



Office of the
Schools
Adjudicator

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT
TO
THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR
FROM
Plymouth City Council

29 JUNE 2011

Report Cleared by: Jayne Gorton

School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager

Date submitted: 29 June 2011

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SECTION 1

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR IN WHICH THE REPORT IS MADE - 2010 - 2011

Please complete using data/information for the period 1 September 2010 to date of report

NOTE: This template is designed to be filled in electronically – boxes can 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"/>
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If NO please explain:

- b) Give your assessment of how well the Fair Access Protocol has worked since 1 September 2010. In particular in placing children, the co-operation of schools and Academies as well as any other issues you have had in implementing the protocol.

The policy has been reviewed and appears to be working well. Issues in some cases regarding more vulnerable/SEN pupils being placed at 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 2010 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		No	√
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If NO please comment and also include the number of schools where qualifying measures are being taken:
4 Schools operating at YR over 30 all permitted exceptions – possible impact in Yr 1 in September
No schools operating Yr 1 over 30 per class
1 school operating Yr 2 over 30 per class permitted exception – no impact for Yr 3 in September

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 2010 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"/>
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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"/>
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If NO or Don't Know please highlight any issues raised and if you have been unable to obtain information:

No issues raised and we are always able to obtain information when it is required.

SECTION 2

FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR WHICH STARTS AFTER THE REPORT IS MADE – 2011-2012:

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:

Children in the care of the Local Authority and a child with named school on their statement have overriding priority for admissions.

Children with disabilities:

More than 1% of pupils at 6 primary schools are physically disabled. In primary schools, 3 had more than 40% of their pupils with unstatemented special needs, and only 5 had less than 10%. In secondary schools, only 2 had more than 30% of their pupils with unstatemented special educational needs.

Children with Special Educational Needs:

If a child has a Statement of Special Educational Need or is undergoing statutory assessment, professional advice will be sought and school preferences taken into account. Parents of children with a statement have the same entitlement as others to express a preference for a mainstream school, which may only be refused on the grounds that the nominated school is not available due to the school being full and if the school nominated was ranked lower than the school allocated.

The city council will co-ordinate the admission arrangements and annual reviews of statements to ensure that Year 6 pupils attending special schools or undergoing formal assessment are not disadvantaged when applying for mainstream secondary school places.

Service Children:

Generally the only problem will be the amount of time that the pupils stay in a particular school

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 2011

The scheme has worked well within the Authority; the issue for the future is the increase in the birth rate which will make parental preference very difficult with limited spaces available at Primary level.

b) the admission of pupils in the authority's area to **other admission authority schools** in September 2011.

System works well. No problems identified. We work very well with our neighbouring authorities, in particular Devon and Cornwall

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 2011 for admission in September 2012):

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"/>
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If YES please provide a statement to confirm this:
All Admissions Authorities have complied with the regulations relating to consultation and all have determined admission arrangements that are compliant with the School Admissions Code.

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 2011.

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.

Table 1: Plymouth Admissions Forum Representation	1 representative in each category
Plymouth City Council	Labour Group
Schools	Conservative Group Community Primary Voluntary Aided Secondary Voluntary Aided Primary Voluntary Controlled Primary Trust Primary Academies – Primary and Secondary
Diocese	Exeter Church of England Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth
Parents	Parent governor
Plymouth Association of Governors	1 Other Representative
Crown Servant	Representative of HM Forces
Community group	Pre Schools
Choice Advisor	
Observers:	
Neighbouring Authorities	Cornwall County Council Devon County Council

Is the Admission Forum writing a report?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	√
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If YES is the report attached or has it been sent separately?

Tick as appropriate:

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

DATE:

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

Tick as appropriate:

Has seen		Will see	√
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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 2010 has been "cleaned" and is included in Appendix A.

If the data for 2011 is significantly different from 2010 please state how it differs.

Due to the recession the number of families eligible for free schools meals has risen.
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Using and interpreting the data, please comment on whether the allocation of school places meets parental preferences for those children on Free School Meals.

Primary – 2 children in receipt of FSM did not get one of their three preferences but did not qualify for free travel as both were less than two miles. Secondary – 2 children in receipt of FSM did not get one of their three preferences but did not qualify for free travel as both were less than three miles.
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NOTE: Please identify any issues not covered elsewhere on this template.

The increase in the birth rate is starting to have a significant impact on parental choice as the most popular schools will be full after first round allocations. This is a local issue not due to the admissions code of practise.

We will be expanding our Primary provision in September 2011 by 4 forms of entry in 5 schools across the city with further planned expansion in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

SECTION 5

OTHER ISSUES REQUESTED IN ADDITION THIS YEAR BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION.

Choice Advice

Please complete with reference to Choice Advice provided to parents applying for a secondary school place for the 2011/2012 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"/>
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- 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).

- The Plymouth Choice Advice Service was developed in 2008 with the Council's School Admissions Team and Choice Advisor working closely together, attending all the secondary open evenings for parents.
- The service is situated within the Parent Partnership Service

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

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	√
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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.

Groups targeted by the service in 2010/11 included:

- those who find it difficult to engage with school(s)
- parents with literacy/numeracy problems
- parents of children with additional needs/disabilities
- vulnerable and/or undecided parents as identified by primary schools
- recent arrivals to the city
- parents/carers of looked-after children
- families for whom English is not their first language
- frequent movers
- families living in areas of high deprivation

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

Service activities in 2010 included:

- contact with many parents - offering varying degrees of support from short responses to complex transition planning for more vulnerable students as well as support to parents during the appeal process;
- support to parents in the early-years-to-primary transition stage - visits to families are conducted during February to chase up late applicants;
- extensive briefings and training given to a number of agencies to raise awareness of the service and of school admissions procedures;
- assisting other local authority choice advisors in developing their service. Home visits are made to parents who had failed to complete either the primary or secondary application form or act on the Council's follow-up letter.

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

Tick as appropriate:

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

Tick as appropriate:

Yes		No	
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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	
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If No, please provide an explanation

SECTION 6

OTHER ISSUES REQUESTED IN ADDITION THIS YEAR BY DEPARTMENT.

6TH Forms

Paragraphs 1.42 to 1.45 of the Code provide guidance on applications for Year 12 and transfer from Year 11.

Do you have any 6th forms within your Authority?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If Yes, how Many?

16

Have you considered the admission arrangements for 6th forms in line with recommendations of the Code?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are you going to take any further action with regard to these arrangements?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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If Yes, please specify what action you are taking:

Aptitude

Paragraphs 2.78 to 2.82 provide guidance on partial selection by aptitude.

Do you have any schools which select pupils by aptitude for a subject?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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If 'yes' how many?

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If yes, do you check the tests that these Schools use to ensure that they are compliant with law?

Tick as appropriate:

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