



Local Authority Report
to
The Schools Adjudicator
from

Worcestershire Local Authority
to be provided by
31 October 2023

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**Please email your completed report to: [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](https://www.worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) by
31 October 2023 and earlier if possible**

- 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 at questions:

- i. Section 1: B.i. - B.iv. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- ii. Section 2: Ai - iv that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iii. Section 2: B.i. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.
- iv. Section 2: C.v. that there were no children falling within the relevant definition.

8. We welcome all comments on the information provided in the 505 (m) and (e) 5 (s) 6 0 59-3 (rt, b) 3 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

- ii. How 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 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 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**:

No Children in Care/Previously in Care of or in the Care of an authority outside of England have been refused a place at their preferred school for the normal point of entry.

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:

When starting school and transferring between first/middle/high or primary and secondary schools parents have access to an online system in which they can submit their preferences. When transferring to Further education SENCOs are asked to provide SEND services with a young person's preferences in the Autumn Term of Year 11. Parents and young people can also submit their preferences as part of the phase transfer process and via EHCP annual review. These preferences are processed by the WCF SEND team who undertake consultations with relevant schools to ensure a suitable placement is secured. The SEND team will formally consult with the school on the EHC Plan and in addition the Admissions team will provide the information to the schools Admissions Officer. This enables pupils with a plan to be included on the ranking list for the intake cohort. Governing Bodies/Academy Trusts thus consider those with an EHCP prior to consideration of others in their ranking lists to avoid the need for schools to admit over the PAN, wherever possible.

Section 2 - In-year admissions

A. Looked after children and previously looked after children

- i. How 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 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 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 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:

We have developed a robust system of close working between Virtual School, Social Care and School Admissions to ensure that the needs of the individual children are matched to the right education setting, prior to making applications to move school. Admission protocols for Worcestershire CLA are shared with schools and in training with Designated Teachers. This approach works well and the children in our care, being educated in our area are served well.

The Virtual School (VS) works very closely with other local authority areas to ensure that the interests of our children are well served in other areas. Where initial concerns exist about the suitability of provision, further information is provided and communications between Worcestershire VS, social care, foster carer and the receiving school take place.

There have been a few concerns raised by education settings about children who are looked after by other local authorities but educated in our area, where those local authority areas do not have a robust process for ensuring that the needs of individual children are matched to the right education setting prior to applying. We

C. Fair access protocol

- i. Do you have a fair access protocol agreed with the majority of state-funded mainstream schools in your area?

Yes for primary

Yes for secondary

- ii. If you have not been able to tick both boxes above, please explain why:

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- iii. How many children were admitted to schools in your area under the fair access protocol between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023?

Type of school	Number of Primary aged children admitted	Number of Secondary aged children admitted
Community and voluntary controlled	6	2
Foundation, voluntary aided and academies	15	57
Total	21	59

- iv. If you have seen a change in the number of children referred to your Fair Access Protocol between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023 compared to the previous academic year please indicate what you consider the key reasons for this change to be?

With the introduction of in-year co-ordination 3 years ago, and the opportunity to develop the Fair Access Protocol with settings, that ensured a more robust and accountable Fair Access Protocol. Early identification of children that qualify for Fair Access has greatly reduced the length of time a referral takes and the number of days lost to education is reduced. Close working partnership with schools in developing the protocol created an objective process that is fair for all and ensures that children a

collaborative approach which has benefitted the children and young people of Worcestershire. By working collaboratively with stakeholders through Fair Access, and Chairs of Fair Access, we are able to further develop the process for the benefit of Worcestershire children, continually improving the system for all. We did expect to continue to increase the number of children being placed promptly through Fair Access, and have seen a significant increase in children being placed through the process. We are asking FAP's to share good practice and use a broader set of data to have oversight of access to education in their area.

In addition we have seen a much higher number of children arriving new to the UK, this has greatly increased the number of children being referred through Fair Access with schools capacity to accommodate higher numbers of children in-year, being impacted. Our Sufficiency and Place Planning Team work effectively with the Admissions Team and all stakeholders, to ensure we are able to meet demand,

E. 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 2022 and 31 July 2023 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 schools in your area did the local authority co-ordinate in-year admissions during the 2022/2023 academic year

None

All

Some but less than or equal to half

More than half but less than all

- iii. 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 saw a significant increase of c35% from last year. Pupil movement continues to grow. We continue to work together with stakeholders to ensure children can be placed and use Fair Access, where we are not able to provide a school place in the first instance.

- iv. 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):

We would welcome making in-year co-ordination a statutory requirement for all schools in any new Code developments.

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?

We have not made use of the direction process in Worcestershire, but have a number of examples whereby we have brokered senior level meetings between admission authorities as well as other local authorities, this allows all parties to understand issues with placing. We have worked collaboratively to ensure that children are admitted.

Our proactive approach to partnership working produces good results and relationships that benefit young people, rather than going through the direction process, which is sometime lengthy and does not foster good working relationships.

Section 4 - Feedback

We would be grateful if you could provide any feedback on completing this report to inform our practice for 2024.

A well organised survey with the right balance of questions and details required.

Thank you for completing this template.

Please return to [Office of the Schools Adjudicator](#) by 31 October 2023