



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report
To
The Schools Adjudicator
From
Warrington Local Authority

2018

Report Cleared by (Name & Title): Hilary Smith, Head of Education, Families and Wellbeing

Date submitted: 15 June 2018

By (Name & Title): Tina Waters, Admissions, Transport and School Organisation Officer

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Please email your completed report to: osa.team@osa.gsi.gov.uk by **30 June 2018 and earlier if possible**

Introduction

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 for State for Education. The School Admissions Code (the Code) sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities in paragraph 6. 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 issues. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2018**.

The report to the Secretary of State for 2017 highlighted that at the normal points of admission the main admissions rounds for entry to schools work well. The Chief Adjudicator expressed less confidence that the needs of children who need a place outside the normal admissions rounds were so well met. In order to test this concern, local authorities are therefore asked to differentiate their answers in this year's report between the main admissions round and in year admissions¹. The order of this template for the annual report by local authorities reflects this.

Information requested

1. Normal point of admission

A. Determined arrangements

- i. Please specify the date your local authority determined its arrangements for admissions in 2019 for its voluntary controlled and community schools. Please state if this question is not applicable as there are no voluntary controlled or community schools in the local authority area.

15/02/2018

- ii. Please specify the date the determined arrangements for voluntary controlled and community schools were published on the local authority's website. Say if not applicable.

28/02/2018

¹ By in year we mean admission at the start of any school year 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 admission during the course of any school year.

iii. What proportion of arrangements for own admission schools was provided to the local authority by 15 March?

Not applicable None Minority Majority All

	Primary including middle deemed primary	Secondary including middle deemed secondary	All through
iv. How many sets of admission arrangements of schools that are their own admission authority were queried directly by your local authority because they were considered not to comply with the Code?	0	0	n/a
v. If, when you considered arrangements for own admission authority schools for 2019, you had any concerns about Code compliance, please indicate which paragraphs of the Code you thought were mainly being breached. n/a			
vi. Further comment: please provide any comments on the determination of admission arrangements not covered above. n/a			

B. Co-ordination

i. Provision of rankings: what proportion of own admission authority schools provided their rankings correctly undertaken by the agreed date?

Not applicable None Minority Majority All

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
ii. Reception				x
iii. Year 7				x
iv. Other relevant years of entry			x	
v. Please give examples to illustrate your answer: In relation to normal admission rounds there has been good communication				

between all own admission authorities and the local authority with all information being exchanged within the agreed timescales. In particular, there continues to be excellent communication in dealing with applicants at risk of not meeting the closure dates.

Due to issues encountered in previous years, UTC-Warrington requested that the local authority co-ordinates admissions for year 10 beginning with those enrolling at the school from September 2018.

In addition schools have worked with the local authority and representatives from the UTC to establish a transition schedule for all new starters. The schedule will be reviewed in the autumn term in order to measure its effectiveness and make changes where/if necessary.

C. Looked after and previously looked after children

- i. How well do admission arrangements 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 admission arrangements in other local authority areas serve the interests of your looked after children at normal points of admission?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- iii. How well do admission arrangements 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

- iv. Please give examples of good or poor practice or difficulties which support your answer, and provide any suggestions for improvement:

All schools in Warrington rank looked after children and previously looked after children in their oversubscription criteria as the highest priority. A number of faith schools rank looked and previously after children of the appropriate faith higher in criteria than those who are not of the faith, as permitted in the school admissions code.

Difficulties arise when trying to identify looked after children where the parent/carer has chosen not to declare this status for their child. However, it is noted that this is their decision to make and there is no legal duty for a parent/carer to declare this status.

D. Special educational needs and disabilities

i. How well served are children with disabilities and/or special educational needs who have an education health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs that names a school at normal points of admission?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

ii. How well served are children with disabilities and/or special educational needs who do not have an education health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs at normal points of admission?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

iii. Please give examples of good or poor practice or difficulties which support your answer, and provide any suggestions for improvement.

