



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

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

**Warrington Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2025**

Report Cleared by: Name: Louise Atkin

Job Title: Deputy Director Education and Improvement

Telephone number: 01925 443322

Email: gsykes@warrington.gov.uk

Date submitted: **October 2025**

By: **Name:** Hayley Kiss/ James Bancroft

Job Title: Admissions Manager/ Principal Manager
Admissions and Commissioning

Telephone number: 01925 446226

Email: schooladmissions@warrington.gov.uk

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

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

Contents

Introduction

Guidance on completing the template

Section 1 - Normal points of admission	5
A. Co-ordination.....	5
B. Looked after and previously looked after children.....	5
C. Special educational needs and/or disabilities	6
 Section 2 - In-year admissions.....	7
A. Overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions.....	7
B. Looked after children and previously looked after children	8
C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities	8
D. Fair access protocol	9
E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children	11
F. Other points on in-year admissions.....	11
 Section 3 - Other matters.....	13
 Section 4 - Feedback.....	13

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:

Co-ordination works well within Warrington.

A higher percentage of pupils were offered their preferred schools in comparison to the previous year, for both primary and secondary.

There was oversubscription in certain areas of Warrington for secondary, however all students who applied were accommodated at a school within the Borough.

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**:

n/a

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:

EHC admissions are completed by the SEND team and all young people at transfer points receive their updated plans with named placements within the statutory timescales for Nursery, year 6 and year 2 where applicable.

There can sometimes be delays/ changes which can impact admissions processes and oversubscription, where late/ changes in placements are mainstream.

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:

- Section 2.28 of the Code is being used by some admission authorities to refuse available places to some pupils but not all. This is raised with individual schools/ admission authorities where necessary, as this does not always align with the spirit of the Code
Examples include where a child has additional needs and/or attendances issues and/or behavioural issues which would not meet the FAP threshold. They are however able to admit pupils who do not appear to require additional support. The numbers of these are very low however they are concerning.
- Prejudice to the efficient provision of education or use of resources, is interpreted differently by admission authorities. It would be helpful if there were further clarifications within the in-year admissions section of the code to ensure consistent and non-selective practice, particularly regarding pupils with SEND without an EHCP
- For pupils with EHCPs, there must be robust evidence for a school to refuse a place, however for admissions for pupils with SEND without an EHCP, there is not. There are appeal rights, but not all families appeal
- PANs are only relevant to the normal point of entry and not for in-year. As an LA which co-ordinates in-year admissions for most schools in our area, this causes difficulties when schools decide to adjust their organisation in higher year groups without informing us, resulting in them being able to offer less places. It would be helpful if schools were required in the code to confirm their organisational model to the LA to assist with place planning and sufficiency.
- Our requirement under section 2.27 of the code can be difficult to meet for schools which adjust their organisational model in year.
- Warrington has seen an increase in migration and the volume of in-year admissions received over the past few years, resulting in significant levels of oversubscription in some areas and the need to use our Fair Access protocol to negotiate places.
- There is considerable pressure on the KS2/ KS3 sectors. Places are very limited in some areas, following the high migration into the area over the past couple of years.

- The code stipulates response times for in-year admissions however it is difficult to get timely responses on some occasions, particularly for complex cases.
- We have experienced difficulties placing year 11 students in-year. Some schools refuse admission when they have availability.

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:

n/a

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:

Children with EHCPs

Children who have an EHCP admitted in year are given a mainstream school where applicable in a timely fashion, where there is a need for a more specialist provision an education offer is made, mainstream with support or tuition until a suitable provision is identified.

For some young people with physical needs have had to wait a longer time for a school placement due to adaptations needed to allow them to access their chosen school.

Children without EHCPs

Most applications for children with SEND without EHC's are processed promptly, with families securing a preference where there is an available place.

We have recently experienced some resistance on a small number of occasions for admissions of children with SEND without an EHCP in-year. These cases are challenged where necessary and the FAP is used if required.

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:

n/a

- 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	4	1
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	32	50
Total	36	51

- 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 small increase in Secondary.

We anticipate that there will be more pupils referred to the FAP in both primary and secondary in the coming academic year due to the high levels of oversubscription in certain areas.

- 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:

Children are well served by our protocol, and they are offered a place at a school within the specified timescales.

We continue work with Headteachers regarding any concerns which are also collectively discussed at the Headteachers FAP.

Pupils who have been PEX are processed separately from the protocol and the LA provides support where necessary.

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:

Generally the processes work very well in our area.
In-year admissions would better serve all children if it was made statutory for all schools in all LAs.

- 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):

n/a

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?

FAP – 4 week rule.

l) children who have been out of education for 4 or more weeks where it can be demonstrated that there are no places available at any school within a reasonable distance of their home. This does not include circumstances where a suitable place has been offered to a child and this has not been accepted;

We wanted to raise the four-week rule within the FAP criteria. This can sometimes delay admissions to schools, for example, an overseas applicant moves to the area, there are no spaces within a reasonable distance of their home, but they have not been out of school for four or more weeks as the family apply for a school place as soon as it will be required.

We have been referring to FAP and explaining to our schools that this is criteria which the pupil will fall under, and we wish to avoid any unnecessary time out of education so we would like to place them sooner, and our schools accept, however we are wondering what the benefits of four weeks are.

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 2024