



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report
to
The Schools Adjudicator
from

North East Lincolnshire Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2024

Report Cleared by: Name Jennifer Steel

Job Title Service Director Education and Inclusion

Telephone number 01472 326745

Email: jennifer.steel@nelincs.gov.uk

Date submitted: 30 October 2024

By: Name Richard Davidson-Guiraud

Job Title School Admissions and CME Manager

Telephone number 01472 325306

Email: Richard.davidson-guiraud@nelincs.gov.uk

Website: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#)

Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by **31 October 2024 and earlier if possible**

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Introduction

1. Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the Act) requires every local authority to make an annual report to the adjudicator. The Chief Adjudicator then includes a summary of these reports in the annual report to the Secretary of State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. Paragraph 3.30 specifies what must be included as a minimum in the report to the adjudicator and makes provision for the local authority to include any other matters. Paragraphs 6 and 3.30 of the Code require that each local authority publish its report locally.
2. **This year's report must cover the 2023/2024 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2024.**
3. Please note that, in response to feedback on the previous template and in the light of consultation with a group of local authorities, changes have been made to various sections of this year's template.

Guidance on completing the template

4. We have included all the guidance on completing specific parts of the template in this section. There is no requirement for local authorities to include the introduction and the guidance in their published reports, but they are free to do so if they wish.
5. We should be grateful if in completing questions which ask for information about primary and secondary schools and/or pupils, local authorities would follow the approach to classification of schools used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release¹ and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002².
6. The Code sets out some minimum requirements on the contents of each local authority report stating that each must cover as a minimum "information about how admission arrangements in the area of the local authority serve the interests of looked after children and previously looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including any details of where problems have arisen."
7. The Department for Education's aim through the annual reports from local authorities is to understand how well the admissions system is working nationally, rather than to hold individual local authorities to account. By understanding the effectiveness of the system, including outcomes, the Department hopes to identify areas where the admissions system is working well and areas where it could be improved. With that in mind, when the template asks, "how well does the admission system serve the needs of

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 23/24 compared to 22/23?**

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:

For secondary admissions the LA were able to allocate 91% of on-time applicants to their first preference school however, a significant number of subsequent late or changes to preferences could not be allocated at catchment/preferred schools due to initial preference demand and a specific school which had reduced PAN from previous year and was subject to many late, catchment, requests which could not be fulfilled. This has led to issues with admission into school where parents have not engaged with arbitrary place offers and/or elected to home educate instead.

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**:

We experienced no issues in North East Lincolnshire with the coordination of admissions and allocation of places at primary and secondary schools at normal points of admission. All preferences are verified with corporate PR holder for looked after children or by reference to case files for previously looked after children to ensure appropriate priority is given in allocations.

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:

As the number of children with EHCPs continues to rise, the LA experiences challenges in mainstream schools accepting a consultation for a child with an EHCP. The team regularly experience objection (not always with reference to the legislation) and resistance, frequently having to undertake multiple consultations for the same student without a positive response and have to invest time in challenging and meeting the schools/colleges in order to progress admission.

Once named schools are confirmed, the allocation of places at normal points of entry is carried out by the LA School Admissions team as part of the coordinated phased process with the requisite top priority given as per each admission authority's published criteria.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Which of the following best describes the overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions in 23/24 compared to 22/23?

Phase	Much less challenging	Less challenging	No change	More challenging	Much more challenging
Primary				X	
Secondary				X	

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

There was a 15% increase in primary in-year admission requests administered through the LA from previous academic year. A significant proportion of these were new-to-area families and arranging admission into preference or catchment area schools is an increasing challenge.

Although secondary in-year admissions were largely administered by own-authority academies, there is a matching increase in new-to-area applicants with a high initial level of preference refusal, ultimately leading to increases in invocation of the Fair Access Protocol.

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 LA School Admissions Team works collaboratively with the Virtual School for Children In Care and sits within the same service area. This enables collaborative working to ensure that allocation and admission of this cohort are monitored and processed appropriately.

