



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

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

Nottinghamshire Local Authority

to be provided by

31 October 2023

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by
31 October 2023 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 her 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 2022/2023 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2023.**
3. Please note that, in response to feedback on the draft template, changes have been made to section 2C of this template.
4. Please also note that the OSA and Department for Education are planning a small project to ensure that the report is as useful as possible to local authorities, the OSA, DfE and others. As a result of this, there are likely to be changes made to the template for the 2023/2024 academic year.

Guidance on completing the template

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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. 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

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

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

- 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 at questions:

- i. Section 1: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- ii. Section 2: Ai - iv that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iii. Section 2: B.i. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iv. Section 2: C.v. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

8. 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.

9. 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 points 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:

The varying dates for exchange between local authorities continues to create difficulties in meeting deadlines set within NCC's coordinated scheme. This also impacts on the final offer process where outcomes are not received in time for offer day.

NCC continues to experience difficulties where applications are received for children who are already partway through an EHCP assessment process and the delays in naming schools ahead of national offer day impacts on final outcomes. This is exacerbated due to increasing pressures on availability of secondary school places.

B. Looked after and previously looked after children

i. 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

ii. 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

iii. 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

- iv. 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

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**:

NCC's school admissions service works closely with the virtual school to ensure that all known looked after and previously looked after children submit applications on time. Some difficulties can be experienced in securing local schools where children come into care beyond the national offer date. NCC links with social workers/virtual school staff to support placement at appropriate schools.

C. 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:

NCC identifies all those children with an EHC plan and works with colleagues in SEN teams to monitor those children being placed in mainstream school. These families are not sent application information for the coordinated intake round but are contacted and supported directly by the EHC assessment team.

For community and voluntary controlled schools, NCC gives higher priority to an application where it is established that it is the only school that can meet a child's particular needs. This supports families where professionals have already been working with a child and adaptations have already taken place at a school. Parents are reminded of the need to provide this information at the application stage and professionals working with the family are encouraged to provide supporting information to enable full consideration to be given to the application.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Looked after children and previously looked after children

- i. 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

- ii. How 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 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 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:

NCC's school admissions service works collaboratively with Virtual School and Fair Access to raise the profile of looked after children and works positively to offer places to our children in a timely manner.

Own admission authority schools managing their own in-year admissions can result in NCC not being made aware of applications quickly which can result in a delay with places being offered. The additional pressure on places across some areas of the county has seen an increase in looked after children/previously looked after children not being offered their first preference school. For children looked after by another local authority and in areas where there is high oversubscription, delays have occurred when admission authorities are not willing to admit over PAN.

NCC's school admissions service is responsive to support requests from the Virtual School when trying to identify schools with spaces when children in care are moving to the area. The service provides Virtual School colleagues with context around specific year groups and details of schools that are oversubscribed, as well as communicating with schools who have spaces which supports places being offered quickly for a looked after child.

Navigating admissions processes in other local authorities for our looked after children continues to be challenging at times. Although the option to direct schools is helpful, it is a long and slow process which causes more drift and delay for children in the most vulnerable situations.

B. 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:

Children and young people with an EHCP requiring a special school placement mid-year will have difficulty due to the current shortage of appropriate placements. NCC is currently working to address this issue with a view to creating additional special school places for future years.

The increase in in-year applications and migration into the County also means that many mainstream schools are oversubscribed. This means there is less physical capacity on their sites for children with an EHCP to have access to quiet or sensory areas/rooms as well as space to undertake therapy sessions therefore schools are indicating that they cannot meet need.

C. Fair access protocol

- i. 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

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 August 2022 and 31 July 2023?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	2	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	11	237
Total	13	237

iv. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

Significant increase in children being referred to Fair Access Protocol and admitted through the protocol due to pressure on school places in the secondary phase. Increase in inward migration in the county has also impacted on the number of referrals to fair access where preference cannot be met.

