Office of the Schools Adjudicator

Template for

Local Authority Report

to

The Schools Adjudicator

from

Royal Borough of Greenwich

to be provided by

31 October 2026

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Please email your completed report to: Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 31 October 2026 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 2025/2026 academic year and be submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) by 31 October 2026.**

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[1] and the Education Middle School (England) Regulations 2002[2].

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 25/26 compared to 24/25**?

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 2025 received an offer or allocation on Primary National Offer Day (NOD). Approximately 91% of applicants were offered their first preference, and 99% received an offer for one of their preference schools. This is broadly in line with the past three years.

In the secondary school cohort, as with previous years, there was a higher number of applications than available places in the borough during the 2025 secondary admission round. Despite this, 99% of on-time applicants received an offer or allocation on Secondary NOD. Of these, 64% were offered their first preference, consistent with the 2024/25 round. Thirty-nine (39) residents (equivalent to 1% of the total number of applicants) did not receive an offer or allocation on NOD but they were all provided with places by 27 March 2025. While this was an improvement from 2024/25, when 74 residents (2% of applicants in the round) did not receive an offer or allocation on NOD, all unplaced children in the 2025/26 round were boys due to shortage of places for boys in the borough. The majority of the unplaced boys were concentrated in the south, i.e., SE9 part of the borough (specifically within the Avery Hill, Coldharbour, Mottingham and New Eltham areas).

This highlights the continued imbalance between the availability of school places for boys and girls and localised pressure on school places in the south of the borough.

The proposed Harris Academy Avery Hill free school for boys, which was to be funded and project managed by the Department for Education, was originally intended to open in 2023 and would have contributed additional secondary school capacity for boys within the borough. However, following a review of the project,

the Secretary of State took a final decision in March 2026 not to proceed with the school and the project has now been formally discontinued. As a result, the anticipated additional capacity will not be delivered, and the existing imbalance in the availability of secondary school places for boys is expected to remain a pressure within the borough in the short to medium term.

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**:

All own admission authorities in Royal Borough of Greenwich continue to 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 2025. 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 the best interests of looked-after and previously looked-after children are well served during the admission rounds.

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 schools named under Section 1 of EHC Plans are able to adequately meet young peoples' needs. Information about named schools are shared promptly with the School Admissions Service, allowing for places to be reserved in mainstream settings during the normal admissions rounds co-ordination process. As a result, every child with a mainstream school named under Section I of their EHC Plan secured a place at a preferred school in the 2025/26 admissions rounds.

Nineteen (19) places were reserved in mainstream primary schools and 170 places reserved in mainstream secondary schools for children and young people with EHC Plan in the 2025/26 coordinated admission rounds. This represents an increase of 9 and 15 places reserved for children with EHC Plan in primary and secondary schools respectively compared to 2024/25.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Which of the following best describes the overall level of challenge for your in-year admissions in 25/26 compared to 24/25?

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:

Similar to the 2024/25 round, the principal challenge during the 2025/26 in-year round remained being able to secure places for children with special educational needs who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). At various times, some schools were concerned about the capacity to meet need when children without an EHCP but with demonstrable need were seeking places in mainstream settings. As a result, a small number of children remained out of school for longer than would ordinarily be expected during the in-year admission round.

In these cases, local authority's intervention was required to facilitate placements through discussions with schools and the development of bespoke support arrangements tailored to individual circumstances. The introduction of referrals to our Complex Panel, through which relevant professionals consider each case and determine appropriate support and resource requirements, has been instrumental in resolving these challenges. This process provided a consistent and transparent approach, ensuring that children received the support they need while schools initiate the statutory needs assessment process where appropriate.

As in 2024/25, there continued to be particular pressure on secondary school places in Years 8, 10 and 11, driven largely by new arrivals to the borough and increased cross-borough movement. Despite these pressures, the number of cases referred to the Fair Access Protocol (FAP) because a place could not be secured through the normal in-year admissions process was lower than in previous years. This is likely to reflect the reduced levels of pupil mobility, consistent with the lower number of in-year applications during the year.

