



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT
TO
THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR
FROM
Oldham Local Authority

30 JUNE 2014

Report Cleared by (Name): Steve Edwards

(Title): Interim Associate Assistant Director, Learning & Attainment

Date submitted: 30 June 2014

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Please email your completed report to: OSA.TEAM@OSA.GSI.GOV.UK

Introduction

1. Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to make an annual report to the adjudicator.
2. The School Admissions Code (the Code) at paragraph 6 sets out the requirements for reports by local authorities. 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 local issues.
3. There are other matters concerning admissions, some suggested by local authorities, about which it would be useful to have a view. Rather than undertake a separate exercise in which information is sought from local authorities, you are asked to include any relevant information in your report to the adjudicator.

Completing the Template

This template is designed to be completed electronically - boxes will expand as necessary.

Throughout this report, please include middle deemed primary schools as for pupils up to age 11 and middle deemed secondary schools as for pupils over 11. For schools that have children of primary and secondary age and are not designated as a middle school please record them as all-through schools.

Where a type of school is given, foundation covers foundation schools and foundation schools with a foundation (trust schools). Academy schools should be recorded by the individual type of academy school, namely, academy, free school, UTC or studio school.

1. Local Authority school numbers

Please give the total number of schools by type within your local authority as at 30 June 2014.

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Community	41	1	0
Voluntary Controlled	6	0	0
Voluntary Aided	31	1	0
Foundation/Trust	1	4	0
Academy	7	6	0
Free School	0	1	0
UTC	N/A	1	0
Studio School	N/A	N/A	N/A

2. Admission Arrangements for Admissions in September 2014

The Code at paragraph 3.23 requires that each local authority must report on how well the admission arrangements for state-funded schools (of all types) in its local authority area serve the interests of the groups of children listed below.

Please include details of any problems that have arisen for these children while allocating places for admissions in September 2014, for example any admission arrangements for own admission authority schools that could be interpreted as implying the school has some discretion over the admission of children who have a statement that names the school or looked after children and previously looked after children other than the permitted exceptions.

(a) How well are the interests of **looked after children** served?

Tick as appropriate: Fully In part Not satisfactorily

Comments:

Looked after children (LAC) are given the highest priority within the admission criteria for all community and voluntary controlled primary schools in Oldham.

All Church of England primary schools prioritise all LAC, regardless of their faith.

The single Trust primary school prioritises all LAC.

The Roman Catholic primary schools all give highest priority to baptised RC LAC. After all other categories of baptised Roman Catholic children, all other LAC are prioritised above all other applicants.

The primary Academies prioritise LAC.

In the secondary sector, LAC are given the highest priority in the one community school.

The single Roman Catholic secondary school gives the highest priority to baptised RC LAC. After all other categories of baptised RC children, all other LAC are prioritised above all other applicants.

Of the two Church of England academies, one prioritises all LAC, the other gives priority to LAC who are members of the Church of England after all other categories of membership of the Church of England, all other LAC are prioritised above all other applicants.

All Foundation and Trust secondary schools and secondary Academies give highest priority to LAC.

(b) How well are the interests of **previously looked after children** served?

Tick as appropriate: Fully In part Not satisfactorily

Comments:

Previously looked after children are categorised with looked after children and given priority as explained above.

(c) How well are the interests of **children with disabilities** served?

Tick as appropriate: Fully In part Not satisfactorily

Comments:

Children with exceptional medical reasons (including disabilities) are prioritised if they meet the criteria and evidence is provided as to why a particular school can meet their needs.

(d) How well served are **children who have special educational needs and who have a statement of special needs** that names a school?

Tick as appropriate: Fully In part Not satisfactorily

Comments:

Children with a statement of SEN are offered places before all other offers.

(e) How well served are those **children who have special needs, but do not have a statement?**

Tick as appropriate: Fully In part Not satisfactorily

Comments:

Children with special needs, but do not have a statement are considered under exceptional circumstances or other admission criteria.

3. Co-ordination of admissions

A) During the normal admissions round

Please assess the effectiveness of co-ordination of primary and secondary admissions for September 2014 in your local authority highlighting any particular strengths in the process and any problems.

Primary

- (a) How well has the first year of operating the national offer day for primary places worked compared with when there was no specified national offer day?

Tick as appropriate: Better The same Less well

- i) Any strengths of the new procedure?

Comments:

The locally agreed scheme was effective in enabling Oldham LA to make a single offer to the highest possible ranking preference of school to Oldham parents. This applied to offers of places in Oldham schools and to schools outside the Oldham area, in other LA's.

The critical path of dates and deadlines was successfully achieved, securing on-time exchange of information with other admissions authorities in the area and with neighbouring authorities, leading to the on-time notifications of offers to parents.

- ii) Any problems encountered this year?

