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 2026

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Please email your completed report to: Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 31 October 2026 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 2025/2026 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2026.**

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 25/26 compared to 24/25**?

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 is pleased to report it has continued to maintain first preferences rates compared to last year further building on the successes of the previous years' transfer rounds.

Secondary transfers:
The transfer process in the main ran very smoothly this year with 90.1% securing first preference school and 97.8% securing a preferred school. Leicestershire this year experienced a drop in the number of applications by about 450 compared to last year. We also experienced low numbers of appeals

First time Admissions:
The first-time admission process in the main ran very smoothly this year with 94.1% securing first preference school and 99.3% securing a preferred school. Leicestershire this year experienced a continued drop in the number of applications by about 190 compared to last year. Low births continue to impact school budget positions and in some instances school viability. In terms of appeals, and similar to the secondary transfers, we have experienced low number of appeals, interestingly however we have had appeals for schools that have never previously had appeals.

The only issue Leicestershire experienced related to software issues, where parent email firewalls blocked decision emails. In order to resolve, action taken included a combination of emailing parents directly and sending out paper offer

letters. This has been discussed with the software provider to consider what further action can be taken for future years.

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**:

All LAC and PLAC were agreed places at the normal points of entry, without any challenge from schools. Leicestershire's experience has continued to be positive in championing school places for LAC and PLAC at the normal points of entry.

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:

In Leicestershire the School Admissions Service and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service have continued to strengthen working relationships. Both services have adopted clear, timely, and high-quality communication in relation to normal points of entry. This includes the Admissions Service encouraging parents of SEN children without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or those awaiting an EHCP assessment outcome, to apply for a mainstream school place. This is helping to ensure that children are not disadvantaged during the admissions process, especially when a special school setting is not subsequently agreed following completion of an EHCP assessment.

Where a mainstream school is named in a child's EHCP, both the school and the Admissions Service are informed via the SEN Service in a timely manner, prior to national offer date. This then ensures no one school is overburdened with student numbers which could impact the overall quality of education able to be provided to all pupils including those with SEND.

A challenge that Leicestershire is facing is when other local authorities name a mainstream school in Leicestershire on a child's EHCP without, as required, consulting the school. This has then on occasion impacted Leicestershire's School Admissions Service's relationship with the named school. School Admissions are therefore now exploring improved communication with other LAs when they are seeking to name and secure a mainstream Leicestershire school for a child with an EHCP.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Which of the following best describes the overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions in 25/26 compared to 24/25?

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 general, Leicestershire's in-year admissions process has operated effectively this year, with fewer issues reported across both primary and secondary schools. However, Leicestershire would like to raise two specific concerns.

1. Academies Managing Their Own Admissions and Appeals Processes:
   Several Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), citing financial considerations, have chosen to manage their own admissions and appeals processes. As a result, the Local Authority (LA) is no longer informed of new starters, leavers, or appeal outcomes. Although the LA has requested this information, most secondary academies have declined to provide it, as required by the Code.

   As a result, the LA is often unaware of applications that have been refused, the grounds for refusal, or the outcomes of subsequent appeals. In addition, these children are not consistently being reported to the LA's Children Missing Education (CME) team. This in turn is a significant safeguarding concern. Leicestershire are exploring how we can better capture this data and improve reporting relationships with MATs.

   Some secondary academy headteachers in MATs now managing their own admissions and appeals have expressed concerns about losing LA oversight, guidance and support. Their feedback suggests a preference for continued LA management, although trust leaders have chosen to end these arrangements.

   This situation is also creating increasing confusion for parents, who are often uncertain about where to submit applications. This does result in significant parent frustration, dissatisfaction and delayed school starts, especially where applications are refused, as academies are unable to advise families of alternative schools with available places or, in some cases, are not informing them of their right to appeal.

   Furthermore, a number of academies refuse to provide accurate numbers on roll per year group to the LA despite the School Admissions Code requiring this information must be shared. Instead, they simply state that they are full. This lack of transparency can make it extremely difficult to identify available

school places and, in some cases, results in local children having to travel considerable distances to attend schools outside their immediate community. The impact is travel time, no local friendship groups, not being able to attend after school clubs etc.

