



**Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator**

**LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT  
TO  
THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR  
FROM  
Wirral Local Authority**

**30 JUNE 2016**

**Report Cleared by (Name): Julia Hassall**

**(Title): Director of Childrens Services**

**Date submitted: 30/06/2016**

**By (Name): Sally Gibbs**

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**Please email your completed report to: [osa.team@osa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:osa.team@osa.gsi.gov.uk)**

## **Introduction**

1. Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to make an annual report to the adjudicator.
2. The School Admissions Code (the Code) at paragraph 6 sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities. Paragraph 3.23 specifies what must be included as a minimum in the report to the adjudicator and makes provision for the local authority to include any other local issues.
3. There are other matters concerning admissions, some suggested by local authorities themselves, about which it would be useful to have a view. Rather than undertake a separate exercise in which information is sought from local authorities, you are asked to include any relevant information in your report to the adjudicator.

## **Completing the Template**

**This template is designed to be completed electronically - boxes will expand as necessary. Please note that we will contact you if any data boxes have not been completed. However if there are any blank comment boxes we will presume that you have no comments to make.**

**Throughout this report, please include middle deemed primary schools as for pupils up to age 11 and middle deemed secondary schools as for pupils over 11. For schools that have children of primary and secondary age and are not designated as a middle school please record them as all-through schools.**

**Where a type of school is given, foundation covers foundation schools and foundation schools with a foundation (trust schools). Academy schools should be recorded by the individual type of academy school, namely, academy, free school, UTC or studio school.**

### **1. Local Authority school numbers**

Please give the total number of schools by type within your local authority as at 30 June 2016.

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11</b>	<b>Number of Schools for pupils over age 11</b>	<b>Number of all-through schools</b>
<b>Community</b>	60	2	0
<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>	3	0	0
<b>Voluntary Aided</b>	26	1	0
<b>Foundation</b>	0	3	0
<b>Academy</b>	2	14	1
<b>Free School</b>	0	0	0
<b>UTC</b>	N/A	0	0
<b>Studio School</b>	N/A	0	0

## 2. Admission Arrangements for Admissions in September 2016

The Code at paragraph 3.23 requires that each local authority provides “*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*”.

Please include details of:

1. Any ways in which each of the following groups of children have been especially well served; and
2. Any difficulties that have arisen for each group of children while allocating places for admission in September 2016.

(a) How well are the interests of **looked after children** served?

Tick as appropriate: Fully  In part  Not satisfactorily

Comments: Looked After Children were given priority for admissions in accordance with the School Admissions Code. For some faith schools looked after children of the appropriate faith are placed higher than looked after children not of the faith as permitted in section 1.37 of the Admissions Code.

(b) How well are the interests of **previously looked after children** served?

Tick as appropriate: Fully  In part  Not satisfactorily

Comments: Previously Looked After Children were given priority for admissions in accordance with the School Admissions Code. For some faith schools previously looked after children of the appropriate faith are placed higher than previously looked after children not of the faith as permitted in section 1.37 of the Admissions Code.

(c) How well are the interests of **children with disabilities** served?

Tick as appropriate: Fully  In part  Not satisfactorily

Comments: The oversubscription criterion for children with medical needs remained part of the policy for community and controlled schools, where necessary if supported by a professional recommendation. Own admission authority schools vary in their inclusion or not of a medical criterion.

(d) How well served are **children who have special educational needs**

**and who have a statement of special needs** that names a school (or an education health and care plan)?

Tick as appropriate: Fully  In part  Not satisfactorily

Comments: The Council gives priority to children with special educational needs in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice and the School Admissions Code. Such children are considered over and above the oversubscription criteria.

(e) How well served are those **children who have special needs, but do not have a statement?**

Tick as appropriate: Fully  In part  Not satisfactorily

Comments: No priority is given to children in this category.

### **3. Co-ordination of admissions**

#### **A) During the normal admissions round**

Please assess the effectiveness of co-ordination of primary and secondary admissions for September 2016 in your local authority, highlighting any particular strengths in the process or any problems that have arisen.

##### **Primary**

(a) How well has the operation of national offer day worked for primary admissions this year compared with previous years?

Tick as appropriate: Better  The same  Less well

Comments:

##### **Secondary**

(b) How well has the operation of national offer day worked for secondary admissions this year compared with previous years?

Tick as appropriate: Better  The same  Less well

Comments:

(c) If you have any UTCs or studio schools in your area, do you co-ordinate admissions for entry at the relevant year group for entry to these schools?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No  N/A

If **YES**, please comment on how well the admissions process is working for these schools:

If **NO**, do you have any evidence about how well the admission process is working for individual UTCs or studio schools?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

If **YES**, please comment:

**B) In-year admissions**

The Code sets out that in-year admissions do not have to be co-ordinated by the local authority.