Comments: n/a.

Secondary

- (b) How well has the operation of national offer day worked for secondary admissions this year?

Tick as appropriate: Better than last year
The same
Less well than last year

- i) Any strengths?

Comments:

The locally agreed scheme was effective in enabling Oldham LA to make a single offer to the highest possible ranking preference of school to Oldham parents. This applied to offers of places in Oldham schools and to schools

outside the Oldham area, in other LA's.

The critical path of dates and deadlines was successfully achieved, securing on-time exchange of information with other admissions authorities in the area and with neighbouring authorities, leading to the on-time notifications of offers to parents.

ii) Any problems?

Comments: n/a.

(c) If you have any UTCs or studio schools in your area, do you co-ordinate admissions for entry at the relevant year group of entry to these schools?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No N/A

If **YES**, please explain how well the admissions process is working for these schools:

The critical path of dates and deadlines was successfully achieved, securing on-time exchange of information with other admissions authorities in the area and with neighbouring authorities, leading to the on-time notifications of offers to parents.

Oldham LA has an excellent working relationship with the UTC. Communication and systems are robust allowing coordination to take place seamlessly.

If **NO** do you have any evidence about how well the admission process is working for individual UTCs or studio schools?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

If **YES**, please comment
n/a.

B) In-year admissions

From September 2013 in-year admissions have not had to be co-ordinated by the local authority.

(a) How many **pupils** have needed a school place because they do not have one or parents have applied for a place as an in-year admission for any other reason between 1 September 2013 and 15 June 2014?

For pupils up to age 11	For pupils over age 11	For Sixth Forms
1604	504	N/a

(b) Did you discuss with community and voluntary controlled schools the option of continuing to co-ordinate in-year admissions?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

Comments: The LA made the decision to continue to coordinate all in year admissions for community and voluntary controlled schools. All community and voluntary controlled schools agreed to this.

(c) Did you discuss with own admission authority schools the option of continuing to co-ordinate in-year admissions?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

Comments: There is a Service Level Agreement and charging policy in place. Most schools that are their own admission authority have signed up to this and Oldham LA continue to coordinate their in year admissions. During 2013/2014, 25 schools did not buy this service back and do their own in year admissions.

(d) Will the local authority continue to co-ordinate in-year admissions for any schools?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

If **YES**, for which schools will it co-ordinate in-year admissions?:

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Community	41	1	0
Voluntary Controlled	6	0	0
Voluntary Aided	16	1	0
Foundation/Trust	1	2	0
Academy	3	4	0
Free School	0	0	0
UTC	N/A	0	0
Studio School	N/A	N/A	N/A

(e) If you have any information about how many schools parents approach before obtaining a place, please comment?

Comments: All parents with the exception of the 25 schools that coordinate their own admissions apply direct to the LA.

The 25 schools that do their own in year transfers inform the LA of all who have gone on their roll and any pupils they have had to refuse admissions to due to not having vacancies.

- (f) How confident are you that the requirements of the Code at paragraph 2.22 for schools to keep the local authority informed about applications and the outcomes are being met?

Tick as appropriate: Very confident confident not confident

- (g) Across your local authority area how well have in-year admissions worked this year?

Tick as appropriate: Better than last year
The same as last year
Less well than last year

- (h) Please comment on the effectiveness overall of in-year admission arrangements across all types of schools in your local authority.

Comments:

The locally agreed scheme is effective in ensuring that applicants are able to access their transfer place without delay in most cases. Admissions officers and social workers work in partnership to ensure that the placement of LAC is prioritised. Procedures are in place to ensure that the parents of children who are not in receipt of a suitable education are contacted and appropriate arrangements made for them to access a school place. Non-arrivals are followed up by School Attendance officers and appropriate action taken.

The issue the LA is facing is around the shortage of primary school places in the borough and the increasing numbers of new arrivals in to the borough. There is a School Place Planning Strategy in place to alleviate this pressure, including school expansions in some areas and the building of a new 3 form entry primary school in the Centre of Oldham.

4. Fair Access Protocol

The Code at paragraph 3.9 requires each local authority to have a Fair Access Protocol agreed with the majority of schools in its area. Paragraph 3.11 of the Code requires that all admission authorities must participate in the Fair Access Protocol.

- a) Please confirm that your local authority has a Fair Access Protocol that has been agreed with the majority of schools in your area.

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

If **NO**, please explain: n/a.

- b) Although a majority of schools, and perhaps all, will have agreed the Fair Access Protocol, some may not have done so. Please state how many schools have not agreed the Fair Access Protocol.

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Community	0	0	N/A
Voluntary Controlled	0	0	N/A
Voluntary Aided	0	0	N/A
Foundation/Trust	0	0	N/A
Academy	0	0	N/A
Free School	N/A	1	N/A
UTC	N/A	1	N/A
Studio School	N/A	N/A	N/A

- c) Where schools did not agree the Fair Access Protocol; please say why they did not agree.

