



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT 2024
TO
THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR
FROM
WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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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 | 9 |
| A. Overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions | 9 |
| B. Looked after children and previously looked after children | 9 |
| C. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities | 10 |
| D. Fair access protocol | 10 |
| E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children | 12 |
| F. Other points on in-year admissions | 12 |
| | |
| Section 3 - Other matters | 14 |
| | |
| Section 4 - Feedback..... | 14 |

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 covers the 2023/2024 academic year.

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 | | | Y | | |
| Year 7 | | | Y | | |
| Other relevant years of entry | | | Y | | |

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

- **A simpler system for parents to understand**
 - **Common closing dates and offer date**
 - **One form/online application**
 - **One offer of school place on National Offer Day thereby increasing offer of preferred school to more families**
 - **LA Admissions Team as main point of contact.**
- **Close partnership working with all state funded schools and the LA**
 - **Co-operation of all schools**
 - **Open accountability for own admission authority schools including quality assurance of ranked application lists. All late submissions and queries were resolved in good-time ahead of pan-London deadlines for submission.**
 - **LA continues to administer waiting lists from National Offer Day to 31 August with school input where necessary eg faith or medical/social applications.**
- **Inter LA working**
 - **A prime example of close working between LAs on a regional basis leading to the development of the Pan London Admissions Hub and London Eadmissions Portal.**

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**:

As required by the Admissions Code, looked after children and previous looked after children have first priority in the published admission criteria of maintained schools and academies. In the main managed rounds (Reception and Secondary Transfer), this has served the interests of LAC and previous LAC very well. All have been offered their first preference school.

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:

Pupils with an EHCP are not considered under the mainstream admissions process and are covered by separate legislation. All of Wandsworth's seven special schools are judged outstanding or good by Ofsted. There are also 13 resource bases, meaning that overall children are extremely well served in terms of admissions options. Mainstream schools and academies accept children with EHCPs readily where they can demonstrably meet their needs.

For children who have disabilities and/or special educational needs but who do not have an EHCPs, most admission authorities have an exceptional social/medical need criterion if there is an exceptional need to attend a particular school.

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 | | |

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:

As required by the Admissions Code, looked after children and previous looked after children have first priority in the published admission criteria of maintained schools and academies. This has served the interests of LAC and previous LAC well.

As stated in previous years, it would be helpful to have clarity within the Admissions Code, around the expectation that schools should admit LAC and previous LAC over number where they are the preferred school.

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:

Pupils with an EHCP are not considered under the mainstream admissions process and are covered by separate legislation. All of Wandsworth's seven special schools are judged outstanding or good by Ofsted. There are also 13 resource bases, meaning that overall children are extremely well served in terms of admissions options. Mainstream schools and academies accept children with EHCPs readily where they can demonstrably meet their needs.

For children who have disabilities and/or special educational needs but who do not have an EHCPs, most admission authorities have an exceptional social/medical need criterion if there is an exceptional need to attend a particular school.

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%

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 | 8 |
| Foundation, voluntary aided and academies | 0 | 45 |
| Total | 0 | 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?

The number of pupils admitted under both the Primary and Secondary Fair Access Protocols is comparable to 2021-22. There was a decrease of 11 pupils admitted under the Secondary FAP but there appear to be no overarching reasons for this.

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:

Wandsworth LA co-ordinates the secondary phase in-year fair access protocol through the Wandsworth Improving Behaviour & Attendance Partnership which includes representation from all secondary schools, the secondary PRU and officers from the LA Inclusion Service. There is generally a good level of engagement by schools and very few cases are discussed at meetings as work to place pupils is conducted between times as an early intervention to prevent drift and delay. This is also effective as not all schools attend partnership meetings on a regular basis.

At primary level, Fair Access Panel members are drawn from headteacher nominations together with representatives from the Primary PRU and LA

Inclusion Service and Pupil Services section. As with the secondary protocol, there is good level of engagement from schools. The level of vacancies within primary schools and active participation of schools has meant that it has not been necessary to formally place only any pupils through the primary FAP in 2023-24.

A challenge in both primary and secondary phases lies in ensuring the system is equitable and fair with all schools participating fully in the process. Whilst the related changes in the Code are welcome this has had little impact on practice.

E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children¹

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 |

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%

¹ 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 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:

Wandsworth continues to operate a centralised application system so parents need only make one application. Where it is not possible to offer a preferred school, applicants will be offered an alternative school or advised of schools with vacancies as appropriate.

This has been effective in seeking to ensure that all children changing schools or moving into the area can secure a school place. Following on from statutory co-ordination, it has enabled the monitoring and tracking of applications in order to safeguard pupils at a time when they can be most vulnerable to missing education.

There was a 8.2% decrease in the total number of in year-admission applications, with applications falling from from 2596 in 2022-23 to 2384 in 2023-24. The largest proportion of applications continues to be from families moving from outside of the UK.

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?

None

Section 4 - Feedback

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

None

Thank you for completing this template.

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