During normal rounds all own admission authorities indicate in their arrangements that places will be allocated to all pupils with the school named in their Statement/Education Health and Care Plan over and above the schools oversubscription criteria.

All own admission authorities have a 'medical' oversubscription criteria which allows for special consideration to be given to children for medical needs. A child would only be ranked in the medical criterion if the preferred school is the only suitable school to meet the particulare needs of the child.

2. In year admissions

A. The number of in year admissions. We are asking for two years' data for comparative purposes. If you do not have the data for the year 1/9/16 to 31/8/17 available, please still provide the data for 1/9/17 to 31/3/18.

i.	Primary aged children	Secondary aged children
Number of in year admissions between 1/9/17 and 31/3/18	521	227
Number of in year admissions between	825	378

1/9/16 and 31/8/17		
The reasons for children seeking in year admission will vary across the country. What do you consider to be the main reasons in your area?	Moving into the authority from other local authority	Moving into the authority from other local authority

ii. The Code requires the setting of a published admission number (PAN) for each normal year of entry. In the annual reports for 2017 several local authorities referred to problems in relation to in year admissions when schools which are their own admission authority refuse to admit applicants even if the year group concerned contains fewer children than the relevant PAN suggested could be accommodated. This was referred to sometimes as 'capping' in-year admissions and local authorities observed that it reduced the number of places available below that anticipated by the local authority. Please comment on your experience as a local authority.

The local authority is only able to comment on the position regarding schools that have opted to centralise in year co-ordination by the local authority. According to our records there have been no difficulties with own admission authority schools capping in year admissions.

B. Co-ordination of in year admissions

i. To what proportion of community and voluntary controlled schools does the local authority delegate responsibility for in year admissions?

a) Primary: Not applicable None Minority Majority All

b) Secondary: Not applicable None Minority Majority All

c) All-through: Not applicable None Minority Majority All

d) What do you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of delegating responsibility for in year admissions (where applicable)?

The local authority does not consider there to be any advantages of delegating responsibility for in year admissions.

There is only one school in Warrington which chooses to opt out of centralised in year admission co-ordination despite invitations to join the scheme from the local authority. The Kings Leadership Academy (Kings Free School) consistently chooses not to participate at the monthly meeting of Warrington Headteachers despite numerous invitations to attend.

Opting out of the co-ordination scheme presents a range of issues for parents, the local authority and other schools in the area.

It is difficult to establish actual numbers on roll in each year group on a regular basis which makes it difficult to advise parents appropriately. In addition there are concerns about the number of appeals lodged for the school in comparison with other schools in the area. This makes it difficult to determine if parents are being offered the statutory right of appeal if refused a place there.

ii. For what proportion of own admission authority schools does the local authority co-ordinate in year admissions?

a) Primary: Not applicable None Minority Majority All

b) Secondary: Not applicable None Minority Majority All

c) All-through: Not applicable None minority Majority All

d) What do you consider are the advantages and disadvantages of the local authority co-ordinating in year admissions (where applicable)?

The advantages of in-year coordination include a fair, transparent and simple process for parents to access guidance and enquire about the possibility of a school transfer for their child.

Central coordination also allows the local authority to monitor in-year transfer requests at each school. Analysis of these requests may show a sudden increase in requests from parents with children at a particular school. The local authority is then able to investigate if there are any issues arising at a school which is causing parents to try and move their child to a different school.

The local authority meets with primary schools on a termly basis and with secondary schools each month in order to provide admission related updates. These updates include statistical information on in-year admissions and "excepted" pupils in order that schools can see how in-year admissions have an impact on all schools across the Borough and where there is pressure for places. Feedback from schools regarding these updates is very positive as it gives them a greater understanding of the increased demand for school places, particularly in the primary sector and how we can plan for further demand in future.