2. Unlawful Refusals of In-Year Applications

The LA is also concerned about what appears to be an increasing number of unlawful refusals by some secondary academies. There appears to be a misunderstanding of the requirements under paragraph 3.10 of the School Admissions Code. Schools cannot refuse an in-year application under this provision without demonstrating how the individual circumstances of the application have been properly considered, particularly where places remain available.

Examples include:

- Academies being unable to demonstrate that they have already admitted or already have a disproportionately high number of pupils with challenging behaviour compared with other local schools;
- Academies failing to evidence how they have considered a child's disability, including cases where families have not even been asked or contacted to enquire whether their child has a disability impacting behaviour;
- Academies being unable to demonstrate that a child is beyond the range of normal and reasonable interventions available within a mainstream school setting;
- Academies incorrectly stating educational prejudice has been met in response to relatively low-level behavioural concerns.

Where the required criteria have not been met, and the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) does not apply, these refusals will still however trigger a statutory right of appeal.

The LA's experience of challenging behaviour appeals, where these have been managed through the LA's Appeals Service, is that all appeals have been dismissed at Stage One, often to the frustration of headteachers. However, the issue is the delay to the child's education while the appeal hearing is organised and outcome known, resulting in additional time out of school.

In some instances, the LA has escalated concerns and reminded academies of its duty to refer matters to the Secretary of State where admissions arrangements appear not to comply with statutory requirements. However, the LA does not believe it is appropriate to continue operating in this way with academies. The LA therefore wishes to alert the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) to these difficulties for the most vulnerable children and families.

The LA would welcome greater clarity regarding what is a lawful refusal where a school has available places, together with clearer guidance on the evidence that must be in place before a refusal can be issued. This is particularly important with regards to defining challenging behaviour as the existing admissions code is open to interpretation on this matter and is leading to disagreements between schools and the LA.

It is important to note that these cases represent a relatively small proportion of overall applications. Nevertheless, for those academies whose admissions arrangements are managed by the LA, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of refusals that appear to be unlawful, resulting in increased school challenges.

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:

The Virtual School Service has a fantastic working relationship with the School Admissions Service that ensures all in-year admissions are prioritised and dealt with in a timely manner. The out of county admissions has also improved in other LAs in most cases.

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:

Following a significant increase in the number of EHCPs in Leicestershire between January 2025 and January 2026 of 22.5% or 1,600 plans, sufficiency of specialist places has become an increasing challenge. Around 31% of pupils with EHCPs require a specialist school place. Despite creating 600 new school places over the last 5 years, a specialist place is not always immediately available for all pupils who are issued an EHCP naming specialist by type in section I, and there is now a waiting list of over 400 children whose needs are considered to best be met in a specialist setting.

High Needs Capital funding has not kept pace with demand for specialist places; while this is a national issue, it has been exacerbated by the EHCP increase over a relatively short time period. Demand for EHCPs continues at an accelerated rate as a result of a number of system challenges, including mainstream school funding, access to mental health and diagnosis services, and nervousness around proposed SEND reforms. Leicestershire remains one of the lowest funded authorities in the country in terms of per-pupil school funding, and this continues to impact the ability of mainstream schools to meet increasing levels of complex additional needs.

While there are likely to remain challenges in placing pupils with additional needs on an ongoing basis, new specialist capacity is undergoing development, including a new special school due to open in the south of Leicestershire in 2028 creating 252 places, and an accelerated pipeline of smaller specialist bases on mainstream school sites is underway.

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:
N/A

i. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	0	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	50
Total	0	50

ii. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

Leicestershire brought the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) process in-house from the 2025/26 academic year. Overall, this change has been successful. In addition, more robust systems have been developed, that have strengthened the threshold for consideration under FAP. As a result, the number of cases meeting the threshold has reduced. As part of bring in the FAP process in-house a new and dedicated FAP Officer was also appointed.

This role has enabled better understanding of an unlawful admission refusal when schools cite paragraph 3.10 of the School Admissions Code, allowing for more robust challenge where schools seek to refuse admission on the grounds of challenging behaviour, when the have spaces available.

In cases where a school has spaces and has lawfully refused admission based on challenging behaviour. The parent retains the right of appeal; where the appeal is heard our experience to date has been that schools have been unsuccessful at Stage One of the appeal process. This has further reinforced the importance of schools ensuring that refusal decisions are supported by clear and robust evidence. In several cases, appeal panels have determined that the threshold for challenging behaviour had not been met, that the school had not demonstrated sufficient prejudice to the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources, or that evidence relating to medical or disability needs had not been adequately verified.

