



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Local Authority Report**

to

**The Schools Adjudicator**

from

**St Helens Local Authority**

to be provided by

**31 October 2023**

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2023 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 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 3.30 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. Local authorities do not have to include this introduction and guidance in their locally published report.
2. **This year's report must cover the 2022/2023 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2023.**
3. Please note that, in response to feedback on the draft template, changes have been made to section 2C of this template.
4. Please also note that the OSA and Department for Education are planning a small project to ensure that the report is as useful as possible to local authorities, the OSA, DfE and others. As a result of this, there are likely to be changes made to the template for the 2023/2024 academic year.

## Guidance on completing the template

5. 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.
6. 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 Release<sup>1</sup> and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2022<sup>2</sup>.
7. 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. at the start of any school year to a year group 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

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

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

- 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 at questions:

- i. Section 1: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- ii. Section 2: Ai - iv that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iii. Section 2: B.i. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iv. Section 2: C.v. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

- 8. 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.
- 9. 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.

# Information Requested

## Section 1 – Normal points of admission

### A. 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				

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

Although own admission authority schools categorise applications according to their published oversubscription criteria, the Local Authority Admissions Team undertakes the ranking exercise on their behalf. This enables checks to be built into the allocation process which helps identify any issues at an early stage and enables the Team to take appropriate action. It also helps to ensure that the agreed timetables in the co-ordinated admissions schemes are adhered to.

### B. Looked after and previously looked after children

#### i. How 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 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 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 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**:

The School Admissions Team works with colleagues within Social Care to ensure that looked after children applications are submitted by the relevant admissions deadlines.

The Local Authority, ensures that Good or Outstanding Ofsted rated schools are chosen for looked after children.

Looked after and previously looked after children are given top priority in the oversubscription criteria for all schools and academies in St Helens. In addition, for those children whose applications are received after the Primary and Secondary National Offer Dates, if the relevant schools/academies in St Helens are oversubscribed they are admitted above the published admission number.

No school or academy in St Helens has refused a place for a looked after or previously looked after child for admission either at the normal point of entry or in year transfer.

### C. 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:

The Local Authority's School Admissions and SEND Teams work together to ensure that children are allocated mainstream school places in accordance with the Education Health and Care Plan. All children with an Education Health and Care Plan were offered a school place at their parents' preferred mainstream school – this included those children who Education Health and Care Plan is maintained by another Local Authority.

In order to support the transition from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary, the School Admissions Team shares SEND data with the relevant schools/academies (after the allocation process is complete). This enables schools/academies to plan any necessary support for children who are recorded on the Special Educational Needs register.

## Section 2 -In-year admissions

### A. Looked after children and previously looked after children

- i. How 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 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 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 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 the **in-year admission** to schools of looked after and previously looked after children:

All St Helens schools and academies admit looked after children and previously looked after children outside the normal round (in year), even if the relevant year group is full and irrespective of which Local Authority is the 'corporate' parent.

There have been instances, however, where other local authorities have refused (where the relevant year group is full) in year applications for St Helens looked after children and the Authority has had to lodge an appeal to the Independent Appeal Panel.

## B. 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     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     Not well     Well     Very well     Not applicable

- 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:

St Helens School Admissions and SEND Teams work closely to ensure that children are allocated places at the school named in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). All children with a St Helens mainstream school/academy named in their EHCP have been offered a place including those from neighbouring local authorities.

Children with special needs who do not have an EHCP are treated equally in the allocation process for in year places. In accordance with the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol children with behavioural difficulties are supported via the managed transfer process and schools (even those which are oversubscribed) cannot refuse admission.

## C. Fair access protocol

- i. Do you have a fair access protocol agreed 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 August 2022 and 31 July 2023?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and Voluntary Controlled	6	1
Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Academies	2	4
Total	8	5

iv. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

- v. How well do you consider children referred to the fair access protocol are served in your area?

Not at all     Not well     Well     Very well     Not applicable

vi. Please provide any comments you wish on the protocol not covered above:

Protocol has been developed and agreed in co-operation with Headteachers (representing various sectors) to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable children are met. Panels have representation from various professionals, like Early Help, Health and Educational Psychologists, to ensure any additional needs are met and schools are supported with hard to place pupils.

#### D. Directions

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 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

## E. 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 2022 and 31 July 2023 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 schools in your area did the local authority coordinate in-year admissions during the 2022/2023 academic year

- None  
 All  
 Some but less than or equal to half  
 More than half but less than all

- iii. 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:

In-year co-ordination is not a statutory function. We, the LA, co-ordinate this for all schools in St Helens, which provides consistency, transparency and best meets the needs of children and families.

- iv. 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):

### **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?

As mentioned in Section 1, there are agreed timetables in the co-ordinated admissions schemes that must be adhered to, for the schemes to run smoothly and in accordance with government codes and legislation. Own admission authorities should not change PAN in year, i.e., after the determination year. Academies seeking to reduce their PAN, in year, must obtain Secretary of State Approval. Without such approval the local authority reserves the right to place children in year in accordance with the existing PAN as previously determined by the academy.

Also, as per the 'School Admissions Code' par: 3.29 (Page 36), "...if an Academy refuses to admit the child, the LA can ask the Secretary of State to intervene. The Secretary of State has the power under an Academy's Funding Agreement to direct the Academy to admit a child and can seek advice from the Schools Adjudicator in reaching a decision."

### **Section 4 - Feedback**

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2024.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2023