



Office of the
Schools
Adjudicator

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT
TO
THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR
FROM
Wokingham Borough Council

30 JUNE 2012

Report Cleared by: Brian Grady
**Strategic Commissioner for Children,
Young People and Families**

Date submitted: 29 June 2012

By: Sue Riddick
School Admissions Lead Officer

Contact email address: sue.riddick@wokingham.gov.uk

Telephone number: 0118 974 6113

www.education.gov.uk/schoolsadjudicator/

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 in the report to the adjudicator and makes provision for the local authority to include any other local issues.
3. The remit letter from the Secretary of State for Education to the Chief Schools Adjudicator also makes reference to additional matters on which he wishes to have a report included in the Chief Adjudicator's annual report. 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.

For ease of reference the legislation is given below.

Legal References

"88P Reports by local authorities to adjudicator

(1) A local authority in England must make such reports to the adjudicator about such matters connected with relevant school admissions as may be required by the code for school admissions.

(2) In subsection (1) 'relevant school admissions', in relation to a local authority, means:

- (a) the admission of pupils to relevant schools in the authority's area;*
- (b) the admission of pupils in the authority's area to other relevant schools;*
- (c) the entry to the sixth form of pupils who have been admitted to relevant schools in the authority's area; and*
- (d) the entry to the sixth form of pupils in the authority's area who have been admitted to other relevant schools.*

(3) In this section, "relevant school" means--

- (a) a maintained school,*
- (b) an Academy,*
- (c) a city technology college, or*
- (d) a city technology of the arts."*

"Section 88Q Reports under section 88P: provision of information

(1) A relevant person must, on request, provide a local authority in England with such information as the authority may reasonably require for the purpose of enabling the authority to fulfil their duties under section 88P.

(2) In subsection (1), “relevant person”, in relation to a local authority, means-

- (a) an admission authority (other than the local authority) for a maintained school in the area of the local authority;
- (b) -----
- (c) any member of an appeal panel constituted under section 94 by-

- (i) the local authority, or
- (ii) the governing body of a foundation or voluntary aided school in the area of the local authority;

(d) the proprietor of-

- (i) an Academy,
- (ii) a city technology college, or
- (iii) a city college for the technology of the arts,

in the area of the local authority;

- (e) any other local authority in England;
- (f) other person as may be prescribed.”

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.

Where type of school is given, foundation covers foundation schools and foundation schools with a foundation (trust schools).

Admission Arrangements for Admissions in September 2012

Please provide details of how the admission arrangements for schools in your local authority serves the interests of the groups of children listed below. Please include details of any problems that have arisen while allocating places for admissions in September 2012. (the Code paragraph 3.23 a) refers)

Looked after Children:

Looked after children are prioritised as required by the School Admissions Code and admitted to schools. Information is sought from the local authority with responsibility for the child to support applications made under this

criterion.

Four children are allocated under this criterion to start school and one child is currently allocated to transfer to secondary school in September 2012.

Thirteen children have been allocated in-year for the academic year 2011/12. 11 in the primary phase and two in the secondary phase.

Previously looked after children: Giving priority to previously looked after children was not a requirement in admission arrangements for admissions from September 2012. However, if you have any evidence about the admission of such children please include details here:

No evidence has been collected on the admission of previously looked after children as these children are not currently prioritised for admission.

Children with disabilities:

The authority makes provision for children with disabilities through individual Statements of Special Education Need and has resources to meet specific needs as follows:

Secondary:

Physical disabilities – preferred school – The Piggott CE School

Dyslexia – resource at The Bulmershe School

Primary:

Physical disabilities – resource at All Saint’s Church of England Aided Primary School and Lambs Lane Primary School

Hearing impairment – designated schools – Emmbrook Infant and Junior Schools and Ambleside Nursery School

Speech and Language – resource at Highwood Primary School

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – resource at Wescott Infant and Westende Junior Schools.

The authority has, as its second oversubscription criterion, a criterion pertaining to “children who have a serious medical, physical or psychological condition which makes it essential that they attend the preferred school rather than any other. This criterion enables parents to apply where their child has a specific need that can only be met by the preferred school provided evidence is submitted from a professional person involved with the family to support their preference for consideration by an Admissions Panel. Four children to start school and two children due to start secondary school in September 2012 were allocated under this criterion.

Schools are required to make provision within their policies and procedures to meet the needs of children with disabilities. There is a process for schools to bid for capital funding to improve accommodation or to make specific provision where appropriate.

