

**LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT**  
**TO**  
**THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR**  
**FROM**  
**Herefordshire Council**

**30 JUNE 2009**

**Report Cleared by.....**

**Date submitted .....**

**By Andrew Blackman**

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## SECTION 1

### FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR IN WHICH THE REPORT IS MADE - 2008 - 2009

Please complete using data/information for the period 1 September 2008 to date of report

*Code 4.9 a) (i) how well the Fair Access Protocol has worked and how many children have been admitted to each school in the area under the protocol;*

The Code at 3.44 requires (1) each local authority to have a Fair Access Protocol and (2) all schools and Academies to participate in their LA area's protocol

- a) Please confirm that the LA has a Fair Access Protocol that has been agreed with all the relevant schools in its area.

Protocol not yet agreed by all schools and academies?

We do have a protocol, but recognise with schools that we need to develop it further and work is currently underway to have a revised protocol in place by January 2010.

- b) Give your assessment of how well the Fair Access Protocol has worked since 1 September 2008:

- a. in placing children in schools;

Has worked well.

- b. the co-operation of schools and Academies in implementing the protocol; and

Good co-operation

- c. any issues you have had in implementing the protocol.

None

- c) In Appendix A, please record for each school the number of children directed to (column O) and admitted (column P) to the school under

the protocol between 1 September 2008 and date of report.

*Code 4.9 a) (ii) whether primary schools are complying with infant class size legislation*

Please include in your comments the number of schools where qualifying measures are being taken.

No primary schools are in breach of the infant class size legislation other than those circumstances covered by section 2.63 of the School Admissions Code. The two schools this relates do not expect to have to take qualifying measures in September 2009.

*Code 4.9 a) (iii) the number of admissions appeals held for each and every school in the area, and the number of appeals that were upheld.*

Please insert the data covering the period 1 September 2008 to the date of the report in Appendix A to show for each school:

- column Q - the number of appeals held;
- column R - the number of appeals upheld; and
- column S - the number of appeals pending from the date of the report onwards.

*Code 4.9 a) iv the extent to which the local authority and appeal panels in the area complied with the requirements of the Appeals Code, with reference to ensuring the timeliness and transparency of appeals, effective communications with parents and any other relevant matter.*

Please include in your comments, where there is evidence of non-compliance, what action have you taken.

**No evidence of non-compliance.**

*4.9 d) iii any other matters which affect the fairness of admission arrangements for schools for schools in the area.*

Please complete with reference to Choice Advice provided to parents applying for a secondary school place for the 2009/2010 school year.

Appendix 5 of the Code requires local authorities to provide an independent Choice Advice service that is focused on supporting the families who most need support in navigating the secondary school admissions process (paragraph 5). Choice Advice must be independent and free from any potential conflict of interest between the need of the local authority to allocate places and the advice that parents receive (paragraph 8). As a minimum, local authorities must ensure that Choice Advisers are not in the same management chain or reporting lines as the local authority's admissions staff (paragraph 9).

- a) Please confirm that your local authority has an independent Choice Advice service in place.

**YES**

- b) Please explain how you ensure the independence of the Choice Advice provided (for example, the Choice Advice service may be situated in the Parent Partnership service or Family Information Service).

**Based within the Parent Partnership Service**

- c) Please confirm that your Choice Adviser(s) are not in the same line management chain or reporting lines as staff on the admissions team.

**YES**

Choice Advice must be targeted at those parents who most need support with the secondary school admissions process (paragraph 10). Local authorities and Choice Advisers should market their service to ensure that they reach the families most in need of their support and that other relevant agencies and professionals are aware of the service they provide (paragraph 11). Choice Advisers should be proactive in reaching 'hard to reach' parents and should develop good links with organisations that may be able to refer parents to them (paragraph 12).

- d) Please explain how you ensure Choice Advice reaches those parents who are most in need of it.

**Targeting through schools, all other agencies working with vulnerable families such as traveller support groups and forces family officers. Advertising through local newspapers, radio and**

journals such as "Kids Stuff"

- e) Describe how has Choice Advice contributed to the fairness of the admissions process.

