Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Template for

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

London Borough of Newham Local Authority

to be provided by

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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[1] and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002[2].

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 24/25 compared to 23/24**?

Year Group	Much less challenging	Less challenging	No change	More challenging	Much more challenging
Reception				X	
Year 7			X		
Other relevant years of entry			X		

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

Pan London co-ordination with the eAdmissions portal continues to deliver a simple, clear and transparent application process for home residents.

For reception, local processes cannot be as robust as for other normal points of entry as this cohort of children is not easily identified making communication and tracking difficult, however we do work in partnership with nurseries, PVIs and health attempt to fully capture the cohort. The only element of the process that continues to be a challenge is summer born, as the legislation does not support a simple process for families.

Admission to Atypical schools (University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools) continues to be a challenge as there is no requirement for co-ordination.

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

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**:

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:
There are effective admission procedures between the local authority and schools, in line with the Children and Families Act, 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice, 2015.

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?

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 Newham we have always fully co-ordinated in year admissions, which works very. However, in the 2024/2025 school year there was an increase in 3.10 refusals due t challenging behaviour, much of which relates to families appearing to be changing schools to avoid behaviour sanctions and schools feeling they are unable to meet to the increase of children with special education needs.

Another area of challenge is the placement of year 11 pupils, all of which have to be managed via FAP as schools do not report places being available.

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:

It is particularly challenging to find school places for LAC placed out of borough in Year 11.

For admissions teams there are ongoing difficulties resulting from the legislation versus the understandable expectations of Virtual Schools and other parties supporting/advocating for the child. The School Admissions Code 1.7 requires schools to prioritise looked after children in their oversubscription arrangements but the expectation is they will admit. The challenges and delays could be overcome if Looked After Children were placed (like children with an EHC plan) outside of the oversubscription criteria.

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:

There are effective in year admission procedures between the local authority and schools, in line with the Children and Families Act, 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice, 2015. Schools are provided with High Needs Top-up funding for children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, to support their complex needs.

More challenges are presented to schools for in year admissions of children who have special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND), particularly for those who may not require an EHC plan, however have presenting needs which require additional support via SEN Support. This is significantly challenging for schools who have high numbers of SEND pupils and are also in financially difficult circumstances.

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	0	5
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	31
Alternative Provision - academies	0	14
Total	0	50

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?

Commissioning of the LA's Newham Late Arrivals Programme (NewLAP) for year 11 applicants ceased. Schools are now being required to admit more pupils as a result. As the vast majority of schools were full after census we are placing via FAP on a rotational basis considering parental preference and home to school distance.

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:

To introduce consistency of approach and fairness for children, greater clarity should be provided as to when FAP can be applied, as there is statutory duty for local authorities ensure there are sufficient places for all compulsory school aged residents. Guidance is required to explain in what circumstances a place cannot be secured when all reasonable measures have been taken – unless the local authority does not have sufficient places.

Guidance is also needed on how vulnerable children are identified, when these questions are not permitted on the in year application form. Clarity is required as to whether the pupil information can be shared by the child's last/current school, if it must be shared which parties are involved, and what are the timescales.

The School Admissions Code 3.10 states an admission authority can state they do not want to admit where they have good reason to believe a child may display challenging behaviour – this section contradicts 2.28 of the Code, raising the question which has more weight in law.

Local experience suggests that FAP is being used for a significant number of cases where the applicant has applied for a new school place to avoid sanctions such as permanent exclusion. However for 3.10 to be applied information must be shared. Families are becoming aware of this and are now applying for schools

with vacancies to increase the likelihood of changing school and avoiding sanctions. Whilst many of the issues can be managed through local data sharing agreements and consent processes, there is no clear process for cross border applications.

E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children[3]

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% ☒

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

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% ☒

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:

Co-ordination continues to work very well as we fully co-ordinate meaning the application process is clear and simple for all applicants – one form for whichever schools in the borough the family prefer. This also means the local authority is not reliant on schools advising us of families who have applied and been refused. This means where preference cannot be met, applicable children are placed immediately.

One challenge continues to be is that PAN only applies to the normal point of entry, so for some schools it may be difficult to place children even when we know there is physical capacity – especially for year 11.

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):

Greater clarity is required in the Code relating to admission limits for year groups not being the normal point of entry. This would give greater transparency and control over the number of places available in the local area and fairness as to when an applicant can be refused a place as the school is 'full'.

Alternative allocations continue to be a challenge for schools with vacancies, as they have to manage weekly new admissions.

Delays in admission after a school is offered/allocated – the Code should specify the number of days to admit following the school place being offered. Families are sometimes left feeling their child is unwanted, so apply for another school.

A new challenge is the significant growth in families applies for admission out of year group, especially as the Code does not provide clear guidance on this.

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?

Summer born and out of year group

All Summer Born guidance is published as being an element of Out of Year Group Entry – but all guidance relates to summer born or alludes to Summer Born. Specific guidance relating to Out of Year Group Entry requests for in year admissions should be included.

Additional guidance is required for when a family with a child currently being educated out of their expected year group, changes school and the admission authority of the new school do not agree to the current back or forward yearing.

Capping and overallocation

Capping needs to be officially recognised and information published regarding their use.

Giving OOA schools the right to over allocate for normal admissions means schools with lower preferences receive even fewer children, which is particularly challenging at a national time of falling rolls.

Other
Parental disputes on preference – clarity over parental disputes and fair handling where there isn't agreement on preferences
Looked After Children – the Code is clear that LAC are placed in Criterion 1 of the admission arrangements for any school – however this is somewhat contradicted by the expectation that schools must admit these children who face a possible direction. It should be clear as to whether LAC are in Criterion 1 or should be placed outside of the oversubscription criteria as for children with an EHC plan.

Information sharing
Many schools raise concerns that a child's previous school will not share information for them to determine if 3.10/3.11 can be applied. It is understood that the Data Controller of the child's current school is legally responsible for making this decision as it is being shared on a lawful basis, however schools expect local authorities to manage the situation. However neither the ICO or DfE provide definitive advice on this so it is essential guidance is published. There needs to be a specific section about information sharing, timelines and responsibilities including advice about moving pupil files (electronic and paper) and start dates for children offered places outside of their home LA.

Withdraw the use of words such as promptly and refer to actual timelines – when referring to school days, the impact of schools determining their own term dates should be recognised.

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 2025