- (a) How many **pupils** have needed a school place because they do not have one or because parents have applied for a place as an in-year admission for any other reason between 1 September 2015 and 15 June 2016?

Number of pupils up to age 11	Number of pupils over age 11	Number of post-16 students
977	522	n/a

- (b) Does your local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions for all, some or none of the schools in your area?

Tick as appropriate: All  Some  None

If 'Some', please complete the table below as appropriate

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Community			
Voluntary Controlled			
Voluntary Aided			
Foundation			
Academy			
Free School			
UTC	N/A		
Studio School	N/A		

- (c) Do you have any information about how many schools parents might approach before obtaining a place? Please comment on any issues that have come to your attention.

Comments: n/a

- (d) How confident are you that the requirements of the Code at paragraph 2.22, for schools to keep the local authority informed in a timely manner about applications and the outcomes, are being met? (If you co-ordinate all admissions for all schools then please tick not applicable.)

Tick as appropriate:

Very confident  Confident  Not confident  Not applicable

- (e) Across your local authority, how well have in-year admissions worked this year?

Tick as appropriate: Better than last year  The same as last year   
Less well than last year

- (f) Please comment on the effectiveness overall of in-year admission arrangements across all types of schools in your local authority.

Comments: The arrangements have generally worked well, however in some instances own admission authority schools have expressed concerns about admitting pupils with various perceived difficulties or who are "looked after". This has resulted in additional officer time taken negotiating entry to school for these pupils and also introduces unnecessary delay for parents. The Fair Access and Negotiated Transfer protocol is assisting with placing these pupils more speedily, however challenges remain and are being addressed as they arise.

As English authorities are no longer compelled to co-ordinate in-year admissions, some LAs are no longer co-ordinating between Authorities, which is causing confusion for some parents moving between areas who no longer know to which authority they should apply.

All schools in Wirral are part of the co-ordinated scheme. There have been a small number of instances where even with full internal co-ordination schools have offered places directly to children without informing the Authority, or only informing the Authority after the child has started at the school. This is not appropriate and schools are made aware of their responsibilities on a regular basis.

#### 4. Fair Access Protocol

The Code at paragraph 3.9 requires each local authority to have agreed a Fair Access Protocol with the majority of schools in its area. Paragraph 3.11 of the Code requires that all admission authorities must participate in the Fair Access Protocol.

(a) Please confirm that your local authority has a Fair Access Protocol that has been agreed with the majority of schools in your area.

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

If **NO**, please explain:

(b) Although a majority of schools, and perhaps all, will have agreed the Fair Access Protocol, some may not have done so. Please state how many schools have not agreed your Fair Access Protocol.

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
<b>Community</b>	60	2	0
<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>	3	0	0
<b>Voluntary Aided</b>	26	1	0
<b>Foundation</b>	0	3	0
<b>Academy</b>	2	14	1
<b>Free School</b>	0	0	0
<b>UTC</b>	N/A	0	0
<b>Studio School</b>	N/A	0	0

(c) Where schools did not agree the Fair Access Protocol, please say why they did not agree.

Comments: All schools have agreed the Fair Access Protocol.

The principal of one community school has advised that the school will no longer participate in the local Wirral Negotiated Transfer element of the Fair Access Protocol but will comply with all other elements.

(d) (i) Please give your assessment of how well your Fair Access Protocol has worked in the academic year 2015/16 in placing children without a school place in schools in a timely manner.

Tick as appropriate: Very well  Mostly well  Some difficulties

(ii) What is your general assessment of the working of the protocol compared with last year?

Tick as appropriate: More effective  As effective  Less effective

(iii) How frequently has the protocol been used to place a child compared with last year?

Tick as appropriate: More frequently  Same frequency  Less frequently

(e) Have you any examples of particularly effective collaboration and working with individual schools, for example, placing children in year 6 of a primary school or years 10 and 11 of a secondary school?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

Comments:

(f) Have you had specific problems in allocating a place through the protocol, for example, where a school has been reluctant to accept a child?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

Comments: Some schools have refused admission to in-year children who are looked after or previously looked after, however these instances have been referred to the Education Funding Agency and have been resolved without need for direction.  
Schools are generally reluctant to admit children into Years 10 and 11, even when the child has moved from outside the area and has no local school place, however these have been resolved through Fair Access without the need for direction.

(g) How many children have been admitted under the protocol to each type of school in your area? How many children have been refused admission to a school?