There was a particular challenge involving a small number of academy schools implementing changes to year groups organisation without prior consultation with the local authority. Through ongoing engagement with such schools, resolutions were reached that safeguarded the interests of the affected pupils and ensured appropriate admission arrangements were maintained.

While the local authority continues to fulfil its statutory role in overseeing pupil movement through the in-year admissions process, the absence of a fully co-

ordinated in-year admissions system continues to present challenges in achieving an equitable distribution of vulnerable pupils across all schools. Secondary community schools have, at times, expressed concerns about variations in in-year admission practices between admission authorities, which can result in a disproportionate number of pupils with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and other complex needs being placed in community secondary schools through the casual in-year admissions process managed by the Council. This can create additional pressures on those schools and, in some cases, contribute to delays or uncertainty in securing appropriate provision where there are differing views between schools as to which setting is best placed to support the child's needs.

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:

While the in-year admissions process has generally worked well for looked after and previously looked after children, there remained some challenges during 2025/26 in securing school places for this cohort. As in 2024/25, difficulties were most often encountered where suitable placements needed to be identified across local authority boundaries or where preferred schools were operating at, or close to capacity while supporting high levels of pupil need. In these circumstances, the

intervention of the Virtual School Service was required to work with schools and neighbouring local authorities to develop tailored support arrangements able to facilitate a placement. This collaborative approach proved effective in securing appropriate provision and minimising delays in children accessing a school place.

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:

Parents of children with an EHCP may seek an alternative school place during the school year for a range of reasons, including changes arising from the annual review process, a change of address, a breakdown in the relationship with the current school, or movement between local authority areas. Where this occurs, the local authority consults with potential placements and works with parents to identify an appropriate school.

While these circumstances can occasionally result in delays in securing a new placement, the statutory framework governing children with EHCPs provides the local authority with a range of mechanisms to secure suitable education in a timely manner. Where necessary, interim education arrangements are put in place to ensure continuity of provision, including alternative tuition and the use of formal powers to direct admissions where appropriate. As a result, children with EHCPs continue to receive education while long-term placement arrangements are finalised.

For children who do not have an EHCP, the borough's pathway system has provided a clear process for securing school places, particularly for children arriving from overseas with SEND but without an EHCP. However, challenges remain in securing timely placements for children with demonstrable SEND needs

who transfer between schools during the school year. Difficulties can arise where schools have concerns about their capacity to meet additional needs, particularly in year groups operating at or near capacity or where there are already significant levels of pupil need. As a result, some children may experience delays in securing a new school place.

Our referral process through the Complex Panel has been instrumental in addressing these challenges. Through this process, multidisciplinary professionals consider the evidence available in each case and determine the level of support required to facilitate a placement. This may include the allocation of financial resources in line with the borough's SEND funding framework and, where appropriate, access to therapeutic interventions and specialist support.

This approach provides a transparent and consistent framework for decision-making, ensuring that schools receive resources proportionate to a child's assessed needs and helping to facilitate successful transitions into new educational settings. It also supports children in accessing appropriate provision whilst any statutory assessment processes are being considered.

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 2025 and 31 July 2026?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	1	0
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	4	3
Total	5	3

ii. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

The figures above relate only to children who were unable to secure a school place through the casual in-year admissions process and therefore required placement through the Fair Access Protocol (FAP). They do not represent the total number of cases considered at FAP during the year.

Referrals to both the Primary and Secondary Fair Access Protocols continued to decline during 2025/26 when compared with the previous two years. The number of cases presented to the Primary FAP reduced from 47 in 2023/24 and 43 in 2024/25 to 33 in 2025/26. The reduction in Secondary FAP referrals was more pronounced, falling from 204 in 2023/24 to 85 in 2025/26.

The relatively low number of pupils requiring admission through the Fair Access Protocol reflects the availability of school places across the borough and the ability to secure placements for most children through the normal in-year admissions process. Consequently, recourse to the FAP as a placement mechanism has been required less frequently.

The continuing reduction in referrals may also reflect strong partnership working between the local authority and schools, together with earlier intervention through services such as the Inclusion Support Service. This has enabled barriers to

admission to be addressed at an earlier stage, reducing the need for cases to progress to the Fair Access Protocol.