Working regularly on behalf of those parents who come into the vulnerable target groups, providing information at Yr5 Parent Information Sessions offered to families at both stages of transition, being accessible to all agencies working with families, providing email and cell phone contact and regularly asking parents for their evaluation of the service. Representing the most vulnerable parents (e.g. those who are illiterate) at appeals

Local authorities may provide Choice Advice at the primary school admission stage and for in-year applications (paragraph 5).

- f) Choice Advice is offered at the primary admissions stage?

YES

- g) Choice Advice is offered for in-year applications?

YES

It is good practice for Choice Advisers to provide support during the appeals process, particularly to those parents who accessed Choice Advice at the application stage.

- h) The Choice Adviser provides support during the appeals process?

YES

- i) We plan to provide support during the appeals process in future?

YES

## SECTION 2

### FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR WHICH STARTS AFTER THE REPORT IS MADE – 2009-2010:

*Code 4.9 b) (i) the extent to which admission arrangements for schools in the authority's area serve the interests of children in care, children with disabilities, children with special educational needs and service children.*

Note: You may wish to point out if specialist staff from within the Council has contributed to this report.

The local arrangements to secure appropriate school placements for children in care have been welcomed by foster carers, social workers and young people and often their parents. Ensuring a good match with the child's individual circumstances has helped facilitate successful transition.

Facilitating in year moves have been helped by the oversubscription policy introduced. We have successfully moved a number of young people for a variety of reasons. Each individual circumstance differs but having the capacity for flexibility assists matching individual need. Not having to look at another school other than the chosen school and subject young people to unnecessary travel arrangements is very helpful. Although in some cases moving away from the local school has been deemed advantageous for social and personal reasons

Parents of children with a Statement of special educational needs are able to express a school preference. The SEN Team will consult with this school if appropriate. However if the local mainstream school can appropriately meet the child's needs, if parents prefer another school the child will not be eligible for Local Authority transport to and from school on SEN grounds.

Looked After status and a Statement of special educational needs both have high priority when schools rank children for admissions purposes.

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*Code 4.9 b) (ii) the effectiveness of co-ordination.*

Note: You may wish to report on the authority's assessment of the effectiveness of any scheme for co-ordinating:

- a) the admission of pupils to relevant schools in the authority's area in the next academic year to begin after the date of the report, and
- b) the admission of pupils in the authority's area to other relevant schools in that academic year.



## SECTION 3

### **FOR ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN DETERMINED IN THE APRIL IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE DATE OF THE REPORT IS MADE (determined by 15 April 2009 for admission in September 2010):**

*Code 4.9 c) (i) a statement of whether or not admission arrangements for maintained schools in the area complied with the mandatory requirements of this Code and admissions law.*

Are you satisfied that the admission arrangements for all maintained schools in your area are fully compliant with the Code?

YES

If NO, please specify what action you are taking – please see paragraph “Referring objections to the Schools Adjudicator” on page 10.

Following the compliance exercise in 2008, the Chief Adjudicator wrote to all local authorities with details of where the admission arrangements for schools in their area may not be compliant with the Code. Subsequently, local authorities were asked to report on the action that had been taken to amend the arrangements.

Are you satisfied that all the necessary action that was said to be needed has been taken for the arrangements determined by 15 April 2009?

YES

If you are not completely satisfied, what further action are you taking?

### **The Schools Adjudicator and local authority reports**

*Code 4.10 local authority reports play an important part in monitoring schools’ compliance with this Code and ensuring an open and fair admissions system. The Schools Adjudicator **must** ensure that admission arrangements which come to his attention via local authority reports, and any Admission Forum reports that he receives comply with this Code and admissions legislation. This will form the basis of an annual report to the Secretary of*

*State which will also include how fair access is being achieved locally. The Schools Adjudicator's annual report to the Secretary of State on fair access replaces the biennial report of the Schools Commissioner.*

*Code 4.11 where a local authority report, under section 88P of the SSFA 1998, states that admission arrangements for maintained schools do not or may not conform with statutory requirements or the mandatory requirements of this Code, the Schools Adjudicator **must** decide whether the arrangements are compliant. In the case of Academies he may advise the Secretary of State on whether he considers the arrangements are compliant and the Secretary of State will reach a decision on any changes that are necessary.*

