively in 21-22 academic year),

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 | | | | | X |
| Secondary | | | | | X |

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

In-year admissions have become significantly more challenging over the past year. Between June 2023 and May 2024, we've processed nearly 600 additional primary-aged children, with a 32% increase in applications for the next key stage. The rise in inward migration and applications has led to the creation of new primary fair access panels to manage the surge. Throughout the year, fair access has been our only option for placing children without a school place, resulting in a 37% increase in secondary placements through this process.

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:

Virtual School Head Comment:

We often face challenges in securing education provision for looked after and previously looked after children when it relates to in-year admissions. On several occasions schools have refused an offer of a school place for our children and young people and the Virtual School have subsequently had to notify them of our intention to direct, which then usually results in an offer being made.

The level of challenge we experience in respect to securing in-year admissions varies depending on the type of school we are seeking a school place for. Typically, we experience more barriers and challenges if we are seeking a school place, as part of an in-year admission, at academy secondary schools. We are often informed that schools are over PAN in that particular year group or the school is unable to meet the young person's need.

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:

I: Nottingham City follow a clear protocol of pupils with EHCP's transitioning schools mid year. Any transition requires a statutory EHC annual review, following which formal consultations are made to school. Pupils and parents will receive their preferred choice of mainstream school, however due to limited capacity within specialist schools, those preferencing specialist school are not always able to access their preferred school place.

Pupils with specific needs can access support of specialist services to support transition between schools, for example, Autism Teachers will support visits to new settings, prepare visual resources, and support receiving schools. This service is accessible to pupils with and without EHCP's.

There has been an increase of pupils moving into Nottingham with EHC plans where their complex needs have resulted in a delay in school admission. In these cases the LA has made arrangement to provide education through none school based providers.

II:

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 | 177 | 11 |
| Foundation, voluntary aided and academies | 208 | 279 |
| Total | 385 | 290 |

- 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?

Lack of school places in certain year groups and certain areas across the city. Also very hard to keep sibling groups together and parents are refusing offers on that basis. Seeing a large rise in inward migration from African countries and Pakistan, which has resulted in more applications through Fair Access due to lack of school places.

- 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:

Still have time delays on academies providing us with information regarding direct applications and decisions on applications, which affects children being referred to Fair Access and out of education longer.

At a number of times during the year, schools have stated that they cannot physically accommodate any further children in certain year groups, which caused issues with regards to placing children

Year 11 children continue to be an issue to place, given their impact on results and a lack of AP placements due to large amounts of permanent exclusions in the city.

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 | | |

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%

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

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%

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:

We are confident in our processes and ability to carry out work in line with the school admissions code. Our processes come under strain only where capacity issues are present.

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):

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?

There remains a growing need for centralised coordination through local authorities. It has been observed that own admission authorities are increasingly reluctant to provide the required information regarding offers, starters, and leavers. This lack of engagement results in significant gaps in our data, complicating our efforts to assist parents, carers, and newcomers to the city with reliable information about school availability. Furthermore, it hampers our ability to ensure that all applications are processed fairly and in accordance with the principles of the School Admissions Code. As in previous years, we strongly recommend the implementation of mandatory in-year coordination for own admission authorities to mitigate these challenges and foster greater collaboration with the local authorities.

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