



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

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

**Gloucestershire Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2024**

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**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:

The LA continues to have good relationships with all schools and academies in the co-ordination of the main admissions round. We continue to provide an admissions service to academies through our Traded Services scheme which all parties sign up to through a service level agreement. This supports us meeting all key deadlines and milestones to ensure the success of the scheme.

We continue to experience delays in receiving data from neighbouring authorities which is very frustrating and can be stressful for the team. We again state that we would support the introduction of a national exchange data for all local authorities to fully support the effectiveness of the co-ordinated scheme. This would ensure that all local authorities would work more effectively and collaboratively.

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 ☒ X 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 ☒ X 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**:

Our experienced and knowledgeable admissions team provide expert advice and guidance for children in care, helping them navigate a complex system.

Children in care and their families/carers continue to have a positive experience at normal points of admissions. The admissions team work collaboratively with social workers and the virtual school to ensure applications are submitted on time. This year 21 children in care were in the secondary transfer group and all received their first preference.

For primary we received 13 applications, and all received their first preference. As all children in care received their first preference in normal round, the Virtual School were satisfied with the placements for their pupils.

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 ☒ X 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:

Where a child does not have an EHCP, the family need to follow the normal admissions process and have access to our Coordinated Admissions Team to assist with any queries relating to admission arrangements and the appeals route if necessary.

This year 220 Pupils with an EHCP had a mainstream school named who were in the secondary transfer group.

For primary there were 48 pupils with an EHCP with a mainstream school named in the reception transfer group.

The belonging regs and scarcity of school places is creating difficulties for our Social Workers and Care Teams to apply for schools/academies and receive responses for the pupil to start school. We are reliant on another casework team and schools whom we have no knowledge and relationships to ensure consults/ reasonable adjustments are completed in a timely manner. This has been further complicated re the issues surrounding recoupment of these costs. However, our Virtual School and Fair Access Team continue to work together to ensure that Social Workers and Care Teams know who to contact if they need advice relating to Admissions

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:

An increase of 10.5% of children submitting In Year applications in Gloucestershire from the previous year. This has had an impact on In Year admissions within certain 'hot spots' across the County and has affected parental preferences where some families have applied to for over 10 schools before they are offered a school placement. It has become more challenging within our urban areas of Gloucestershire.

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:

We liaise with schools to assist with admission queries relating to Children In Care, however, oversubscribed schools have requests from a number of children under their priority admissions categories, that they are unable to offer to all.

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:

We are experiencing an increase for In Year Requests for Looked After Children from Out of County placed in Gloucestershire. Some Authorities agree to pay for and support the placement as the child is Looked After by their Authority, increasingly other Local Authorities consider that as the pupil is now residing in Gloucestershire then the funding responsibility lies with the receiving County. Clarity on this matter would be useful.

EHCP can be a barrier if a child is placed out of county. The belonging regs and scarcity of special school places as the national picture for children needing specialist support grows, is leading to a diminishing resource. We are reliant on another casework team and schools whom we have no knowledge and relationships to ensure consults/ reasonable adjustments are completed in a timely manner

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?

PrimaryBetween 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	3	2
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	4	51
Total	7	53

- 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?

Increase in number of exclusions. Lack of school places in secondary year groups in some areas of the county increased FAP CME referrals to the panel.

- 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:

All children in Gloucestershire are served well by the protocol. We have regular panel meetings and a dedicated outcome coordinator who liaises with parents and schools to ensure that any transitions into new settings are made swiftly.

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		

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

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

- ☐ 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:

All schools in Gloucestershire have been delegated the responsibility for processing in year applications to their schools. The majority of schools respond well to the agreed process of sharing in year application information with the LA however there are some who are more challenging and need to be followed up with reminders. There has been a noticeable increase in applications from out of country/out of county which has put pressure on school places in some areas. This has caused an increase in parents appealing, which has had an impact on the time that children have been out of education.

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):

Some schools are finding that providing a place for children who have additional needs (but without an EHCP) is really challenging and are requesting additional resources from the LA to support them. This can result in a child being out of school for some time while arrangements are negotiated.

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