Children who have special educational needs:

Reviews were completed by statutory deadlines for the primary to secondary and infant to junior school transfer. Parental preference is taken into account when considering naming a school on the Statement of Special Educational Needs and parents have the opportunity to express preferences through the completion of the common application form.

Parents of children with statements of special educational needs are invited to attend a seminar during year five to explain transition to secondary school, including presentations by the School Admissions and School Transport Teams.

Secondary schools will admit the following number of children with statements naming the school to start year 7 in September 2012.

The Bulmershe – 5
The Emmbrook – 7
The Forest – 3
The Holt – 3
Maiden Erlegh – 8
The Piggott CE – 3
St Crispin's – 6
Waingels College – 8

Total 43. There are no current assessments underway.
Total reported in 2010/11 – 42 (plus 10 under assessment).

Nine children were named for maintained schools in the transfer to year 3 junior schools for September 2013.

Due to the number of late requests for assessment from parents; early year's settings or late moves to the area, the number of completed assessments prior to the main allocation of school places for children starting school is low. Currently seven statements have been completed; three for special schools and four for mainstream schools. A further seven children are currently under assessment. Whilst it is recognised that the admittance of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs would be 'excepted' under the Code; ideally it would be helpful to aid transition and to maintain the infant class size ratio if assessments were completed prior to the allocation. A number of resource places currently remain unfilled to meet the needs of children through late assessment.

The SEN Team report that four tribunals were lodged this academic year; two as a result of a refusal to assess, both of which were subsequently undertaken with final placement being negotiated without the recourse to Tribunal, one for an independent school and one for an independent special school.

The varied practices by local authorities in the naming of schools for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs can mean that such children

are sometimes not included as part of the co-ordinated admissions process. Whilst this authority invites parents to express their preferences and liaises with the SEN Team to ensure that places are allocated within the admission number; some neighbouring local authorities operate the placement of their children outside of the admissions process which has led to some confusion, late notification and over-allocation.

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:

The current Fair Access Protocols have been adopted as part of the determined admission arrangements and these are used to admit children who have been excluded and require reintegration to mainstream schools; managed moves and the admission of vulnerable children. The current Fair Access Protocols were included as part of the annual consultation on admission arrangements and therefore all schools had the opportunity to comment on the Protocols prior to adoption.

New protocols are currently under consideration following the changes in the new School Admissions Code and formal consultation will take place with all schools in the early part of the autumn term and, if agreed by the majority of schools, will be adopted and implemented as soon as possible.

- 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 that have not agreed Fair Access Protocol	
	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11
Community	0	0
Voluntary Controlled	0	0
Voluntary Aided	0	0
Foundation	n/a	n/a
Academy	0	0

c) Please give your assessment of how well the Fair Access Protocol has worked in the academic year 2011/12 in placing children without a school place in schools in a timely manner. Include details of any specific problems that have been encountered in applying the protocol.

All schools in the Wokingham Borough, including own admission authority schools, have reacted positively to approaches made by the local authority for the prompt placement of children under the Fair Access Protocol for Vulnerable Children.

There have been three requests for managed moves; two have been successful. Due to some issues around the third, the Secondary Federation is actively working on a revised Protocol and referral paperwork.

Two young people have been reintegrated from Foundry College (PRU) to mainstream secondary schools following permanent exclusion. One child permanently excluded from a mainstream primary school was reintegrated into a special school.

d) 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	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11
Community	15	25	0	1
Voluntary Controlled	2	N/A	0	N/A
Voluntary Aided	4	N/A	0	N/A
Foundation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Academy	N/A	7	N/A	0

e) Please comment below on the extent to which schools have co-operated in the operation of the protocol.

Please see comments in (c) above.

All schools within the Wokingham Borough have co-operated fully when approached to admit children especially under Vulnerable Pupil's Protocol.

f) If children have not been placed in a school through the protocol, have you used the powers of direction to provide a place for a child?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No N/A

g) 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 Secretary of State or after an appeal to the Adjudicator?

Type of School	Number of children placed	
	Schools for pupils up to age 11	Schools for pupils over age 11
Community		
Voluntary Controlled		
Voluntary Aided		
Foundation		
Academy		

Please add any other relevant information you wish to include in this section.

The Fair Access Protocols only apply, under the School Admissions Code, to in-year admissions and therefore does not apply to the co-ordinated schemes for entry to primary; year three transfer to junior schools and transfer to secondary school until after co-ordination conclude on 31 August. It would be helpful for the Protocols to apply to new or revised applications received after the offer date and for the exceptions to infant class size legislation to be extended to include those children who meet the criteria under the Fair Access Protocols.