Of the 50 FAP cases this year, all met the FAP threshold, however, there was no need to convene a Fair Access Panel as the nominated schools agreed to admit the pupils when approached by the FAP Officer prior to the FAP panel date. The LA has noticed much less resistance from schools in these instances, unlike when the LA had five locality partnerships that previously considered FAP cases.

In relation to primary-aged pupils having no FAP cases, this is not unusual. Historically, Leicestershire has experienced consistently low numbers of primary FAP cases.

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:

Several secondary headteachers have expressed in their view the threshold to meet FAP is too high. As a result, a small working group of heads and officers will review the threshold of what meets FAP, in new academic year.

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

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 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)?

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

Total number of children	Of which, looked after	Of which, not looked after
ZERO	ZERO	ZERO

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 2025 and 31 July 2026 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 2025/2026 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 2025/2026 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:

In general, Leicestershire's experience of managing in-year mainstream admissions has been positive. The majority of families receive a decision within 15 school days. In the small number of cases where this timeframe is not met, delays tend to be because of split-family disputes who make multiple applications, the need to obtain parent proof of address, or situations where a school is considering

refusal on the grounds of challenging behaviour and requires additional information from the child's previous school. However, such instances are rare.

It is also important to note that where the local authority is unable to meet a parental preference, parents are informed of alternative schools with available places and of their right to appeal.

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):

In-year co-ordination:

Leicestershire (as with the majority of LAs), remains firmly of the view that all local authorities should act as the single point of entry for all in-year applications. This would simplify the application process for parents, and ensure that, where a place is refused, the local authority can ensure that parents have been informed of their right to appeal, advise them of the nearest alternative school(s) with available place(s), and, where a place is not taken up, refer the case to the Children Missing Education (CME) team. This would also support FAP referrals, ensuring children not able to secure a school place are placed through FAP more quickly.

Currently, where parents apply directly to an OAA, local authorities have no oversight of whether the application has been processed correctly or whether an application has been successful. In cases where an application is refused, there is increasing anecdotal evidence that some OAAs do not advise parents of their right of appeal, OAAs also fail to notify the LA's CME team, which undermines the LA statutory duty to identify CME. This is resulting in children then remaining at home without a school place for extended periods of time. Children in these circumstances are often from the most vulnerable groups. They are at increased risk of becoming disaffected and are exposed to significant safeguarding risks. These children suffer from social isolation, become withdrawn, find it difficult to reintegrate to the routine of a school day, are likely to have an increased risk of poorer education outcomes, whilst becoming invisible to the appropriate support services.

The East Midlands Regional Admissions Group (EMRAG) has often discussed the lack of in-year co-ordination, and associated concern raised above. The group advocate a national LA desire for the DfE to re-introduce in-year co-ordination as a LA duty, to increase oversight of CME and prevent safeguarding risks. This approach would help ensure that all children are accounted for at point of application and reduce the risk of any child remaining out of education without the local authority's knowledge. It would also ensure all parents receive consistent advice and guidance and clear time scales.

These matters have been raised in last year's annual report by Leicestershire, and although OSA highlighted these concerns in their annual report, the situation

remains the same a year on. Leicestershire is therefore raising these concerns once more as too many children are going unreported to CME teams, creating needless safeguarding risks that could otherwise be prevented if in-year co-ordination was once again made an LA duty. The child and parent experience of in-year applications is also made unnecessarily challenging by the need to apply directly to OAA schools, which in some parts of Leicestershire means parents having to apply to a number of different schools directly as well as applying for some schools through the LA.

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?

Falling births:

Declining birth rates are rapidly becoming a significant challenge for primary schools in Leicestershire. Many primary schools have now experienced low Reception intakes for several consecutive years, resulting in increasingly difficult financial pressures and worsening deficit budget positions that will place some schools on a financial notice plan to address the deficit position. This is forcing governing bodies and trusts to revise teaching staffing structures, reduce support staff, reduce their published admission numbers (PAN), and, in some cases, there is a concern of longer-term viability of some schools. The low level of per-pupil funding in Leicestershire makes this situation more immediate and pressing than in better funded local authority areas.

