



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

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

Nottinghamshire Local Authority

to be provided by

31 October 2025

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Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by **31 October 2025 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 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 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

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:

Continue to experience difficulties with delays in naming schools for children with an EHCP adding to the challenges faced particularly at year 7.

Exchange dates for other local authorities continue to cause some challenge where these differ in respect of exceptional late date not being specified within coordinated scheme. In addition, some neighbouring local authorities accept applications from non-home LA residents and then request Nottinghamshire to accept these at a late date potentially disadvantaging those families that had applied correctly and ontime.

Schools repeatedly do not advise the LA in good time to manage coordinated duties effectively which results in offers being made after national offer day.

Difficulties with a neighbouring LA issuing the incorrect outcome on NOD (Y7) which impacts on offers for Nottinghamshire residents and Nottinghamshire schools.

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:**

Admissions processes are clear and Nottinghamshire's experience of working with our own and other local authorities is that looked after children are prioritised appropriately 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:

NCC identifies all those children with an EHC plan and works with colleagues in SEND 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 EHCP assessment team. Some difficulties can occur when a late notice of change is received which changes the school named, impacting on the wider admission processes and in some cases requiring schools to admit over PAN.

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:

Continuing to experience an increase in pressure on places for in-year county wide. This can in cases where it has not been possible to meet a preference, result in families travelling a significant distance to school. This also increases the number of referrals to FAP, particularly at secondary phase. There are delays in own admission authority schools ranking applications which results in difficulties achieving the statutory timeframe laid out in the Code. In addition, schools are increasingly not providing information about children that could mean referral to FAP under 3:10. There is a notable increase in schools not sharing appropriate information after an offer has been made, this creates delays for children taking up the allocated school place.

OAs that do not participate in the in-year scheme are not always notifying the LA of applications and outcomes within the required timeframe, this results in delays in children accessing education provision or referral to FAP and is a real safeguarding risk. This exacerbates the numbers being referred to FAP unnecessarily where an offer has been made but the LA not notified.

In addition, schools are not providing the LA with details of the available places within the school and this creates further challenge when attempting to identify alternative offers for families within a reasonable distance.

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:

Delays in being notified of applications – leading to additional time out of education

In- year admissions processes for looked after children work well in Nottinghamshire due to strong and collaborative relationships we have with schools. The LA training offer to schools which focuses on looked after and previously looked after children means messages are consistently clear about offering schools places for our children.

However, significant challenges are experienced when our looked after children move to other local authorities and require in-year admission. There is an inconsistent response from schools with some avoiding communication and not responding or causing significant delay to responding to applications. The opportunity to be able to request direction from the Secretary of State is helpful however it currently causes further drift and delay.

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:

Demand for special school places is high which can result in a delay in placing children and young people with an EHCP in a special school in-year. Maintained special capacity often only becomes available at the end of a school year. NCC uses its INM approved framework to secure independent specialist school placements but INM settings also report that they are unable to admit further children or young people due to the lack of physical space.

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	11	
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	17	366
Total	28	366

- 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?

There has been a slight increase in the numbers of children placed through the protocol, notably in primary phase due to the bulge of key stage 2 children working through the system in areas of the county. There continues to be a high demand on places across the county, particularly in most secondary year groups – this is inconsistent with some projections data where there appears to be a sufficiency, however schools are working to lower number (prejudice and staffing) which effectively has removed the available places from the system. Inward migration and movement within the county continues, to impact on the number of referrals received as does increasing populations within some localities due to house building. The increase of referrals is also due to OAAs that manage their own in-year admissions not notifying the LA when places have been offered. This results in unnecessary referral to FAP.