Comments: The two schools listed are newly established and have not yet been asked to take part. This will be a decision made by Secondary Heads in September 2014.

- d) Have you reviewed your Fair Access Protocol since the School Admissions Code 2012 was introduced?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

- e) If **NO**, do you plan to do so in 2014/15?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

If **NO** please say why not: n/a.

- f) (i) Please give your assessment of how well your Fair Access Protocol has worked in the academic year 2013/14 in placing children without a school place in schools in a timely manner.

Tick as appropriate: Very well Mostly well Some difficulties

- (ii) What is your general assessment of the working of the protocol compared with last year?

Tick as appropriate: More effective as effective less effective

(iii) How frequently has the protocol been used to place a child compared with last year?

Tick as appropriate: More frequently same frequency less frequently

- i) Have you had any specific problems in allocating a place through the protocol? For example, where a school has been reluctant to accept a child.

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

Comments: Shortage of place in the primary sector has led to several primary schools asking for reconsideration of placements. This is due to the schools being asked to go over their planned admission number in both key stage 1 and 2 classes. On the whole schools have admitted pupils once the Fair Access Panel has looked at any reconsideration requests and representation the schools have made and decided on placement.

- ii) Have you any examples of particularly effective collaboration and working? For example, placing children in year 6 of a primary school or years 10 and 11 of a secondary school.

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

Comments: Secondary schools in Oldham work very successfully together. Managed moves are discussed at the Behaviour and Attendance Panel meetings. Schools support each other when asked to take a pupil on short notice. All schools are keen for the Fair Access cases to be spread evenly so one school isn't targeted; this is certainly the case for year 10 and 11s. All schools are accepting of year 6, 10 and 11 pupils and will provide a school curriculum for them or alternative off site provision or college placements.

- g) How many children have been admitted to each type of school in the area under the protocol? How many children have been refused admission to a school?

Type of School	Number of children admitted			Number of children refused admission		
	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11	All-through schools	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11	All-through schools
Community	216	15	N/A	0	0	0
Voluntary Controlled	8	N/A	N/A	0	0	0
Voluntary Aided	99	16	N/A	0	0	0
Foundation/Trust	7	57	N/A	0	0	0
Academy	36	92	N/A	0	0	0

Free School	N/A	0	N/A	0	0	0
UTC	N/A	0	N/A	0	0	0
Studio School	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0

- h) If children have not been placed successfully in a school through the protocol, have you used the direction process to provide a place for a child?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No N/A

- i) If **YES**, how many children have been placed and in which type of school as a result of a direction, including a direction via the EFA on behalf of the Secretary of State or after a referral to the Adjudicator?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Community	N/A	N/A	N/A
Voluntary Controlled	N/A	N/A	N/A
Voluntary Aided	N/A	N/A	N/A
Foundation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A
Free School	N/A	N/A	N/A
UTC	N/A	N/A	N/A
Studio School	N/A	N/A	N/A

- j) Please add any other relevant information you wish to include in this section concerning Fair Access Protocols, for example, have you used the guidance issued by the Department for Education in November 2012 ([Link to advice](#)) and has it proved useful?

Comments: We've found that the more involved the schools have become in the panel the more they have bought into the idea of the Fair Access Protocol. We have recently started to rotate which schools are on the secondary panel and this has had a positive effect in terms of schools willing to work with both the LA and other schools to place pupils. It has really helped the schools see the issues faced by both the LA and other schools in terms of placing vulnerable children.

5. Admission Appeals

- a) Please provide details about the number of appeals lodged for admissions in September 2014

	Lodged	Settled (offered a place through a waiting list or other means - not continuing with appeal)	Withdrawn (no place offered, but not proceeding with appeal)	Appeals Heard	Appeals Upheld (a place offered as a result of the appeal)	Appeals Not Upheld (appeal failed, no place offered)
Pupils up to age 11	163	6	2	0	0	0
Pupils age 11-16	242	31	7	54	2	52
Pupils over age 16	0	0	0	0	0	0
Date up to which this information applies	19.05.14	19.05.14	19.05.14	19.05.14	19.05.14	19.05.14

Please note there will be an opportunity to update this data up until 31 August 2014 - the update form is attached as an appendix so that you can return it separately if you wish at the end of August.

- b) Please add any comments about the appeals process in your area.

Comments: Appeals are continually increasing due to the pressure on primary school places in the borough.

6. Other Issues

A. Publication of the local authority's report

Paragraph 3.23 of the Code requires each local authority to publish a copy of its report locally by 30 June.

- a) Please indicate where or how a copy of the report can be obtained by a member of the public:

Tick as appropriate: Local authority website Hard copy Other

If **OTHER** please state how: n/a.