Type of School	Number of children admitted			Number of children refused admission		
	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11	All-through schools	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11	All-through schools
<b>Community</b>	0	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>	0	n/a	0	0	0	0
<b>Voluntary Aided</b>	0	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Foundation</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Academy</b>	0	7	0	0	0	0
<b>Free School</b>	0	n/a	0	0	0	0
<b>UTC</b>	N/A	n/a	0	N/A	0	0
<b>Studio School</b>	N/A	n/a	0	N/A	0	0

(h) If children have not been placed successfully in a school through the protocol, have you used the direction process to provide a place for a child?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No  N/A

- (i) If **YES**, how many children have been placed and in which type of school as a result of a direction, including a direction via the EFA on behalf of the Secretary of State or after a referral to the Adjudicator?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Community			
Voluntary Controlled			
Voluntary Aided			
Foundation			
Academy			
Free School			
UTC	N/A		
Studio School	N/A		

- (j) Please add any other relevant information you wish to include in sections g - i concerning Fair Access Protocols.

Comments:

## 5. Admission Appeals

The Code requires data to be collected about appeals. In order to meet this requirement the DfE will use the latest published Statistical First Release: admission appeals for maintained and academy primary and secondary schools in England.

Taking into account comments reported in 2014, and data gathered for the first time in 2015, in response to the invitation to *“add any comments about the appeals process in your area”*, it would be helpful to gather views once again across all local authorities on the extent to which schools that are their own admission authority continue to use local authority services for admission appeals.

- (a) Do any own admission authority schools use any of your services as part of the appeals process?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

- (b) If yes, please indicate the number of schools that use at least some of your services

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Voluntary Aided	26	1	0
Foundation	0	3	0

<b>Academy</b>	2	14	1
<b>Free School</b>	0	0	0
<b>UTC</b>	N/A	0	0
<b>Studio School</b>	N/A	0	0

(c) Please indicate the services that are used :

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Schools for pupils up to age 11(Y/N)</b>	<b>Schools for pupils over age 11 (Y/N)</b>	<b>All- through schools (Y/N)</b>
<b>Full appeals process</b>	28	14	0
<b>Legal advice</b>	28	14	0
<b>Assistance in the preparation and presentation of case documentation</b>	28	18	1

(d) Please add any other service related to appeals obtained from your local authority

Comment: In relation to the last item in the above table, preparation of documentation should be separated from presentation. In Wirral, all own admission authority schools require information from the Authority in order to complete their appeal statements (distances, scores etc.) but ALL present their own appeals.  
Four secondary schools and one all-through school will require information to be provided as above, but do not use any other appeal services or legal advice and organise and clerk their own panels.

(e) Please add comments about any aspects of the appeals process in your area that work well or that cause difficulties, as appropriate.

Comment: Complaints are sometimes raised with the Authority about appeals not organised through the Authority by Academy schools. These complainants are advised to follow the statutory complaint channels, and the individuals schools are asked to comment on these concerns.

## **6. Other Issues**

### **A. Objections to admission arrangements**

Paragraph 3.2 in the Code says “*local authorities **must** refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator if they are of the view or suspect that the admission arrangements that have been determined by other admission authorities are unlawful*”.

(a) How many sets of admission arrangements of schools were queried directly by your local authority with schools that are their own admission

authority because they were considered not to comply with the Code?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Voluntary Aided	0	0	0
Foundation	0	0	0
Academy	0	0	0
Free School	0	0	0
UTC	N/A	0	0
Studio School	N/A	0	0

(b) How confident are you that own admission authority admission arrangements are now fully compliant with the Code?

Tick as appropriate: Very confident  Confident  Not confident

(c) How many schools did not send you a copy of their full admission arrangements, including any supplementary information form (or any such form by another name, for example, religious inquiry form) if one is used, by 15 March, as required by paragraph 1.47 of the Code?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Voluntary Aided	3	0	0
Foundation	0	1	0
Academy	0	1	0
Free School	0	0	0
UTC	N/A	0	0
Studio School	N/A	0	0

## B. Fraudulent applications

(a) Is there any concern in your local authority about fraudulent applications?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

(b) Did your local authority make any offers on national offer days that were subsequently withdrawn as a result of a fraudulent application?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

(c) If **YES**, how many for each type of school?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to	Number of Schools for pupils over	Number of all-through schools
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	age 11	age 11	
<b>Community</b>			
<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>			
<b>Voluntary Aided</b>			
<b>Foundation</b>			
<b>Academy</b>			
<b>Free School</b>			
<b>UTC</b>	N/A		
<b>Studio School</b>	N/A		

(d) What action is your LA taking to prevent fraudulent applications?

Comment: All applicants addresses are checked against the Council held records and proof of residence sought where there is a discrepancy, or if a change of address occurs prior to the allocation of places, or in relation to a place on the waiting list. Looked after/previously looked after status is confirmed with the relevant Social Care team, Statements of SEN or Education Health and Care Plans are confirmed against Council records. Sibling status is checked against Council held records and confirmed with the individual schools.

