



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

**Template for
Local Authority Report
to
The Schools Adjudicator
from**

Leicestershire County 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 children," the

¹ [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

² [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

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	✓				
Year 7	✓				
Other relevant years of entry	✓				

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

Leicestershire has further built on the successes of the previous year's transfer rounds. Outcomes for Leicestershire families and children have improved, with more children securing their first preference school. Software issues were minimal and communications worked well.

Secondary transfers:

- 91.2% secured first preference, 98.2% secured a preferred school entry 2024

Primary First Time Admissions:

- 94.8% secured first preference, 99% securing a preferred school entry 2024

Infant to Junior:

- 99% secured first preference (one infant child applied to a primary school)

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**:

For both LAC and PLAC Leicestershire has continued to secure these children their first school preference school.

The only issue we have experienced is on occasion parents or carers have not disclosed that their child is LAC or PLAC, but once this was established, places were secured swiftly.

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:

Leicestershire has had an improved experience of securing school places for children with an EHCP. This has been through building better relationships between the Admissions service and the SENA Service, introducing new improved working practices that enable swifter data exchanges for EHCP children seeking or requiring a mainstream school places.

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	✓				
Secondary	✓				

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

In general Leicestershire built on success of the auto-allocation system introduced in the 22/23 academic year. This ensured that where a family's preferences could not be met at phase transfer they were automatically allocated a place at the next nearest school to their home address. This improvement has resulted in far fewer parent/carer complaints, challenges and upset as parents have not had to chase these vacancies themselves.

The challenges we have faced have been with high birth rate year groups, in Year 3, Year 4, Year 8 and Year 9 as availability of places has been limited to small pockets of Leicestershire. This has resulted in increased appeals for these year groups.

In the majority of instances application processing times have significantly improved. This is in part due to increasing awareness with academy schools of the requirement to provide parents and carers with a decision by the 15th school day and also stronger process management within the admissions service.

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:

Placing Year 11 CiC from other authorities has on occasion been challenging with good and outstanding schools setting out that they already have high numbers of CiC in their current Year 11; they cannot offer the options or examination boards required; their school is already over PAN; and they anticipate incurring costs of courses that they cannot afford.

We have also experienced delays with out-of-county LA support staff sharing information with school Own Admission Authorities to assist in a speedy school start.

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:

Whilst we have had many successes with regards to children and young people with SEND moving into schools throughout the year it is apparent that schools often feel that the numbers of SEN pupils in their school is too high or disproportionate in some areas, or that their schools are at or beyond capacity.

Some schools have stated that they cannot reasonably offer a place for a young person with SEND as they cannot meet needs. Children arriving with no formal diagnosis but evident additional needs (for example awaiting assessment or arriving from overseas) present additional challenges. Parental expectation and demand for specialist places far exceeds those available or feasible.

Work has been undertaken through the Transforming Special Needs and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme and is continuing at pace in order to mitigate the ongoing demands through the system, and schools across the county have been engaging well with this work and support for children with SEN.

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	3	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	13	80
Total	16	80

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?

Leicestershire has experienced an increase in FAP referrals because of pupils presenting complex needs and schools citing they cannot meet needs where a child has not got an EHCP or is under assessment.

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:

Fair Access Panels meet regularly to consider cases and to ensure speedy outcomes. We continue to raise awareness of the requirement of a child being on roll within 20 school days of the decision.

Leicestershire has started a review of its current FAP during 2023-24 and is planning to update the FAP sometime during the autumn 2024-25.

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

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

0	0	0
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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%
 - 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:

Overall Leicestershire has had a successful year for in-year admissions. Finding places for year 11 children is challenging as there is little appropriate provision for children arriving on roll late and not taking GCSE or level 2 qualifications.

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):

Popular schools continue to attract more in-year applications as well as experiencing an increase in appeals. We have struggled for school places in Years 3, and 4 (the whole year), and in Years 8 and 9 from late Spring onwards. In both instances it is because of the high births and inward migration in these year groups.

Leicestershire is also experiencing admission pressures because of asylum seekers and refugees needing school places, including children in contingency hotels and more recently on the MOD's Afghan re-settlement programme (ARAP).

Leicestershire has successfully raised awareness with academies of the need to obtain decisions within 15 school days. However, some academies are still taking more than 15 school days to make a decision due to a number of reasons. In some cases this may be because the school's admissions decision-makers have teaching or other commitments that can take priority over admission decisions and understandably, many academies are keen to know detailed circumstances of pupils ahead of agreeing places.

We are also experiencing an increase in the number of schools citing that they 'cannot meet needs' and electing to refuse applicant(s). In many cases these places have ultimately been agreed following more detailed discussions.

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?

In the normal round for reception year entry from September 2024 Leicestershire has experienced the results of a low birth rate for a second year leading to a significant surplus capacity. Several trusts and the LA have in response reduced PANs to support schools that are at risk of falling into a deficit budget position.

The situation in the normal round for the secondary point of entry has seen a slight drop in applicants resulting in easing the pressure on school places. We expect this to continue for entry 2025.

A developing concern Leicestershire wishes to highlight is where multiple offers are being made and parents are holding on to more than one school offer. This is where Own Admitting Authority school(s) have made offers whilst at the same time and unbeknown to them so has the LA (and there could also be other offers from other OAA schools), as a parent would have applied directly to each school (ie OAA or LA co-ordinated).

If, however, the co-ordination of all in-year admissions were to be centralised to the LA (with appropriate powers): there would potentially be better understanding of who has applied and what offers have been made; children would be put on roll faster; the LA would be in a stronger position to advocate for children. This would also have a positive impact on reducing the number of children missing education.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2025.

The report continues to be a worthwhile exercise, as it provides LAs an opportunity to draw the adjudicator's eye to successes and challenges faced by LAs when trying to secure school places for local children.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2024