### **Referring objections to the Schools Adjudicator**

*Code 4.12 local authorities **must** refer an objection to the Schools Adjudicator if they consider, or are made aware of any admission arrangements proposed by any other admission authority that are unlawful, that do not comply with the mandatory requirements or guidelines in this Code, or that appear to be unfair, unclear and subjective or encouraged social segregation. Local authorities **must** refer the objection as soon as such admission arrangements come to their attention. Local authorities may refer such an objection with their report or separately.*

*Code 4.13 local authorities **must** also consider carefully any representations they receive from parents about the admission arrangements for schools for which they are not the admission authority and whether they will use their power to make an objection to the Authority.*

Using Appendix A, please identify any schools (column U) that you have referred to the OSA, or may be referring to the OSA by the 31 July 2009.

## SECTION 4

### OTHER MATTERS:

*Code 4.9 d) (i) details about the current membership of the Admission Forum for the area*

Please list the bodies represented and the number of representatives in each category. Do **NOT** give the names of members.

2 elected Members of Herefordshire Council  
2 Community School Representatives (1 Primary & 1 Secondary)  
1 Voluntary Controlled School representative  
1 Voluntary Aided School representative  
2 Foundation School representatives  
1 Academy School representative  
1 Church of England School representative  
1 Roman Catholic School representative  
3 Parent Representatives  
1 Armed Forces Representative  
1 Consortium of Special Needs Representative  
1 Choice Advisor  
1 School Governor Representative  
1 Independent Sector Representative

Please add any comments on the transition from the previous to the new constitution of the Forum; the effectiveness of the Forum in challenging non-compliant admission arrangements; the contribution of the Forum in promoting fair access.

TBA

The Admission Forum may make a report to the Schools Adjudicator. If the Forum wishes to make such a report it would be helpful to include the report with the report from the local authority. Please indicate:

The Admissions Forum does not wish to make a report to the Schools Adjudicator in 2009.

Whether or not the Admission Forum is making/submitting a report, please confirm that the Forum has seen, or will see, this LA report.

Will be presented at the next Admission Forum meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009.

*Code 4.9 d) (ii) the proportion of children currently on free school meals at each school in the area.*

The data provided by the Local Authority to the DCSF in January 2008 has been “cleaned” and is included in Appendix A at the end of this template.

If the data for 2009 is significantly different please state how it differs.

Using and interpreting the data, please comment on any features associated with Fair Access to allocation of school places and meeting parental preferences.

The data does not suggest that there are any issues between Fair Access and parental preferences

*Code 4.9 d) (iii) any other matters which affect the fairness of admission arrangements for schools in the area.*

Please provide evidence about or any information, that in your view affect the fairness of admission arrangements by improving or reducing the fairness for schools in your area.

## SECTION 5

### RANDOM ALLOCATION OF SCHOOL PLACES

1. Was random allocation being used in any way by the local authority in allocating places at community and/or voluntary controlled schools for September 2009:

(a) infant/primary/middle deemed primary schools?

NO

If yes, please specify how?

(b) in secondary/middle deemed secondary schools?

NO

If yes, please specify how?

2. Do the determined admission arrangements for admission in 2010 use random allocation in the same way as 2009 arrangements?

N/A

If no, please specify the changes that have been made.

3. What are your views on whether the outcomes of random allocation as used by the local authority result in fair outcomes for parents?

4. What evidence do you have of parental reaction to the use of random allocation and parental understanding of how the system works?

5. For all foundation and voluntary aided schools in your area, please indicate in Appendix A (column T), those schools that use random allocation in any part of its admission arrangements.

## SECTION 6

### ADMISSION OF TWINS TO THE SAME SCHOOL

1a). What is your policy on the admission of twins (and multiple births) to primary schools?

Unless there is a very good reason not to, then to admit to the same school

b). What is your policy when the last place of the admission number is allocated to one twin (or fewer than all born in a multiple birth)?

Offer a place (or places) to other twin (or others born in a multiple birth)

2a). What is your policy on the admission of twins (and multiple births) to secondary school?

As per answer to 1a)

b) What is your policy when the last place of the admission number is allocated to one twin (or fewer than all born in a multiple birth)?

As per answer to 1b)

3) Please indicate below, those Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools within your area, that do not have a policy on admission of twins (and multiple births).