C. Looked after children and previously looked after children

i. How well do in year admission arrangements in your local authority area serve the interests of looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

ii. How well do the in year admission arrangements 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 do in year admission arrangements in your local authority area serve the interests of previously looked after children?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

vii. Please give examples of good or poor practice or difficulties which support your answer, and provide any suggestions for improvement:

The admissions code permits the admission of a child in care/previously in care outside the normal admissions round even if the year group in question is full or oversubscribed.

All schools including own admission authorities consistently agree to admit a children in care/previously in care where necessary.

D. Children with disabilities and children with special educational needs

- i. How well served are children with disabilities and/or special educational needs who have an education health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs that names a school when they need to be admitted in year?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- ii. How well served are children with disabilities and/or special educational needs who do not have an education health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs when they need to be admitted in year?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- iii. Please give examples of good or poor practice or difficulties which support your answer, and provide any suggestions for improvement:

In relation to Point i) the admissions team has not encountered any difficulties in relation to the in year admissions process for pupil with disabilities and/or special educational needs who have an education health and care plan.

The local authority's, EHCP Assessment Team also report that they have not encountered any difficulties in relation to the in year admissions process for pupils with an education health and care plan.

In relation to Point ii), there has been no difficulties in connection with the in year admissions process. Pupils with special educational needs who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan tend to be offered a place at a school in accordance with the fair access protocol which works well locally.

E. Other children

- i. How well served are other children when they need to be admitted in year?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

- ii. Paragraph 3.12 of the Code - several local authorities referred to paragraph 3.12 in their annual report for 2017 stating that this was being used “*inappropriately*” by some admission authorities.

Please could you comment on your experience as a local authority:

Due to issues encountered previously the local authority and schools work together to establish a fair access protocol that works in conjunction with the co-ordinated in year admissions scheme. The process involves the assessment of all in year applications received against the locally agreed fair access criteria upon submission.

Any application found not to meet the fair access criteria must be admitted by the school, where places are available. The local authority does not have any concerns about the process as it appears to be working well for the child, parents and schools.

3. Fair Access Protocol

- A. Has your Fair Access Protocol been agreed with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

- Yes for primary
 Yes for secondary

- B. If you have not been able to tick both boxes above, please explain why:

n/a

- C. How many children have been admitted or refused admission under the Fair Access Protocol to schools in your area between 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018?

Type of School	Number of children admitted		Number of children refused admission	
	Primary aged child	Secondary aged child	Primary aged children	Secondary aged children
Community and voluntary controlled	101	3	0	0
Own admission authority schools	99	92	0	0
Total	200	95	0	0

D. If a number of children have not secured school places following the use of the protocol, please indicate what provision is made for these children.

All unplaced children residing in Warrington, are offered a place at a Warrington school. If the offer is not one of the preferred schools the parent/carer is offered the right of appeal against the decision not to offer a place at their preferred school(s).

E. How well do you consider hard to place children are served by the Fair Access Protocol in your area?

Not at all Not well Well Very well Not applicable

F. Please explain your answer giving examples of good and poor practice, successes and difficulties as appropriate.

Schools have co-operated very well in the operation of the protocol.

The local authority conducts an annual review on the impact of the fair access protocol and demonstrates the fairness and transparency when identifying which school should take the next placement .

The protocol serves a range of objectives, not only those children that are unplaced. When the new approach was first implemented in 2015 one of the additional objectives was to minimise the number of in year school moves for reactive reasons. For example where a parent is being challenged about their child's school attendance it appears that some parents, often the most vulnerable families, decide to avoid the issue by requesting an in year transfer to another local school. In circumstances such as these the protocol permits the preferred school to refuse the request even if a place is available in the required year group and the right of appeal is offered. The child's current school is then given the opportunity to further address any other reasons such as bullying issues which the school may not have been made aware of which may be impacting on the child's attendance. This provides the current school with an opportunity to try and resolve any issues which may then prevent the parent from pursuing a school move/appeal.

4. Directions

A. How many directions did the local authority make between 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018 for children in the local authority area?