Schools with a faith status are responsible for checking that children meet their faith-based criteria.

### C. Summer-born children, deferred entry and part-time attendance

The DfE issued revised guidance in December 2014 “Advice on the admission on summer-born children” for local authorities, school admission authorities and parents ([Link to Guidance](#)). The Code at paragraph 2.16 deals with deferred entry and/or part-time attendance for children in the year they reach compulsory school age. Paragraph 2.17, 2.17A and 2.17B refer to the admission of children outside their normal age group.

(a) Do you keep data for any schools on the number of requests from parents who ask that their child is admitted to a class outside their normal age group?

Tick as appropriate: Yes  No

(i) For community and voluntary controlled schools: Yes  No

(ii) For own admission authority schools: Yes  No

If **YES** in answer to (a) above, please complete the tables:

Type of School	In 2015, how many requests for deferred admission to year R in 2016 were agreed for a child who will have reached the normal age
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	for Year 1?
<b>Community &amp; Voluntary Controlled</b>	6
<b>Own Admission Authority</b>	note not possible to split by comm/own admission authority as data not kept

Type of School	How many requests to defer admission to year R in 2016 were received?	How many of those requests were subsequently agreed?
<b>Community &amp; Voluntary Controlled</b>	19	17 (incl 1 agreed but subsequently w/d by parent)
<b>Own Admission Authority</b>	note not possible to split by comm/or own admission authority as data not kept	note not possible to split by comm/own admission authority as data not kept

(b) What reasons, if known, were given for seeking to defer the admission to year R of children for a full school year?

Comments: Examples: Seizures; extremely premature birth; developmental delay and incontinence; congenital myotonic dystrophy; diagnosed autistic spectrum disorder; idiopathic hypertension

Examples of reasons given that were not by themselves sufficient for approval or were not approved; staying with younger friends from pre-school; not getting their preferred school; childcare arrangements; shyness; stature; poor language skills

(c) Do you have any other comments on the matter of admission of summer-born children, including requests to delay admissions made after the allocation of places in the normal admissions round?

Comments: This seems to be a growing area.

(d) Do you have any comments about paragraph 2.16c) in the Code concerning the offer and/or take-up of part-time attendance by children below compulsory school age?

Comments: No

#### **D. Pupil, service and early years premium**

The 2014 Code permits all schools to give priority for admission in 2016 to

children eligible for the pupil, service or early years premium (paragraphs 1.39A and 1.39B). If admission authorities wish to introduce such a priority they must have consulted as required by the Code in paragraphs 1.42-1.45.

(a) Pupil and service premium

In respect of community and voluntary controlled schools:

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Has the LA considered giving priority to pupil/service premium? (Y/N)</b>	<b>If YES, have you consulted on this? (Y/N)</b>	<b>In response to consultation has the priority been implemented? (Y/N)</b>
<b>Community Primary</b>	N		
<b>Voluntary Controlled Primary</b>	N		
<b>Community Secondary</b>	N		
<b>Voluntary Controlled Secondary</b>	N		

Comments:

In respect of own admission authority schools:

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Has the LA been consulted by any own admission authority of the type shown below on giving priority to pupil/service premium? (Y/N)</b>	<b>If YES in response to consultation, for how many schools has the priority been implemented? (Please give the number)</b>
<b>Voluntary Aided Primary</b>	N	
<b>Foundation Primary</b>	N	
<b>Academy Primary</b>	N	
<b>Free School Primary</b>	-	
<b>Voluntary Aided Secondary</b>	N	
<b>Foundation Secondary</b>	N	
<b>Academy Secondary</b>	N	
<b>Free School Secondary</b>	-	
<b>UTC</b>	-	
<b>Studio School</b>	-	

Comments:

(b) Early years pupil premium - nursery priority

In respect of community and voluntary controlled schools:

Type of School	Has the LA considered giving priority to early years pupil premium? (Y/N)	If YES, have you consulted on this? (Y/N)	In response to consultation has the priority been implemented? (Y/N)
Community Primary	N		
Voluntary Controlled Primary	N		

Comments:

In respect of own admission authority schools:

Type of School	Has the LA been consulted by any own admission authority of the type shown below on giving priority to early years pupil premium? (Y/N)	If YES in response to consultation, for how many schools has the priority been implemented? (Please give the number)
Voluntary Aided Primary	N	
Foundation Primary	N	
Academy Primary	N	
Free School Primary	-	

Comments:

**E. Local Authority Issues**

Please provide details of any other issues that you would like to raise and/or comment on that have not been already covered in this report.

Comments:

**Thank you for completing this report**

Please email your completed report to: [osa.team@osa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:osa.team@osa.gsi.gov.uk)

