



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator



LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT 2025
TO
THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR
FROM
WANDSWORTH COUNCIL

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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 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.

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			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, Junior 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 24/25 compared to 23/24?

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 2024 and 31 July 2025?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	1	17
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	19
Total	1	36

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 was a decrease of 17 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 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:

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 4.7% decrease in the total number of in year-admission applications, with applications falling from 2384 in 2023-24 to 2273 in 2024-25. 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 2026.

None

Thank you for completing this template.

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