The unanticipated immigration of Hong Kong and Ukrainian families has exacerbated the situation.

v. 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

vi. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above:

D. Directions

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 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
NONE	0	0

E. 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 2022 and 31 July 2023 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 schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2022/2023 academic year
- None
 - All
 - Some but less than or equal to half
 - More than half but less than all

iii. 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:

The increased demand for school places due to inward migration (Hong Kong and Ukraine families) has resulted in some delays in placing children in a school close to their home. There is pressure on higher year groups in the primary phase which is increasing the number of referrals to fair access. Numbers of available places across most secondary year groups is significantly reduced.

Generally, in-year coordination for those schools that participate in NCC's coordinated in-year scheme works well and applications are processed quickly within the statutory time frame. Delays about the notification of applications from own admission authority schools that manage their own in-year applications creates difficulties for the LA where we are not notified quickly of families arriving in the county. This can mean children are out of school and not referred to fair access in a timely manner.

iv. 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):

Increasingly, due to pressure on places in some areas of the county, this has meant that families are travelling a significant distance for a school place. This is incurring additional costs on transport budgets and means that at the next key transition points the families can be at a disadvantage when applying for a secondary school place as they are not attending a linked school for their catchment secondary.

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?

Integrated Children's Disability Service has seen an increasing number of complex early years children with EHC Plans whose parents are preferencing special school. Work is required with both families and settings to increase confidence in this cohort's needs being able to be met in mainstream primary schools. Due to the increase in this cohort, we have more children accessing 'childcare settings' with EHCP's, this is challenging as these settings do not have the same access to funding or education support services. We continue to work with our early years colleagues as to how we can better improve the offer for this cohort. We have set up an early years' working group to better understand the concerns and have updated guidance and information sheets to reflect this cohort.

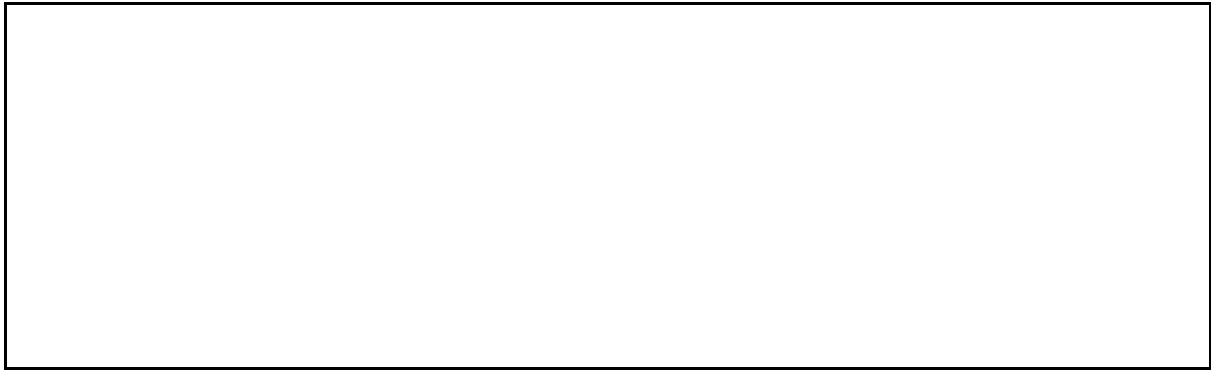
We are currently recruiting to 5 SEND Education Pathway Officer posts who will contact families and settings at the point an EHC Needs assessment request is made to discuss the requests and better understand why requests are being made at such an early stage. These workers will also offer support, advice and signposting to families and settings.

Over the last year the number of children and young people with EHCP's have increased in number. Some due to an increase in permanent exclusion, schools stating they cannot meet need, refusing themselves to utilise alternative provision and a general lack of confidence. We have also seen a significant increase in families requesting their children be supported via an EOTAS package and some requesting personal budgets.

School admissions service is seeing an increase in requests for admission at statutory school age for summer born children. Schools remain unclear about their role in these requests and increasingly own admission authority schools are taking a 'blanket approach' to refuse these requests. NCC has drawn up additional guidance to remind schools of the requirement of the Code but this continues to be a challenge, particularly where the schools for which the preferences are expressed reach different decisions on what is in the best interests of a child.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2024.



Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2023