



Office of
the Schools
Adjudicator

Local Authority Report
to
The Schools Adjudicator
from

Royal Borough of Greenwich
to be provided by
31 October 2025

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by
31 October 2025 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 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.

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 24/25 compared to 23/24?**

Year Group	Much less challenging	Less challenging	No change	More challenging	Much more challenging
Reception			✓		
Year 7			✓		
Other relevant years of entry			✓		

Please give examples to illustrate your answer if you wish:

In the primary school cohort, all on-time applicants for a Reception place for entry in September 2024 received an offer or allocation on Primary National Offer Day (NOD). Approximately 90% of applicants were offered their first preference, and 99% received an offer for one of their preferred schools. This is broadly in line with the past three years.

In the secondary school cohort, due to the higher number of applications than available places in the borough, 98% of on-time applicants for a Year 7 place for entry in September 2024 received an offer or allocation on Secondary NOD. Of these, 65% were offered their first preference, maintaining the same rate as in 2022/23. The remaining 2% (equivalent to 74 residents) received an offer or allocation by 28 March 2024. Several factors contributed to this, including increased demand for Greenwich schools from local and neighbouring residents, 11 more places being reserved in mainstream secondary schools for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with an Education and Health Care (EHC) Plan, and the continued delay of a new free school that had been scheduled to open in the borough in September 2023. To address these challenges, temporary capacity was created, allowing the local authority to secure places for all applicants, including those applying late, before the academic year started in September 2024.

As in previous years, more boys than girls were affected by unplaced allocations, with 85% of the unplaced students on NOD being boys. This highlights the ongoing imbalance between the availability of school places for boys and girls in the borough

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**:

In line with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code, all own admission authorities within Royal Borough of Greenwich give priority to looked-after and previously looked-after children in their oversubscription criteria. Acting as the home local authority and maintaining authority, all looked-after and previously looked-after children who required a school place have secured a place at their first preference school for September 2024. There is a strong partnership working relationship between the School Admissions, Virtual School and Safeguarding and Social Care Services within Royal Greenwich, which ensures that applications for looked-after and previously looked-after children are made on time.

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:

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are very well supported in Royal Borough of Greenwich. The SEND Code of Practice provides clear guidance on how transitions for children with Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plans should be managed. The Royal Greenwich SEND Assessment and Review Service works collaboratively with parents and schools to ensure that provisions are consulted on and named in EHC Plans within the required timeframes. This information is also shared promptly with the School Admissions Service, allowing for places to be reserved in named mainstream settings during the normal admissions rounds co-ordination process. As a result, every child with a mainstream school named on their EHC Plan secured a place at a preferred school in the 2024/25 admissions rounds.

In the 2024/25 admission rounds, a total of 155 secondary school places and 10 primary school places were reserved and offered outside the co-ordination process to children with SEND who had mainstream schools named in their EHC Plans. This represents an increase of 11 reserved places in secondary schools and a decrease of 15 in primary schools compared to 2023/24.

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				✓	
Secondary				✓	

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

Although the number of primary in-year applications processed during the 2024/25 academic year was lower than that of 2023/24, the main challenge was in relation to placing children with special educational needs yet to have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This was due to schools being concerned about the level of need within the relevant year groups and lack of resources to adequately meet these children's needs. This often led to children being out of school for longer periods than expected. In these circumstances, the LA's intervention was necessary to negotiate bespoke support arrangements with the relevant schools based on each child's circumstances. As a result of this challenge, a process of referral to our Complex Panel has since been developed to provide a consistent approach to ensuring that every child who needs additional support receives the right support whilst schools initiate the statutory needs assessment process for the child.

In contrast, secondary in-year admissions saw a notable increase in demand compared to 2023/24, with particular pressure on places in Years 8, 10, and 11. This was largely due to new arrivals in the country and increased cross-borough movement. Although fewer children were placed through the Fair Access Protocol in 2024/25, the main challenge was the time taken by own admission authority schools to notify parents of the outcomes of their applications. Even after places have been offered, the time taken to enrol children was often prolonged due to various reasons. Additionally, one own admission authority school reduced its capacity mid-year in a high-pressure year group, without prior consultation with the LA, further limiting the number of available places and exacerbating the challenges faced by families seeking a place in that year group.

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:

Although the in-year admissions process has generally worked well for looked-after or previously looked-after children, there were some challenges particularly when securing a school place in another local authority area or when a preferred school within our borough may already have a high number of disadvantaged students requiring additional behavioural support while operating at full capacity. In such cases, interventions by the Virtual School Service in negotiating bespoke supports with the relevant schools have proven successful in securing places for this group of children.