	Primary aged children (not looked after)	Primary aged looked after children	Secondary aged children (not looked after)	Secondary aged looked after children
Voluntary aided or	0	0	0	0

foundation				
<p>B. Please add any comments on the authority's experiences of making directions.</p> <p>Prior to the new fair access protocol being embedded, the local authority was required to undertake a number of directions to own admission authority schools. However it has not been necessary to do so as all schools participate in the fair access process.</p> <p>Although King's Leadership Academy chose to opt out of in year co-ordination they do participate in the process for placing pupils who have been permanently excluded.</p>				

C. How many directions did the local authority make between 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018 for a maintained school in another local authority area to admit a looked after child?	
For primary aged children	For secondary aged children
0	0
<p>D. Please add any comments on the authority's experiences of making directions.</p> <p>It has not been necessary to direct any schools in another local authority area to admit a looked after child.</p>	

E.	How many requests to the ESFA to direct an academy to admit a child did the local authority make between 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018?	How many children were admitted to school as a result of the request for a direction by the local authority to the ESFA between 31 March 2017 and 31 March 2018?	How many requests were outstanding as at 31 March 2018?
For primary aged children (not looked after)	0	0	0
For primary aged looked after children	0	0	0
For secondary aged children (not	0	0	0

looked after)			
For secondary aged looked after children	0	0	0
<p>F. Please add any comments on the authority's experiences of requesting directions.</p> <p>Although it is not applicable for academic year 2017-2018 in previous years where it has been necessary to submit a request to the ESFA to direct an academy to admit a child, the process is administratively laborious. However, we are unsure as to whether the process has changed since then.</p>			

<p>G. Any other comments on the admission of children in year.</p> <p>None</p>
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5. Pupil, service and early years pupil premiums (the premiums)

A. How many community or voluntary controlled schools in the local authority area will use a premium as an oversubscription criterion for admissions in 2019?	Primary including middle deemed primary	Secondary including middle deemed secondary	All through
Pupil premium	0	0	n/a
Service premium	0	0	n/a
Early years pupil premium	0	n/a	n/a
Total number of schools using at least one premium in their oversubscription criteria	0	0	n/a

B.	How many own admission authority schools in your area will use one of the premiums as an oversubscription criterion for 2019?	Total number of own admission authority schools using at least one of the premiums in their over subscription criteria for 2019
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Primary including middle deemed primary	Early years	0	0
	Pupil	0	
	Service	0	
Secondary including middle deemed secondary	Pupil	0	0
	Service	0	
All through	Early years	0	0
	Pupil	0	
	Service	0	
C. Do you have any further comments on the use of premiums?			
none			

6. Electively home educated children

A. How many children were recorded as being electively home educated in the local authority area on 29 March 2018?

82

B. Any comments to make relating to admissions and children electively home educated?

Following a review of the fair access protocol during the summer term 2017 it was found that as existing arrangements did not take account of the fact that it was hard to place pupils who were on the electively home educated register, particularly those who were secondary school aged. This was because the child was not classed as unplaced as the parents had chosen to opt for home education but equally could not be considered as already on roll at a school. Therefore it was agreed in partnership between the local authority and co-ordinating schools that all applications received for electively home educated pupils will be considered and placed in accordance with fair access procedures. The effectiveness of this will be measured as part of the local review of the fair access protocol which takes place each summer term.

It may be necessary to make changes to these arrangements following the outcome of the ongoing consultation into Home Education.

7. Other matters

Are there any other matters that the local authority would like to raise that have not been covered by the questions above?

There are no other matters arising which have not already been covered in this report.

8. Feedback on the Local Authority Report template

In previous years we have asked for feedback on the process of completing the template in the following November to inform what is asked in the following year. We are aware that it may be easier to provide feedback on providing information for the annual report at the time rather than later. We would therefore be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2019.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to Lisa Short at OSA.Team@osa.gsi.gov.uk by 30 June 2018