Co-ordination

Please assess the effectiveness of co-ordination of primary and secondary admissions for September 2012 in your local authority.

Primary:

Starting School (Reception)

The total number of on-time Wokingham Borough applications numbered 1,946 an increase of 118 from the previous year and 195 more than applicants for entry in September 2010. 145 places were created within the Borough to ensure sufficient places to allocate a place to all those Wokingham Borough applicants who applied by the deadline as follows:

Hawkedon Primary – 20 places
The Colleton Primary – 25 places
Shinfield Infant & Nursery – 30 places
Lambs Lane Primary – 30 places
Winnersh Primary – 30 places and
St Teresa's Catholic Primary – 10 places

83% received an offer for their first preferred school with 96% receiving an

offer for one of their preferred schools. 70 applicants were allocated to an alternative school where preferred schools were full. 75% applied online. 1,924 were allocated to a Wokingham Borough school and 20 to schools outside the Borough. On 20 April, 2012 only 19 places remained unfilled - All Saints CE Aided Primary School (10 places), Emmbrook Infant School (2 places) and Winnersh Primary School (7 places).

This was the first year where parents could express up to four preferences (previously this numbered three). 423 expressed a single preference, 413 expressed two preferences, 532 expressed three preferences and 578 expressed four preferences.

The current place situation (at 21 June 2012) is as follows:

All Saints CE Aided Primary School – 13 places
Emmbrook Infant – 1 place
Lambs Lane Primary – 1 place
Whiteknights Primary – 4 places
Willow Bank Infant – 2 places
Winnersh Primary – 4 places
Total: 25 places

A total of 78 late applications have been received so far and all late applicants have been allocated a school place if they are living in the borough.

There were some delays in receiving the initial applications from other local authorities which meant that the own admission authority schools received those applications after the date set by the local authority for consideration. Now that a national offer date has been set with effect from 16 April 2014; it would be helpful to set national co-ordination dates to ensure that the increasing number of own admission authority schools can be assured of receiving information for ranking.

Transfer to year 3 (junior schools)

The total number of on-time Wokingham Borough applications numbered 507 with 57% applying online. 96% received their first preferred school with 98% receiving an offer of one of their preferred schools. Four applicants were allocated to an alternative school where preferred schools were full. 13 applications were received for higher ranked primary schools which will be considered as an in-year application shortly and 13 applications have been received late.

Parents could express up to four preferences but as expected the take-up of this was low as parents mainly expect their children to move to the linked junior school, as a result 322 expressed a single preference; 130 expressed two preferences, 40 expressed three preferences and 15 expressed four preferences.

46 junior school places currently remain unfilled – Emmbrook Junior has 14 places; Gorse Ride Junior has five places, Shinfield St Mary's CE Aided Junior School has 22 places and Willow Bank Junior School has five places.

Secondary:

The total number of on-time Wokingham Borough applications numbered 1,673, a relatively low number of applications compared with previous years and numbers are expected to rise in the future especially as the rising primary numbers come through.

79% received an offer for their first preferred schools with 98% receiving an offer for one of their preferred schools. 28 applicants were allocated to an alternative school where preferred schools were full. 79% applied online. 1,390 applicants were allocated to a Wokingham Borough school and 283 were allocated to schools outside the Borough. On national offer day; 101 places remained unfilled – The Bulmershe had 72 places; The Emmbrook had 18 places and The Forest had 11 places.

This was the first year where parents could express up to four preferences (previously this numbered three). 368 expressed a single preference; 333 expressed two preferences; 460 expressed three preferences and 512 expressed four preferences.

The current place situation (at 21 June 2012) is as follows:

The Bulmershe School – 90 places available
The Emmbrook School – 28 places available
The Forest School – 22 places available
Waingels College – 3 places available
Total: 143 places available in the Wokingham Borough.

Oakbank School, the proposed Free School due to open in September 2012, considered applications outside of the co-ordinated scheme. It is unknown what affect this will have on each school should the Secretary of State give final approval to open as it is known that some parents currently hold two school place offers. Next year, the school will be required to be part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme should its Funding Agreement be agreed.

A total of 51 late applications were received.

Wokingham Borough Council uses Capita ONE admissions and transfer system and there were some technical issues with importing of files and the generation of offer emails. For all transfer groups, there were issues with online application process relating to the system providing a list of some schools against the post code and some schools not appearing at all. Capita has acknowledged this is a problem and has provided a temporary solution and hopefully this will be fully resolved for the next round.