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 through FAP are well served by the borough's collaborative and established arrangements. All schools participate in the Protocol and are represented through the Primary and Secondary Fair Access Panels. As a result, our FAP continues to provide an effective safety net for vulnerable children who have been unable to secure a school place through the normal admissions process.

The multi-agency nature of the Panels ensures that placement decisions are informed by a broad range of professional expertise. This enables individual circumstances to be fully considered and supports the identification of appropriate education provision and any additional interventions required to facilitate a successful placement.

Annual reviews of the Fair Access Protocol provide a valuable opportunity to evaluate its effectiveness and consider any amendments required in response to emerging challenges, legislative changes or local priorities. All schools in the borough are invited to participate in these reviews, helping to ensure that the Protocol continues to operate effectively and command sector-wide support.

While the local authority continues to fulfil its statutory role in overseeing pupil movement through the in-year admissions process, the absence of a fully co-ordinated in-year admissions system presents challenges in achieving an equitable distribution of vulnerable pupils across all schools. Secondary community schools have, at times, expressed concerns about variations in admission practices between admission authorities, which can result in a disproportionate number of pupils with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and other complex needs being placed in community secondary schools through the casual in-year admissions process managed by the Council. This can create additional pressures on those schools and increase reliance on support available through the Fair Access Protocol and wider local authority inclusion services.

Through regular review of fair access arrangements, the local authority continues to promote the principle of collective responsibility for vulnerable children and young people. Partnership working between schools remains strong, and placement decisions are monitored to ensure that the aims of the Protocol are upheld. The local authority welcomes recent legislative changes strengthening the

duty on schools to cooperate and anticipates that these will further support collaborative working in the best interests of vulnerable children.

E. Directions to maintained schools to admit children[3]

How many directions did the local authority make between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026 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 2025 and 31 July 2026 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 2025/2026 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 2025/2026 academic year

Between 0% and 24% ☒

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

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:

For the majority of children without SEND and who are not looked after or previously looked after, the in-year admissions process continues to work effectively. Most applicants are able to secure a school place through the normal admissions process within a reasonable timescale, supported by sufficient school place capacity across the borough and clear admission arrangements.

Demand for places remains highest in certain year groups, particularly at secondary level, where localised pressures can occasionally make it more difficult to secure a preferred school. However, in most cases, suitable alternative places are available and children are able to access education without significant delay.

The local authority continues to provide advice and support to families throughout the application process and works closely with schools to facilitate placements where challenges arise. Strong partnership working across the borough has helped to ensure that the vast majority of children are successfully admitted through the normal in-year admissions process without the need for additional intervention.

While the absence of a fully co-ordinated in-year admissions system can occasionally present challenges in obtaining timely information from some admission authorities, this has not generally prevented children from securing school places. The local authority continues to work with all schools to promote consistency, transparency and equitable access to education through the in-year admissions process.

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):

Overall, the local authority has been able to secure school places for children requiring admission during the school year, either through the normal in-year admissions process or, where necessary, through the Fair Access Protocol. Whilst there have been occasional challenges in identifying placements in year groups experiencing higher demand, particularly in Years 8, 10 and 11, suitable provision has generally been secured.

The most significant challenges have arisen where children present with complex needs but do not have an EHCP, or where there are differing views regarding the

most appropriate education setting to meet a child's needs. In some cases, this has resulted in delays in children starting in their new schools. The local authority has sought to address these challenges through early engagement with schools, use of multi-agency panels, and the provision of additional support and resources where appropriate.

Royal Borough of Greenwich remains concerned that the absence of a fully co-ordinated in-year admissions system can make it more difficult to achieve an equitable distribution of vulnerable pupils across all schools and to maintain clear oversight of pupil movement. Nevertheless, strong partnership working with schools and other stakeholders has generally enabled barriers to admission to be resolved and appropriate placements secured.

During 2025/26, there were no cases where it proved impossible to identify a school place. However, a small number of cases took longer than would ordinarily be expected due to the complexity of individual circumstances and the need to ensure that appropriate support arrangements were in place.

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?

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

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2027.

None

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to Office of the Schools Adjudicator by 31 October 2026