



Office of  
the Schools  
Adjudicator

**Local Authority Report**  
to  
**The Schools Adjudicator**  
from  
**London Borough of Brent**  
to be provided by  
**31 October 2024**

**Report Cleared by: Michelle Gwyther**

**Head of Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships**

**020 8937 2499**

**michelle.gwyther@brent.gov.uk**

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**By: Michael Rollin**

**Admissions and School Organisation Manager**

**020 8937 2862**

**michael.rollin@brent.gov.uk**

Website: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#)

**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by  
31 October 2024 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 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 2023/2024 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2024.**
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 Release<sup>1</sup> and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002<sup>2</sup>.
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

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

<sup>2</sup> [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.

## 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			X		
Year 7		X			
Other relevant years of entry			X		

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

In 2023, we had to make emergency adjustment at the end of secondary co-ordination due to a DfE approved reduction to a school's PAN in the week before national offer day. There were no similar issues in 2024.

During co-ordination for 2024 Year 7 admissions, the Pan London co-ordinated iteration process was interrupted and had to be reset due to an issue in another local authority area. However, as all London Boroughs test and train for such an eventuality, this did not present any significant problems in Brent.

#### 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**:

The requirement for all admission authorities to prioritise admissions of looked after or previously looked after children means these children routinely receive their highest preference, even if applications are received after the closing date.

The Commissioning Resources Team works in partnership with social work teams to prioritise looked after children's education when making placement decisions to establish whether a looked after child is able to remain in their current school or whether a new school place application is required.

Brent has a strong Virtual School that liaises with admissions authorities (including those of individual schools) to ensure looked after children obtain a school place as soon as possible.

The London Inter Authority Admissions Group (LIAAG) has an agreed process for confirming the LAC/PLAC status of children to ensure there is no confusion when applications are sent to neighbouring authorities and they are ranked correctly.

### 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:

The Brent Admissions Team works closely with the Brent Special Education Needs Assessment Service and the SENDIAS Service to achieve positive outcomes for children with special educational needs and with an EHCP.

Cross team working takes place to ensure spaces for children with EHCPs are reserved in advance of offers being made for the normal round.

The School Admissions Team also works directly with each school involved in co-ordination to ensure any children with EHCPs from other local authority areas are considered in a timely way when reserving places, as these children are often not known to Brent services.

## 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	

If you wish, please explain the factors that have changed the level of challenge for your in-year admissions:

In 2022/23 we experienced difficulties placing children in higher year groups in secondary school due to a lack of available places and so we began to use Fair Access protocols to ensure children without a school place could access education. In 2023/24 we relied almost exclusively on Fair Access protocols to place children in Years 9, 10 and 11.

Secondary schools in Brent have supported the Fair Access process in response to the need to place many more children than in previous years. A new Fair Access protocol has been developed and the process itself has been streamlined and digitised to support decision making at Fair Access meetings.

The Brent School estate has sufficient built capacity to meet in year demand. However, there are schools that are operating below their built capacity reflecting Year 7 demand patterns. This limits the number of children who can be placed after the normal year of entry. Schools are unable to quickly recruit teachers and open additional teaching capacity in order to meet demand as cohorts grow. Conversations are underway with identified secondary schools to discuss and agree actions which can be collaboratively taken to address the sufficiency of secondary pupil places in Brent.

## **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:

Looked after children in Brent continue to be very well supported by social work teams and Brent Virtual School staff who strongly advocate for them to receive a place at a good or outstanding school and who are proactive in engaging with other relevant admission authorities.

### 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:

A significant proportion of children requiring in-year placements in Brent are new arrivals from abroad. Some of these children have special educational needs which may be undocumented, or they have been assessed overseas but the validity of this assessment is uncertain. Brent mainstream schools have in some specific circumstances been reluctant to admit a child because of the immediate difficulties in meeting their needs in a safe way for the child and other children at

the school. In many cases, once admitted to school the child's needs are found to more complex to manage and / or safety considerations are greater than first expected.

The local authority is refining communication processes between the School Admissions Team and the Inclusion Service to support both families and schools to ensure children with special educational needs receive the support they require to transition to new schools. This is to ensure any delays for admission into a mainstream school are kept to an absolute minimum.

#### **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%

If you have below 75% for either phase, please explain why:

A new Fair Access protocol has been developed and agreed with schools in the 2023/2024 academic year.

- 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	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	0	221
Total	0	221

- 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?

We have seen a further large increase in children referred through the Fair Access Protocol. This is directly attributable to an increase in children arriving into the borough who are out of school and cannot secure a school place through the normal admissions process within 4 weeks. This is particularly the case in higher year groups (Years 9, 10 and 11) (see above). Therefore, the majority of children making an in-year application in these year groups, who do not have a school place within a reasonable distance, are being placed through fair access.

- 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:

The Fair Access Panel is efficient in placing children on a regular basis and as the Fair Access Protocol has been reviewed and agreed with schools, processes and reporting has been streamlined to be more efficient. However, these children would benefit further by not having to wait four weeks in order to be eligible for Fair Access when we already know it is very unlikely they will secure a place through the normal in-year admissions process for Years 9, 10 and 11.

## E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>3</sup> It is important that only Directions to maintained schools are included here. Numbers of Directions to academies are already held by the Department.

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%

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:

In-year admissions for this group of children work well in Brent but there is no complacency with good collaborative working with school leaders to understand what works well and what could still work better. From this feedback processes are refined both before and during in-year admissions.

Children's details are added to school waiting lists or preference offers are made as appropriate. Children without a preference offer and identified as being without a current school place will either receive an offer at an alternative school within a reasonable distance or will be referred to our Choice Access and Fair Access Interview assessment centre (for children in Years 10 and 11 who are new arrivals to the country) or the Fair Access Panel (for all other children). CAFAI and Fair Access Panels take place regularly and children referred are found a suitable placement.

v. 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):

The local authority would welcome taking responsibility for in-year admissions for all schools to make the system easier for parents and to ensure children get a timely in-year offer.

### **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?

## **Section 4 - Feedback**

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

Thank you for completing this template.

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