



Office of the
Schools
Adjudicator

Item 10
Appendix A

DRAFT

LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT

TO

THE SCHOOLS ADJUDICATOR

FROM

Central Bedfordshire Council

30 JUNE 2010

Report Cleared by: Central Bedfordshire Admissions Forum

**Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director
of Children, Families and Learning**

Date submitted: 30 June 2010

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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"/>
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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.

Schools have co-operated fully with the placements so far this year. However the new Academy has permanently excluded 14 students so far this term and this has a serious knock on effect for other schools in the locality. The Academy is not required to accept pupils under the Fair Access Protocol for the first two years and therefore there is no reciprocity with the placement of pupils excluded from other schools. 23 students have been placed in Central Bedfordshire schools under the Protocol since September 2010.

- 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.

Appendix A shows the number of children identified for admission to each school (column O) and admitted (column P) under the Fair Access Protocol for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 May 2010. Some pupils identified for admission to a named school have yet to be admitted as their placement has only recently been identified. Planning for their admission is still taking place. This accounts for the differences, in some cases, between column O and column P.

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"/>
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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.

Appendix A has been completed for the period 1 September 2009 to 8 June 2010 to show the number of appeals held (column Q), the number of appeals upheld (column R) and the number of appeals still to be heard (column S). Appeals will continue to be received throughout the remainder of the academic year as late applications and in-year applications are processed.

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?

N/A – all own admission authority schools use the local authority panels.

Tick as appropriate:

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

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: **All schools are aware of the requirement to admit 'looked after' children arriving in-year and it has not been necessary to issue any directions to schools.**

Children with disabilities: **All schools are required to have effective accessibility plans in place. Any school that submits a bid for funding from the 'Access Initiative' is required to forward a copy of their accessibility plan to the local authority before funding can approved.**

Children with Special Educational Needs: **The Parent Partnership Service gives impartial advice to parents of children with special educational needs and produces leaflets for parents to help them through the process.**

Service Children: **Places are allocated on receipt of a letter from MOD confirming relocation date and intended address.**

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 schools complied with the requirements of the co-ordinated admission schemes. No Central Bedfordshire child, whose parents submitted an on-time application, is without a school place.

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

The admission of Central Bedfordshire pupils to schools in Bedford Borough was seamless as the two authorities have a shared School Admissions Service.

Although Central Bedfordshire has a different age of transfer from other neighbouring authorities, applications from residents for a secondary school place in those areas were received and communicated to the relevant authority. The decisions from those authorities were considered and the outcomes communicated to parents on national offer day.

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"/>
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If YES please provide a statement to confirm this:

The admission arrangements for all maintained schools in the Central Bedfordshire Local Authority area are fully compliant with the 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 2010.

None

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.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Number of Representatives</u>
Local Authority:	1 (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services)
Schools:	
Community	1 Upper School Head Teacher 1 Middle School Head Teacher 1 Lower School Head Teacher (vacancy for upper school)
Voluntary Controlled	2 Governors or Head Teachers (currently vacant)
Foundation / Trust	1 Upper School Head Teacher 1 Middle School Head Teacher
Voluntary Aided	1 C of E Lower School Head Teacher 1 RC Lower School Head Teacher 1 C of E Middle School Head Teacher
Religious Denominations:	
Church of England Diocese	1 Diocesan Board Representative
Roman Catholic Diocese	1 Diocesan Board Representative
Academy:	1 All Saints Academy
Parents: (must be a resident in the area and the parent of a child who is of compulsory school age or who is 2+ and receiving primary education)	2 Parent Representatives
Local Community Representatives:	1 Ethnic Minority Groups 1 Looked After Children 1 Armed Forces

Is the Admission Forum writing a report?

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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If YES is the report attached or has it been sent separately?

Tick as appropriate:

Attached	<input type="checkbox"/>	Separately	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Will see	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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 2009 has been “cleaned” and is included in Appendix A.

The data in respect of some schools, marked with a hash (#), has been omitted from the DCSF data. The Local Authority has been advised that where the number of children eligible for free school meals is very low the data has been omitted to ensure that individual children cannot be identified.

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

Table 1 below identifies those schools (excluding special schools) where the percentage of children eligible for free school meals has changed from 2009 by 5 percentage points or more (i.e. where the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2010 less those eligible for free school meals in 2009 is greater than 5% of the 2010 pupil headcount).

Table 1:		
School	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	
	2010	2009
Beecroft Lower	35.1%	28.7%
Clipstone Brook Lower	16.8%	10.0%
Dunton Lower	10.5%	1.7%
Heathwood Lower	9.8%	2.4%
Mary Bassett Lower	30.8%	23.1%
Meppershall Lower	6.4%	0.9%
St Swithuns Lower	13.8%	7.5%
Brewers Hill Middle	31.6%	22.2%

Table 2 below identifies those schools (excluding special schools) where the percentage of children eligible for free school meals has changed from 2009 by 5 percentage points or more (i.e. where the number of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2010 less those eligible for free school meals in 2009 is less than 5% of the 2010 pupil headcount).

Table 2		
School	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	
	2010	2009
Chalton Lower	7.0%	13.3%
Ridgmont Lower	4.8%	14.5%
Studham Lower	0.0%	7.5%

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

The local authority has no reason to believe that the preferences of those parents whose children are in receipt of free school meals will not have been met, provided there were places available at the preferred schools.

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.

The local authority is not aware of any issues which might affect the fairness of admission arrangements for schools in the area.

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	✓	No	
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This post had been vacant since September 2009, due to three failed attempts to recruit, uncertainty regarding budget and location of the service following disaggregation, at the end of the 2008/09 academic year, of the Choice Advice role which was a shared role between Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough. An appointment has been made and the Choice Adviser started on 8 June 2010.

- 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).

Will be located within the Parent Partnership Service, operating at arm's length from Central Bedfordshire Council

- 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.

Development of role to be agreed within hours available

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

Due to the vacancy it has not been possible to support the admissions process for the September 2010 admissions round.

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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Proposed to offer for September 2011 admissions round

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

Tick as appropriate:

Yes	✓	No	
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Proposed to offer to 'hard to reach' parents

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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Proposed to offer to parents who access Choice Advice at application stage

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

Tick as appropriate:

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

The local authority is not aware of any issues relating to the cost of school uniforms which might inhibit a parent's choice of schools.

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