

**Local Authority Report**

to

**The Schools Adjudicator**

from

**Medway Council**

to be provided by

**31 October 2022**

**Report Cleared by: Celia Buxton**

**Assistant Director – Education and SEND**

**01634 331013**

**celia.buxton@medway.gov.uk**

**Date submitted: 18 October 2022**

**By: Robert Lancaster**

**Admissions Manager**

**01634 331159**

**robert.lancaster@medway.gov.uk**

**Contents**

Introduction

Guidance on completing the template

[Section 1 - Normal point of admission 5](#_Toc37835103)

[A. Co-ordination 5](#_Toc37835104)

[B. Looked after and previously looked after children 5](#_Toc37835105)

[C. Special educational needs and disabilities 6](#_Toc37835106)

Section 2 - In-year admissions 7

[A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions 7](#_Toc37835108)

[B. Looked after children and previously looked after children 7](#_Toc37835109)

[C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities 8](#_Toc37835110)

[D. Fair access protocol 8](#_Toc37835111)

## E. Directions …………………………………………………………………………….9

## F. General comments on in-year admissions………...…………….………..……...10

Section 3 - Other Matters ..………………………………………………………………..10

[Section 4 – Feedback 10](#_Toc37835113)

**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 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 3.30 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. Local authorities do not have to include this introduction and guidance in their locally published report.
2. In 2020 and 2021, we asked far fewer questions than in previous years, asking only for the minimum information required by the Code. This was in response to the pressures on local authorities and others in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, we have again sought to keep the information requested to the minimum. We have, at the request of the Department for Education, asked a small number of additional questions relating to the impact of the new Code which came into force on 1 September 2021.
3. The new Code also changes the period to be covered by reports to the adjudicator and the deadline for submitting reports to the adjudicator. **This year’s report must cover the 2021/2022 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 31 October 2022.**

**Guidance on completing the template**

1. In a departure from previous practice, we have included all the guidance on completing specific parts of the template in this section. We hope that this will be helpful. This is in response to feedback that including guidance and definitions in the body of the template could make the report harder for readers to follow and less accessible. 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.
2. 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[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002[[2]](#footnote-2).
3. Guidance on specific questions and/or meaning of specific terms in this report:
   1. “in-year admissions”: This means admission at the start of any school year to a year group 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 (31 December) in normal years of admission.
   2. Not applicable means at questions:

Section 1: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

Section 1: B.v. that there were no schools for which the local authority was the admission authority at 1 September 2021.

Section 1: B.vi. that there were no schools in the local authority’s area for which the local authority was not the admission authority at 1 September 2021.

Section 2: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

Section 2: C.i. that there were no children falling within the definition.

Section 2: D.iv. that there were no hard to place children referred to the protocol.

1. 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.
2. 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.

**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:

The co-ordinated secondary transfer process presented challenges due to guidelines concerning admission to new schools. A new free school opened in Medway for September 2021. Admission to the free school was outside of the co-ordinated admissions process which meant that families had to apply through two different processes and received two offers on national offer day. Subsequently, families who had two offers were requested to accept one offer only to allow places that were not required to be released for late applicants.

Co-ordinating this presented challenges that the local authority otherwise would not have been confronted with however good communication between the local authority and schools & applicants led to a successful outcome.

## Looked after and previously looked after children

1. How 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

* + 1. How 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

* + 1. How 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

* + 1. How 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

* + 1. Please confirm that your local authority has included children adopted from state care outside England in its definition of previously looked after children in admission arrangements for schools for which it is the admission authority

Yes No Not applicable

* + 1. How confident are you that all other admission authorities in your area have included children adopted from state care outside England in their definitions of previously looked after children in admission arrangements for schools for which they are the admission authority?

Confident all have  Confident some have Not aware of whether all or some have Not applicable

|  |
| --- |
| vii 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**:  All schools give highest priority, after children with an EHCP, to children in care/previously in care. Schools and the local authority take great care to ensure that children in care are ranked correctly against oversubscription criteria so none of the applications are maladministered. This means that children in care/previously in care are offered their first preference school, unless it is a grammar school and the child has not been assessed as grammar. |

## Special educational needs and/or disabilities

# 

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:

Children with an EHCP naming the school are given highest priority for school places in each school’s admissions arrangements.

Most schools include criteria within their admissions arrangements to give higher priority to children who have a health/medical reason for attending the school if sufficient evidence is provided by a medical professional. Not all schools include health/medical/special access reasons within their admissions arrangements as it is not mandatory and is therefore an admission authority decision.

# Section 2 - In-year admissions

## **Effect of Code changes on in-year admissions**

Please provide any comments you wish to make on the effect of the changes to the Code’s provisions for in-year admissions. It would be particularly helpful to have comments on whether you think the changes have made it easier or not for parents to secure places for children in-year?

The changes to the Code have provided more clarity regarding requirements on local authorities and schools when handling in-year admissions applications.

This has generally made it easier for parents both in terms of obtaining information about how to secure school places as well as going through the application process.

However, the lack of a co-ordinated or centralised in-year process means parents must approach schools individually which can prolong the process for some.

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

1. How 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

1. How do 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

1. How does your **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

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

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

|  |
| --- |
| 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: |

## **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 well Not well Well Very well  Not applicable

* + 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 well Not well Well Very well Do not know

|  |
| --- |
| * + 1. 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:   The Code has clarified the timescales for allocating school places and allows for children with special educational needs/disabilities to be referred to the Fair Access Panel for assistance with placement if no school within a reasonable distance has a vacancy. The FAP process allows us to assist families who are struggling to find school places and prevent gaps in education.  In-Year admissions for children with an EHCP work very well if the child’s EHCP names a school. However it is more difficult for new arrivals to the area due to a lack of capacity in the independent and special schools. |

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

## Fair access protocol

1. Do you have a fair access protocol agreed with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

Yes for primary

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 August 2021 and 31 July 2022?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Type of school | Number of Primary aged children admitted | Number of Secondary aged children admitted |
| Community and voluntary controlled | 10 | N/A |
| Foundation, voluntary aided and academies | 53 | 237 |
| Total | 63 | 237 |

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

Not at all well Not well Well Very well Not applicable

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above. It would be particularly helpful to have any comments on the impact of the Code changes on the operation of the FAP in your area and the ability to secure places for vulnerable children:   The current FAP processes work well, with all schools engaged in decision making on appropriate placements. Decisions on some placements can be more difficult than others but panels are child-centred with both primary and secondary schools being committed to making improvements to the protocol each year to achieve the best outcomes possible for Medway children. The number of referrals to the panel for secondary-aged children is more than expected due to limited availability in some year groups. |

1. **Directions**

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2021 and 31 July 2022 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 |
| 1 | 0 | 1 |

|  |
| --- |
| **F.** If you wish, please provide any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised: |

# 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 2023.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](mailto:OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk) by 31 October 2022

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)