Several academy schools have sought in-year variations to reduce their admission numbers, however a number of these applications have been rejected. For schools seeking to reduce their PAN from 60 to 30, the consequence of these applications being rejected has been Reception intakes of 31 or 32 pupils. This requires two qualified teachers to ensure compliance with Infant Class Size (ICS) legislation, placing further financial strain on schools that are already facing significant financial challenges.

The Department for Education (DfE) should recognise the scale and impact of declining birth rates and may wish to consider simplifying the process for schools seeking to reduce admission numbers through the in-year variation process, especially where there is clear evidence of falling numbers on roll.

The Local Authority will shortly be consulting on reductions to admission numbers for the fourth consecutive year, as an increasing number of community schools seek to address significant budget deficits. Similarly, it is anticipated that several own-admission authorities (OAAs) will also consult on reducing their admission numbers in response to falling pupil demand and to address financial pressures.

As a result of the falling births and continuing low numbers on roll, Leicestershire is embarking on a comprehensive review of all its primary schools. Financial modelling indicates that some schools may become unsustainable in the medium term, and the quality of education able to be delivered may become increasingly compromised where schools seek to recover existing budget deficits. During 2025/26, the Local Authority experienced the loss of one primary school, which had only eighteen pupils on roll. Although pupil numbers increased slightly, all the teachers secured other posts and left, this was sufficient for governors to initiate a formal closure process which will be consulted upon during autumn 2026 term.

Many primary schools are also experiencing the wider effects of the cost-of-living crisis and housing market pressures. Older generations are struggling to downsize, while younger families are increasingly unable to afford larger family homes. This is creating pockets across Leicestershire where village primary schools have few, if any, local catchment children applying for places. The result is very small classes and mixed year groups, with some children experiencing what could be considered an unsatisfactory school experience due to limited friendship groups, fewer opportunities for social interaction with peers, and potential difficulties when transitioning to big secondary schools with crowded learning environments.

The impact of declining birth rates will begin to be felt by secondary schools within the next three to four years unless substantial housing growth attracts new families into Leicestershire and increases pupil numbers. The challenges currently facing the primary sector are likely to transfer to secondary education, creating similar potential concerns around financial sustainability and surplus capacity.

Local Government Review (LGR)

Should LGR continue in its current proposed form, Leicestershire County Council will lose more schools than the new Leicestershire and Rutland Council will gain once the revised local authority boundaries come into effect.

As a result, Leicestershire would like to raise a few initial thoughts regarding the potential implications of these boundary changes.

As local authority boundary changes are actioned, there is a strong likelihood that school catchment areas will be reviewed and possibly realigned with new boundaries. This may, for some families, result in no longer living within what was their historic local catchment area. This could lead to concerns and challenges regarding the fairness and impact of any revised catchment lines. Up to 30% of primary catchments and 50% of secondary catchments across the County could be impacted by LGR in some form.

Own admitting authority schools and local authorities may also be affected where a primary feeder relationship is impacted. For example, a traditional feeder primary school and its linked secondary school will, following reorganisation, fall within different local authority areas. This is likely to create parent confusion and worry concerning the feeder school status. Leicestershire also suspects parents will be confused about which LA they should apply to for the co-ordinated processes.

Purpose of the OSA Annual Report

For several years, Leicestershire, alongside many other local authorities, has highlighted areas where it believes the admissions system must be strengthened.

One such area is the lack of a mandatory requirement for local authorities to coordinate in-year admissions applications.

Making in-year coordination a statutory local authority function would support improved tracking and monitoring of children, help safeguard parental rights, reduce the risk of unfair or selective admissions, and prevent parents verbally being refused a place without being informed of their right of appeal. Processing applications through the local authority can also reduce confusion for families, ensure compliance with the School Admissions Code, and provide greater transparency and consistency.

Despite these concerns being raised repeatedly through the annual OSA reports, there appears to have been little to no impact. Leicestershire's experience is like many other local authorities; the issues raised in last year's OSA report have not been actioned, and there is no indication that in-year co-ordination is going to be reviewed.

In response, Leicestershire would like to question the ongoing value and effectiveness of the annual OSA reports, if recurring issues continue to be identified without resulting in meaningful change.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2027.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 31 October 2026