

**Local Authority Report**

to

**The Schools Adjudicator**

from

**Medway Council**

to be provided by

**30 June 2020**

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**Date submitted:** May 2020

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[**www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator**](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator)

**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:
3. 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;
4. 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.
5. We would be grateful if local authorities would follow the approach used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002[[2]](#footnote-2).

1. 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.
2. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2020**.

**Information requested**

# [Section 1 - Normal point of admission](#Text69)

## Co-ordination

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. 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 |

1. Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

## Looked after and previously looked after children

1. 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 [x] Very well [ ] Not applicable[[3]](#footnote-3)

* + 1. 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 [x] Very well [ ] Not applicable3

* + 1. 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 [x] Very well [ ] Not applicable3

* + 1. 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 [x] Very well [ ] Not applicable3

1. 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.

Some admission authorities in Medway give priority to children previously in care abroad however, to date, there has not been a need to use this criterion although there may be in future. The main challenge with criterion would be verifying any potential claim that a child had been looked after abroad.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. 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**:

Overall, looked after and previously looked after children are given the highest priority when allocating school places meaning they can usually be offered their preferred school.  |

## Special educational needs and disabilities

# Section 2 - In-year[[4]](#footnote-4) admissions

1. 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:

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan are considered before those without one therefore have the opportunity to be placed in the preferred environment.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities but without an Education, Health and Care Plan can sometimes be afforded higher priority to schools where the admissions authority have included oversubscription criteria for those with health/medical needs and the applicant can demonstrate a need to be offered a place at that particular school.

## **Co-ordination of in-year admissions**

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

Medway Council delegated in-year admissions to school in 2018. This had the advantage of families being able to deal with schools directly rather than via a middle person, which can make the process smoother.

However, it means that the process can be longer for families, especially where their first preference school is oversubscribed as they must then submit applications to more schools.

To prevent delays, Medway Council writes to all families who are refused a place to confirm their right of appeal and offer assistance in securing a place if families are still without one. However, in order for us to contact these families we must first be notified who they are and that they have been refused a place at a school but not all schools routinely do this. We are aware this is a requirement in the School Admissions Code and continue to work with schools to ensure proper procedures are followed.

## **Looked after children and previously looked after children**

1. 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 [x] Well [ ] Very well [ ] Not applicable[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. 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 [x] Well [ ] Very well [ ] Not applicable[[6]](#footnote-6)

1. 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 [x] Well [ ] Very well [ ] Not applicable6

1. How well does your **in-year admissions** system serve the interests of previously looked after children?

[ ] Not at all [ ] Not well [x] Well [ ] Very well [ ] Not applicable6

|  |
| --- |
| 1. If you wish please give examples of any good or poor practice or difficulties which support or exemplify your answers about **in-year admissions** forlooked after and previously looked after children:

Most schools are aware of the practices and expectations around looked after and previously looked after children including offering over their published admission number as an ‘excepted pupil’.  |

## **Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities**

* + 1. 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 [x] Well [ ] Very well [ ]  Not applicable6

* + 1. 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 [x] Well [ ] Very well [ ] Don’t know

|  |
| --- |
| * + 1. 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:
 |

|  |
| --- |
| * + 1. If you wish please provide any comments about **in-year admissions** in respect of other children:
 |

## Fair access protocol

1. Has your fair access protocol been agreed[[7]](#footnote-7) with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

[x] Yes for primary

[x] Yes for secondary

|  |
| --- |
| 1. If you have not been able to tick both boxes above, please explain why:
 |

1. 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 | Primary aged children | Secondary aged children |
| Community and voluntary controlled  | 2 | 0 |
| Foundation, voluntary aided and academies | 10 | 136 |
| Total | 12 | 136 |

1. How well do you consider hard to place children are served by the fair access protocol in your area?

[ ] Not at all [ ] Not well [x] Well [ ] Very well [ ] Not applicable[[8]](#footnote-8)

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Please make any relevant comment on the protocol not covered above if you wish.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **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.

|  |
| --- |
| The report focuses on the most important elements of school admissions. There is also a clear focus on seeking feedback about how vulnerable children are treated by admissions processes.  |

Thank you for completing this template.

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

1. [Department for Education Statistical First Release](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [The Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/1983/contents/made) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ‘Not applicable’ will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ‘Not applicable’ will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ‘Not applicable’ will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ‘Not applicable’ would mean that there were no hard to place children for which the protocol was required. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)