- 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:

Whilst generally FAP serves children well and places or provision is always secured. In some cases, children referred under the Fair Access Protocol are not always placed quickly enough if decisions about an appropriate placement are delayed until a future meeting. This sometimes results in children being out of school for longer than necessary. This can be the case where parents have lodged appeals for schools and panels will not reach a decision until an outcome of the appeal hearing is known. In addition, there has been a recent increase in delays to actual admission to the school after a panel decision has allocated a place via the Fair Access Protocol (sometimes in excess of 20 days after an allocation is agreed).

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E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children³

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:

Pressure on KS2 year groups has seen a greater increase in referrals at primary phase to FAP.

Local authority secures additional places as part of normal admissions round, but these places are generally “unavailable” at the end of coordination, thereby impacting on the availability of places in-year for year 7.

In-year coordination works well for schools that participate in NCC’s scheme. For those families applying to schools that manage their own in-year admissions, there are often delays in outcomes being received, lack of notification to the LA or parents discouraged to apply as the school is “full”. In addition, where schools in an area appear to have places available, there is no support in offering an alternative offer where a child is without a school place resulting in increased referrals to FAP.

OAA schools managing their own in-year admissions in some cases refuse to process any application received by the LA (breach of 2.25).

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):

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?

Admission outside the normal age requests – schools continue to be unclear about the Code in relation to these requests and often apply a blanket policy without considering the individual request in the best interests of the child. It is increasingly difficult to obtain a decision when schools state they do not have enough information from the parents to consider whether admission to reception or year 1 would be appropriate. Similarly where a child has delayed admission to reception and then requests for this to continue in secondary phase, schools are “refusing” to accept an application but are not clear about why it is in the child’s best interests to miss a year of education. This creates confusion and anxiety for parents and children at key transition points.

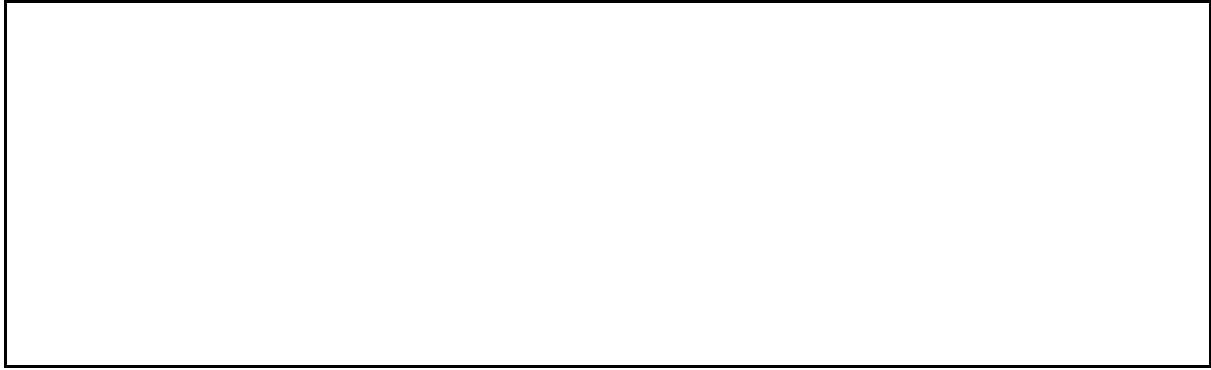
In-year admission process (not coordinating)

The LA remains concerned that whilst admission authorities are managing their own in-year processes there is a risk that children move into the local authority area and the LA is not aware. This exacerbates the situation of children missing education and is a safeguarding concern. The LA considers that it would be more beneficial for applications in-year to be coordinated by the LA to better support the tracking of children and help the LA in its sufficiency duty relating to school places.

Consultation and determination – admission authorities are not always clear about their statutory obligation in respect of consultation and determination of the arrangements, particularly around the requirement to consult after 7 years. NCC regularly reminds admission authorities of their duties but increasingly there are delays in the LA receiving determined admission arrangements by the statutory date. This can create a delay in the LA being able to consider whether the arrangements comply with the Code and raise a referral to the OSA. This also impacts on the provision of information for the composite prospectus.

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