We are still seeing examples of own Admission Authority secondary academies refusing application preferences for Children in Care at first consideration, which has led to informal challenge to impress expectations of admissions in line with the School Admissions Code.

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:

As the number of children with EHCPs continues to rise, the LA experiences challenges in mainstream schools accepting a consultation for a child with an EHCP. The team regularly experience objection (not always with reference to the legislation) and resistance, frequently having to undertake multiple consultations for the same student without a positive response and have to invest time in challenging and meeting the schools/colleges in order to progress admission.

Admission for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities who do not have an EHCP are processed in the same manner as all other children, for in-year admissions. Allocation criteria is referred to and applied in processing of preferences for schools which have Service Level Agreements with the LA for administration of allocations. The LA School Admissions team ensures that placements are fairly allocated however, discussion and clarification has sometimes been required to impress upon own-admission authority academies the correct consideration of requests under the Code, in order to overcome reluctance or delay in confirmation of offers.

D. Fair access protocol

What proportion of the state-funded mainstream schools in your area have said that they agree to the local authority fair access protocol?

Primary

Between 0% and 49%

Between 50% and 74%

Between 75% and 89%

Between 90% and 99%

100%

Secondary

Between 0% and 49%

Between 50% and 74%

Between 75% and 89%

Between 90% and 99%

100%

If you have below 75% for either phase, please explain why:

- i. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	0	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	63
Total	0	63

- ii. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

There has been a significant increase (2.25x) in the number of cases presented to FAP from previous academic year. Key reasons appear to be the increasing number of new-to-area families and children arriving (both from overseas and other parts of the UK) and a rotation of EHE pupils seeking to return to formal education, coupled with a propensity for secondary academies to refuse in-year preferences, even where below PAN, and an increasing number of permanently excluded pupils for which parents are unwilling to engage with Day6 provision options and instead return to mainstream application process.

- 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:

Although overall, allocation offers are generally secured for cases brought to FAP, there is a significant proportion that subsequently fail to engage with the offered placement, leading to continuation at EHE or further education welfare involvement and consideration of enforcement action. A large aspect of secondary academy discourse appears to be focused upon concerns with existing cohorts and financial/school data implications of offering to FAP cases (particularly in respect of Y11 requests) rather than the specific best interests of each respective pupil presented.

E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children³

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2023 and 31 July 2024 to maintained schools for which the local authority is not the admission authority to admit children (including children looked after by the local authority but resident in another area)?

Total number of children	Of which, looked after	Of which, not looked after
0	0	0

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

F. Other points on in-year admissions

- i. For the schools for which the local authority co-ordinates in-year applications, in the year between 1 Aug 2023 and 31 July 2024 did you receive

- Significantly fewer applications than last year
 slightly fewer applications than last year
 about the same
 slightly more than last year
 significantly more than last year

- ii. For what proportion of **primary** schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2023/2024 academic year

- Between 0% and 24%
Between 25% and 49%
Between 50% and 74%
Between 75% and 100%

- iii. For what proportion of **secondary** schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2023/2024 academic year

- Between 0% and 24%
Between 25% and 49%
Between 50% and 74%
Between 75% and 100%

- iv. If you wish, please provide any comments about how **well in-year admissions** works for children who are **not** looked after or previously looked after and/or do **not** have SEND:

Primary in-year admissions are, for the vast majority of schools, administered by the LA School Admissions team through Service Level Agreement with academies. This allows oversight to ensure that admission policies are fairly and properly applied to allocation decisions. With single exception, all secondary academies in the LA area manage their own in-year preference processing which continues to present some issues in the timely response to applicant requests (i.e. within 15 school days maximum, as per School Admissions Code) and notable instances where refusals have been challenged and upheld at first stage in independent admission appeals – this due to prejudice failing to be substantiated and where refusals made on grounds of challenging behaviour have not been supported in line with the requirements of the Code. Secondary allocation and admission post-

coordinated phased transfer continues to be a difficulty across the area, with under-PAN refusals inevitably leading to increasing FAP referrals.

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?

Section 4 - Feedback

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

Thank you for completing this template.

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