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:

While our pathway system has successfully provided a clear process for securing school places for children arriving from abroad with SEND but without an EHCP, challenges remain when supporting UK-based children with SEND but without an EHCP, when transferring between schools. These challenges often arise when schools express concerns about their capacity to meet additional needs, particularly in year groups already operating at full capacity and/or with a high number of children requiring support. This often leads to this cohort of children being out of school for a considerable amount of time.

To manage this situation, we introduced a referral process to our Complex Panel, where expert assessments are carried out based on the evidence provided by schools. These assessments inform decisions on the appropriate level of support to be offered to both the school and the child. Support may include financial resources aligned with our established SEND funding banding rates and/or access to therapeutic interventions.

This approach ensures that schools receive the necessary resources proportionate to the child's level of need, thereby facilitating smoother transitions into new educational settings for this cohort of children.

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:

Not applicable.

- 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	10	7
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	9	30
Total	19	37

- 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?

In 2024/25, there was an increase in referrals to our Primary Fair Access Protocol compared to 2023/24. This rise appears to be driven primarily by children transferring between schools who present with behavioural needs or suspected but undiagnosed SEND. The underlying reasons for this increase is unclear.

In contrast, placements through our Secondary Fair Access Protocol significantly decreased in 2024/25 when compared to the previous year. This reduction is largely attributed to a drop in the number of new arrivals from overseas requiring placement via FAP. While the exact cause is yet to be confirmed, it is suspected that recent changes to immigration rules may have had some effects.

- 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:

Children referred to our Fair Access Protocol are very well served as all schools in the borough buy-in to our protocol and ably represented on both the primary and secondary panels. The multi-professional/agency nature of our panels also ensures that children and young people are very well served through the wealth of professional knowledge and support available when deciding on matters.

As a local authority we hold an annual review meeting to discuss any changes or updates we may need to apply to our protocol. All RBG schools are invited to participate.

While we continue to ensure that as a local authority, our statutory oversight function on movement of pupils through the in-year process is fulfilled, the existing legal framework which is without a mandatory LA co-ordinated in-year admissions process makes the process of ensuring greater equity between schools challenging. However, through our regular fair access review process, we have continued to emphasise collective responsibility on decisions being made about vulnerable children, which has yielded a significant improvement. We also hope that proposed changes to legislation would provide a better framework for the LA and other own admission authorities to work together in the best interests of vulnerable children.

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	

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

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

- ☐ 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% ☒

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:

In the 2024/25 in-year admissions round, there was a particular pressure on places in Years 8, 10, and 11. This trend has largely been driven by new arrivals to the borough, reflecting a wider pattern seen across London. The in-year admissions process remains complex, as parents must apply individually to each own admission authority school, each with its own criteria. This has led to delays in securing school places, resulting in some children being out of school for a considerable period, which negatively impacts both their academic progress and wellbeing.

In 2024/25, 253 in-year applications were received from new arrivals from overseas, representing a notable reduction from 426 in 2023/24. While the reason for this decline is unclear, it has eased pressure on the borough's Fair Access Protocol (FAP). In 2023/24, most new arrivals were placed via FAP as they were unable to secure a place within a reasonable period through the standard in-year process. In contrast, only 16 such placements were made through FAP in 2024/25.

Tracking children not in education continues to be a challenge, largely due to the fragmented nature of the in-year admissions system and the limited coordination between local authorities and academies. The proposed Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, currently progressing through Parliament, introduces new duties for

both local authorities and academy schools to collaborate on school place planning and admissions. While the Bill does not establish a new framework specifically for in-year admissions, it is expected to lay the groundwork for updates to the School Admissions Code, which could provide clearer guidance on managing in-year admissions and help reduce the risk of children missing education due to procedural delays.

To improve coordination locally, Greenwich has established a School Admissions Officers' Forum. This platform fosters collaboration between the local authority and own admission authority schools, i.e., academies and voluntary-aided schools, with the aim of streamlining admissions processes and improving outcomes for children and families.

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):

In 2024/25, we experienced a situation where an academy school unilaterally reduced its available capacity for a specific year group mid-year, without prior consultation with the local authority. This year group was already under significant pressure for school places borough-wide. The academy's decision further constrained capacity and impacted our ability to respond to increasing demand.

Despite the local authority's request for the places to be reinstated, the academy declined, citing a lack of resources. As a result, children seeking places in this year group remained out of school longer than necessary, exacerbating delays in securing appropriate education provision for children in-year.

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.

The report has not considered or requested information on placement of children in alternative provisions in-year.

Thank you for completing this template.

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