In-year 2011/12 (not required by the OSA):

A total of 1,046 primary in-year applications have been processed; a reduction of 84 on the previous year and 463 secondary in-year applications

	Lodged	Upheld
Number of appeals for pupils up to age 11.	97	10 refused Remainder pending
Number of appeals for pupils over age 11.	80	28*
Date up to which this information applies.	21/6/12	21/6/12

*This figure includes 23 appeals upheld by the Diocese for The Piggott CE School – total lodged 28.

Number of appeals lodged in-year for admission from September 2011 to July 2012 (this information is not required by the OSA)

	Lodged	Upheld
Number of appeals for pupils up to age 11.	55	14
Number of appeals for pupils over age 11.	49	17** (includes 12 appeals upheld for The Piggott CE School)
Date up to which this information applies.	21/6/12	21/6/12

**This figure includes 12 appeals upheld by the Diocese for The Piggott CE School – total lodged 14.

Please note there will be an opportunity to update this data up until 31 August 2012 – the update form is attached as an appendix to this form and provided separately for you to return if you wish at the end of August.

Other Issues

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

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

This report will be published to the council's website in the School Admissions Section.

If not yet published please provide details of when and where the report will be published:

This report will be published by 30 June 2012.

Local Authority Issues

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

The principal admissions issue that faced this local authority this year is the unprecedented demand for primary school places.

A small number of Church of England Aided Primary Schools were not fully compliant with the consultation requirements of the Code. Whilst the mandatory changes were carried out, there were some amendments made, on the advice of the Oxford Diocese, to the oversubscription criteria which were not then subject to consultation and were subsequently determined by the Governing Bodies. The School Admissions Forum has written to each of the schools concerned. The schools in question are:

Grazeley Parochial CE Aided Primary School (this school experience IT difficulties during the consultation period)
Sonning CE Aided Primary School
Shinfield St Mary's CE Aided Junior School
St Sebastian's CE Aided Primary School

Although the local authority has no specific objection to these amendments; the Code does not allow for discretion over the requirement to consult and therefore the local authority will be notifying the Office of the Schools Adjudicator of this breach of the Code prior to 30 June.

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School had not submitted its determined 2013/14 admission arrangements as required and had not posted the agreed policy to its website. The school did not consult and the local authority would not expect to see any changes to the previous arrangements other than those mandatory changes required by the new Code. The local authority will be reporting the school to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator prior to 30 June.

Remit Letter from the Secretary of State for Education to the Chief Adjudicator

The Secretary of State has asked that the Chief Adjudicator's annual report includes an assessment of the impact in local areas of having more own admission authorities and any implications for parental choice.

Please give the number of types of Schools in your local authority.

Type of School	Number of schools		
	Number of Schools for pupils up to age 11	Number of Schools for pupils over age 11	Total number of Schools
Community	31	5	36
Voluntary Controlled	9	0	9
Voluntary Aided	9	0	9
Foundation	0	0	0
Academy	0	3	3
Total number of Schools	49	8	57

Does the local authority carry out any investigations into the impact for parents of having many or most or all schools in an area that are their own admission authority?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

If **YES**, what was the outcome of the investigation:

If **NO**, are there any plans to monitor the impact for parents of having an increasing number of own admission authority schools:

The local authority ensures that the admission arrangements of own admission authority schools are compliant with the School Admissions Code annually. Where there is non compliance, the local authority will raise an objection to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

The majority of schools within the Borough are community or voluntary controlled schools especially in the primary sector and therefore it is not currently true that most or all schools in the area are their own admission authority in the Wokingham Borough.

In the secondary sector, of the three new Academies; one was previously a Church of England Voluntary Aided school and was the only secondary school that previously set its own admission arrangements. The two new Academies which were previously community schools, both currently commission the local authority to rank applications and administer appeals on their behalf.

A new secondary Free School – Oakbank School - is currently waiting for its Funding Agreement from the Secretary of State for Education and is due to open in September 2012.

As the number of own admission authority schools increase, it is likely that the local authority will monitor the impact for parents. The impact is currently minimal as all own admission authority schools have agreed to be part of the local authority in-year co-ordinated admissions scheme in 2013/14 ensuring a more cohesive approach to ensuring the prompt placement of children in an

increasingly difficulty environment of reducing school places.

If the admission arrangements of individual schools are all considered to be lawful, is there any difficulty for parents in securing a place at a local school?

Tick as appropriate: Yes No

If **YES**, has the local authority considered what might be done to overcome any difficulties:

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