



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Local Authority Report**

to

**The Schools Adjudicator**

from

**Dorset Local Authority**

to be provided by

**30 June 2020**

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**Date submitted: 30 June 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](mailto: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 Release<sup>1</sup> and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002<sup>2</sup>.
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**.

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<sup>1</sup> [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

<sup>2</sup> [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				X
Year 7				X
Other relevant years of entry				X
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 applicable<sup>3</sup>

- 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<sup>3</sup>

- 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<sup>3</sup>

- 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<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> '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.

We do not have this element as definition of this criteria was unclear. A robust definition of this criteria by DFE will allow this to move forward.

- 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**:

- With 162 out of county LAC placements the system can seem to be somewhat fragmented in order to manage and support all these young people due to the differences across multiple LA's.
- There are inconsistent local authority systems for admissions leading to a long drawn-out process for Virtual School Heads to secure placements.

## 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:

## Section 2 - In-year<sup>4</sup> admissions

### A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

Dorset Council would continue to advocate for greater in year co-ordination. This will improve a family's ability to secure a place quickly and remove the inherent delays when a family has to approach several Own Admission Authorities in order to secure a place or having to wait until these options are exhausted before the In Year Fair Access protocol can be activated to sector the school place.

In Year co-ordination will ensure that all applications are treated fairly and that the system will be seen to be fair and responsive to all families.

**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 applicable<sup>5</sup>

ii. 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  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>6</sup>

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 applicable<sup>6</sup>

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 applicable<sup>6</sup>

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:

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

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

See B(vi) above

For LAC within the authority, the LA is robust in advocating for the placement of children and will also support those in-care to other LA's (but resident in Dorset) to secure places.

### 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 applicable<sup>6</sup>

- 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:

The greatest challenge remains those children without EHCP's but are either in the process of an EHCP request or are receiving levels of support in school that are commensurate with an EHCP. When they wish to move school, often families are badly advised and can get very frustrated with the system that endeavours to support choice but also is mindful of the difficulties in moving children while significant levels of support are required and/or EHCP's processes are in the pipeline.

This also includes those children returning from Elective Home Education, who at their previous maintained school place, were receiving significant levels of support at a level that a new school would not have the ability to replicate a relative short notice.

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

Securing up to date admissions information from Own Authority Schools who do not use County Admissions officers remains a significant challenge. This can generate the feeling of inconsistency of process for families. It produces a system that is difficult for some families to navigate successfully.

**D. Fair access protocol**

i. Has your fair access protocol been agreed<sup>7</sup> 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	20	29
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	32	63
Total	52	92

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 applicable<sup>8</sup>

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

There remains a challenge over 'behaviour' category for referral as well complications around the definition of refusal and allowing a case to be considered by the IYFA Protocol.

**E.** Any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised if you wish.

<sup>7</sup> An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted.

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

Dorset is very proud in the way the Syrian resettlement programme has been embraced by schools from all sectors.

### **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](mailto:OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk) by 30 June 2020