



Office of the
Schools
Adjudicator

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT
TO
THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR
FROM

Herefordshire Council

30 JUNE 2010

Report Cleared by David Sanders

Date submitted 22nd June 2010

By Andrew Blackman

Contact email address ablackman@herefordshire.gov.uk

Telephone number 01432 260927

www.schoolsadjudicator.co.uk

SECTION 1

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR IN WHICH THE REPORT IS MADE - 2009 - 2010

Please complete using data/information for the period 1 September 2009 to date of report

NOTE: This template is designed to be filled in electronically – boxes can/should be expanded as necessary.

Fair Access Protocol

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;

NOTE: 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 (relevant schools are all maintained schools and academies).

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If NO please explain:

- b) Give your assessment of how well the Fair Access Protocol has worked since 1 September 2009. In particular in placing children, the co-operation of schools and Academies well as any other issues you have had in implementing the protocol.

Has worked well with satisfactory co-operation from schools and Academies.

- c) In Appendix A, please record for each school the number of children considered to be placed in (column O) and those actually placed in

(column P) to the school under the protocol between 1 September 2009 and the date of this report.

Infant Class Sizes

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

Are all Primary Schools in your area complying with infant class sizes?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If NO please comment and also include the number of schools where qualifying measures are being taken:

Admission Appeals

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.*

* Every school includes: community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation, Academies, city technology colleges and city colleges for technology of the arts.

For the period 1 September 2009 to the date of this report please insert in Appendix A the following 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 this report.

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.

NOTE: other appeals panels have a duty to provide you with information on appeals (Section 88Q of Schools Standards and Framework Act).

Has your independent appeals panel complied with the requirements of the Appeals Code?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If NO please explain including non-compliance and action taken:

Have all other appeals panels for own admission authority schools complied with the requirements of the Appeals Code?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	------------	-------------------------------------

If NO or Don't Know please highlight any issues raised and if you have been unable to obtain information:

No known issues. I have received information when it has been requested.

SECTION 2

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR WHICH STARTS AFTER THE REPORT IS MADE – 2010-2011:

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 and highlight any problems that may have occurred.

Children in care: (Specialist staff comment)

Children in care are a national priority. Herefordshire has also prioritised former looked after children whose permanence has been sought through adoption.

All looked after children get the school of preference when starting school and on transition. Requests for in year moves are generally met with the rare exception posing difficulties, in these cases there often mitigating circumstances.

Occasionally there are difficulties placing children and young people from other authorities where education provision is not discussed before a placement move. Delays are often due to the lack of supporting information to inform choice and unreasonable expectations regarding the nature of that provision.

My recent experience is that Herefordshire's admission arrangements exceed what is expected of them, offering a good practice model.

Children with disabilities:

Inclusion Team undertakes early assessment of access needs and use is then made of a capital programme to make physical access improvements to preferred schools.

Children with Special Educational Needs: (Specialist staff comment)

- When a child has a Statement of SEN, the SEN team advises Admissions when a child/young person starts at or leaves a school.
- In Autumn Term of Year 6, the SEN Team and Admissions liaise regarding Phase Transfer of children with a Statement of SEN; no later than 15th February these children have a Final Statement naming the high school from the following September.

Service Children: (Specialist staff comment)

CA service works very closely with Service welfare officers, staff from military pre-school, HIVE the forces information service. It is a priority to support all military families throughout the appeal process.

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 LA schools in September 2010

All offers made according to the published co-ordination timetable.

b) the admission of pupils in the authority's area to other admission authority schools in September 2010.

All offers made according to the published co-ordination timetable.

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 2010 for admission in September 2011):

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.

NOTE: All non-compliant admission arrangements must be corrected. All mandatory requirements can be changed by the admission authority. Any other non-compliant issues must be referred to the OSA.

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

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

If YES please provide a statement to confirm this:

Determined admission arrangements for all maintained schools for the 2011/2012 academic year are being reviewed by the Local Admission Forum on July 14th 2010.

If NO, please specify what action you are taking:

Using column T in Appendix A, please identify those schools that you have identified with problems now or which you have referred to the OSA, or may be referring to the OSA by the 31 July 2010.

SECTION 4

OTHER MATTERS:

Admission Forum

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

NOTE: 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 representative
1 Roman Catholic 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

Is the Admission Forum writing a report?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	-------------------------------------

If YES is the report attached or has it been sent separately?

Tick as appropriate:

Attached	<input type="checkbox"/>	Separately	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------	--------------------------	------------	--------------------------

If separately please provide the date the report will or has been sent to the OSA?

DATE:

--

Please confirm whether the Admission Forum has seen, or will see, a copy of this LA report.

Tick as appropriate:

Has seen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will see	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
----------	--------------------------	----------	-------------------------------------

Free School Meals

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

NOTE: The data provided by the Local Authority to the DCSF in January 2009 has been "cleaned" and is included in Appendix A.

If the data for 2010 is significantly different from 2009 please state how it differs.

	% NOR Eligible	% taking FSM
2009	8.61	7.23
2010	10.63	8.21

Using and interpreting the data, please comment on whether the allocation of school places meets parental preferences for those children on Free School Meals.

Generally parents of those children eligible/taking up FSM state a preference for their local/catchment school.

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

NOTE: Please identify any issues not covered elsewhere on this template.

SECTION 5

OTHER ISSUES REQUESTED IN ADDITION THIS YEAR BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Choice Advice

Please complete with reference to Choice Advice provided to parents applying for a secondary school place for the 2010/2011 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.

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	-------------------------------------	----	--------------------------

- 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).

Situated in the Parent Partnership Service sited in a discrete area of the CYPD building where parents can access independently. There is a private meeting area which guarantees confidentiality for parents.

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

- c) Are your Choice Adviser(s) in the same line management chain or reporting lines as staff on the admissions team.

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	-------------------------------------

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 direct contact with learning mentors, traveller groups, immigrant community groups, Health visitors and school nurses, and other colleagues within the CYPD. In addition colleagues in admissions and Parent Partnership guide families to the service, as do EWO's, Social Services, Children's Centres, Carers Support, etc Parents come to the service on the recommendation of families who have used the service.

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

Ensuring parents know their rights and have support to execute them. Regular discussions with the admissions staff. Contributions to changes in the Information Book for Parents. Completing application forms. Challenging colleagues who make assumptions or "label" families, and ensuring rigorous support for the most vulnerable families at appeals. Providing Parent Information Sessions at R, YR5 & YR6

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?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	√	No	
-----	---	----	--

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

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	√	No	
-----	---	----	--

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?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	√	No	
-----	---	----	--

i) If no, do you plan to provide support during the appeals process in future?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Transport

Admission authorities **must** explain clearly whether or not school transport will be available, and, if so, to which schools and at what cost (if any). Are details of the availability and cost of home to school travel and transport clearly set out in the composite prospectus?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	√	No	
-----	---	----	--

If No, please provide an explanation

Paragraphs 1.90 and 1.91 of the Code provide guidance on how Governing Bodies **should** ensure that the cost of a school uniform does not inhibit the choice of school. In the following box, please provide details of where schools do not comply with this and what actions you or Governing Bodies have taken or are proposing to take.

Please provide details of any improvements that you feel can be made to this template.

Personally I find text boxes very difficult to use effectively. I would prefer to be able to simply "insert" text as required.