



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Local Authority Report**

**to**

**The Schools Adjudicator**

**from**

**Blackpool Local Authority**

to be provided by

**30 June 2021**

**Report Cleared by: Name Paul Turner**

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**Date submitted: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

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**[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator)**

Please email your completed report to: [osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk](mailto:osa.team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk) by 30 June 2021 and earlier if possible

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## Introduction and guidance on completing the report

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 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 matters.

2. This template requests the same information as that set out in the revised template we sent on 15 April 2020:

- a) information about how admission arrangements in 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;
- b) an assessment of the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols and co-ordination in their area, including how many children were admitted to each school under them.

3. We should be grateful if local authorities would follow the approach used in statutory provisions and in the Department for Education Statistical First Release<sup>1</sup> and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002<sup>2</sup>.

4. In the template last year we did not ask about the determination of admission arrangements because of continued constraints on local authorities. Again, we have not asked for that information this year, but we intend to return to this area in future years given the importance of determination and checking compliance of all admission authorities. It is a key role for the local authority's leadership to encourage schools to determine arrangements in line with the provisions in the Code.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. The report **must** be returned to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator by **30 June 2021**.

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<sup>1</sup> [Department for Education Statistical First Release](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Education Middle School \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

## Information requested

### Section 1 - Normal point of admission

#### Co-ordination

i. 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
Reception			X	
Year 7			X	
Other relevant years of entry			NA	

ii. Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

#### A. 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<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>

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**?

<sup>3</sup> 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

Not at all  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>3</sup>

v. Priority in admission arrangements for 2022 for adopted children previously in care abroad. Please comment on the use of a priority in admission arrangements for a child adopted who was previously in care abroad if you wish: [Blackpool Council has previously commended this as good practice to all admission authorities. In June 2021 the revised School Admission Code \(May 2021\) and summary about IAPLAC was sent to all schools and academies. They are aware of the need to have this is determined admission policies from September 2021. We are however not yet aware of any instance where this has applied for an admission.](#)

vi. If you wish, please give any 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**: [The relocation of children in KS4 who require carefully planned and specific additional support is a concern. Other LAs often relocate children at short notice with no prior planning and specifically to access alternative provision. This is often unnecessary, as similar provision will be available nearer to home. It is of concern when LAC arrive from other areas with no prior consideration or discussion about educational provision.](#)

## B. Special educational needs and/or disabilities

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: [We allocate places for Blackpool Children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan in accordance with the SEN Code. They are allocated the parent's preferred school or academy for annual intakes \(even where this is within a neighbouring authority\).](#)

[There is regular liaison with SEND officers to identify children who have a current EHCP and those under statutory assessment. Regular liaison with the Early Years Co-ordinator identifies pre-school children who have SEND to ensure places at preferred schools.](#)

## Section 2 - In-year<sup>4</sup> admissions

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<sup>4</sup> 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 after the end of the statutory waiting list period (31 December) in normal years of admission.

## A. Co-ordination of in-year admissions

Please provide any comments on the co-ordination of **in-year admissions** if you wish: [Blackpool has agreed processes for in-year transfers with all primary and secondary schools and academies. We align these to tracking and safeguarding. We are reviewing in-year processes with partners in relation to the new School Admissions Code \(May 2021\).](#)

## 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<sup>5</sup>

- ii. How well do 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<sup>5</sup>

- iii. How well does your **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<sup>5</sup>

- 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<sup>5</sup>

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: [Concerns remain about LAC being relocated without any pre-planned education. This is especially for KS4 children and particularly Year 11. There is still a resolute culture of actively demanding good or outstanding schools. This can concentrate referrals disproportionately in certain establishments. There are always concerns where LAC relocations target alternative provision and not mainstream placements. Invariable AP would have been possible in the home local authority.](#)

## C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

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<sup>5</sup> 'Not applicable' will only be appropriate if there are no children falling within this definition.

- 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  Not well  Well  Very well  Not applicable<sup>5</sup>

- 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  Not well  Well  Very well  Don't 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:

- iv. If you wish, please provide any comments about **in-year admissions** in respect of other children: [please note 2A above](#).

#### D. Fair access protocol

- i. Has your fair access protocol been agreed<sup>6</sup> with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

Yes for primary  
 Yes for secondary

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

- iii. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled		
Foundation,	3	22

<sup>6</sup> An existing protocol remains binding on all schools up until the point at which a new one is adopted.

voluntary aided and academies		
Total	3	22

iv. 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<sup>7</sup>

v. Please make any relevant comment on the protocol not covered above if you wish: [Blackpool Council previously moved away from a panel process for secondary IYFA to decisions by a local authority panel. There was agreement with the CEOs of all secondary academy trusts. The process has worked relatively seamlessly for almost 2 years. We will review Fair Access protocols with all partners in the light of the amended Code.](#)

E. If you wish, any other comments on the admission of children **in-year** not previously raised:

### **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?

[The guidance about summer born children and parents applying for a primary school entry delay for a full school year with a reception start could have been worded more firmly in relation to school transfers and secondary transfers. The DFE guidance states on page 4 “parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group. The decision is for you, as the admission authority”.](#)

[The recent statement from the DFE states that where parents opt for a full year delay then regardless of the admission authority opinion or decision “the assumption should be that the child remains outside of their normal year group”.](#)

[Stating that where agreement had been reached for a child to be educated out of normal year group continuity would be expected in terms of transfer to another primary school and transfer to secondary would have resolved matters clearly.](#)

<sup>7</sup> ‘Not applicable’ would mean that there were no hard to place children for which the protocol was required.



## **Section 4 - Feedback**

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2022.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk](mailto:OSA.Team@schoolsadjudicator.gov.uk) by 30 June 2021