If the report is not published by 30 June please provide details of when and where the report will be published:

Comments: n/a.

B. Objections to admission arrangements

Paragraph 3.2 says “local authorities **must** refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator if they are of the view or suspect that the admission arrangements that have been determined by other admission authorities are unlawful”.

- a) How many sets of admission arrangements of schools were queried by the local authority with schools that are their own admission authority because they were considered not to comply with the Code?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Voluntary Aided	0	0	0
Foundation	0	0	0
Academy	0	0	0
Free School	0	0	0
UTC	N/A	0	0
Studio School	N/A	N/A	N/A

- b) How confident are you that all community, voluntary controlled and own admission authority admission arrangements are now fully compliant with the Code?

Tick as appropriate: very confident confident not confident

- c) How many schools did not send the local authority a copy of their full admission arrangements, including the supplementary information form (or the form by any other name, for example religious inquiry form) if one is used, by 1 May, as specified in paragraph 1.47 of the Code?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Voluntary Aided	0	0	0
Foundation	0	0	0
Academy	0	0	0
Free School	0	0	0
UTC	N/A	0	0
Studio School	N/A	N/A	N/A

C. Fraudulent applications

(a) Is there any concern in your local authority about fraudulent applications?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

(b) Did the local authority make any offers on national offer days that were subsequently withdrawn as a result of a fraudulent application?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

(c) If **YES**, how many for each type of school?

Type of School	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Number of all-through schools
Community	0	0	N/A
Voluntary Controlled	0	0	N/A
Voluntary Aided	0	0	N/A
Foundation	0	0	N/A
Academy	0	0	N/A
Free School	0	0	N/A
UTC	N/A	0	N/A
Studio School	N/A	0	N/A

(d) What action is the LA taking to prevent fraudulent applications?

Comment: The LA do lots of address checking with other agencies and the Council Tax and Benefits Team.
If there are any possible fraudulent applications the team works very closely with the Council's fraud team.

D. Summer born children

The DfE issued guidance in July 2013 "Advice on the admission of summer born children" for local authorities, school admission authorities and parents ([Link to advice](#)). The School Admissions Code at paragraph 2.16 deals with deferred entry and/or part-time attendance for children in the year they reach compulsory school age. Paragraph 2.17 refers to the admission of children outside their normal age group.

(a) Do you keep data for any schools on the number of requests from parents who ask that their child is admitted to a class outside their normal age group?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

(i) For community and voluntary controlled schools: Yes No

If **YES**, how many requests did you receive for admission to a Reception class for a child who had reached the normal age for Year 1?

Number: 0

How many were subsequently agreed?

Number; n/a.

(ii) For own admission authority schools: Yes No

If **YES**, how many requests were received for admission to the Reception Year for a child who had reached the normal age for Year 1?

Number: 0

How many were subsequently agreed?

Number: n/a.

(b) What reasons, if known, were given for seeking to delay the admission to reception of the child for a full school year?

Comments: n/a.

(c) Any other comments the local authority has on the matter of admission of summer born children.

Comments: Oldham LA now have a Summer Born Protocol in place containing the relevant legislation and process for admission.

E. Composite prospectus – admission to sixth form

The School Information (England) Regulations 2008, regulation 5 requires the local authority to publish no later than 12 September in the offer year a composite prospectus for primary and secondary schools. Regulation 6 deals with the manner of the publication of the prospectuses and schedule 2 to the regulations details the information to be included in a prospectus.

Schedule 2, paragraph 14 says of what is to be included: *“The determined admission arrangements for the school in relation to each relevant age group at the school (including ages above and below the compulsory school age)*

and, where the arrangements include a supplementary information form a copy of that form.”

(a) How were the admission arrangements for admission to the sixth form of schools that admit students new to the school to year 12 included in a composite prospectus for admissions in September 2014?

(i) With the admission arrangements for each school admission to the earlier relevant age group (for example Year 7) for admission?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

or

(ii) In a separate composite prospectus for the sixth form?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

or

(iii) Other, please describe how the requirements of the regulations are met.

Comments: n/a.

(b) If the requirements of the regulations were not met for admissions in 2014, how will they be met for admissions in 2015?

Comments: n/a.

F. Admission Forum

(a) Does your local authority still have an admission forum?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

If **YES**, which groups, (types of schools and other bodies) are represented on the Admission Forum?

Comments: n/a.

How often does this forum meet?

Comments: n/a.

What do you see as the key benefits arising from this forum?

Comments: n/a.

G. Local Authority Issues

- (a) Please provide details of any other issues that you would like to raise and comment on that are not already covered in this report.

Comments:

Thank you for completing this report

Please email your completed report to: OSA.TEAM@OSA.GSI.GOV.UK