



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24**

**EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023**

**SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES**

**Author: Catrin Edwards,  
Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the annual school admissions process.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the contents of the report and consider whether they wish to scrutinise any parts in greater depth.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 This report provides an update on developments within school admissions in the admissions year 2022/2023 and application dates for the forthcoming 2023/2024 admissions year.

**4. UPDATE / CURRENT POSITION**

**Admission Year 2022/23**

**4.1 Normal/Routine Admissions**

In September every year, individual letters are sent to the parent/carer(s) of every pupil registered in nursery, year 2 in an infant school and year 6. The letter details their User Identification Number and the application process that they need to undertake to apply for a school place for the following September.

Parents/carers have the right to express a preference when selecting a school for their child(ren). If the number of preferences received for a school is below the

school's admission number (AN), all applications for admission to the school will be granted.

If the number of preferences received for a school is above the school's AN, the published over subscription criteria will be applied in the priority order listed, to determine the allocation of available places.

Information is also provided to the Welsh medium (WM) primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil and two schools in the Vale of Glamorgan for children who plan to attend schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf (e.g., Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun and Y Pant Comprehensive School).

#### 4.2 Applications for the Academic Year 2022/23

For the academic year 2022/23, the LA processed 9016 applications; of which 7826 (i.e.,86.80%) were applied for on-line, which is an increase of 5.654 percentage points from 2021/2022. There was 1488 pre-nursery, 2355 nursery, 2439 reception, 69 junior and 2665 year 7 applications.

Within Rhondda Cynon Taf, there are 8 voluntary aided (church) schools. The admission arrangements for these schools have been formulated by the schools' governing bodies and requests for admission into these schools are the responsibility of the relevant governing bodies.

Decision letters were issued for applications for year 7 places for September 2022 on the 1st of March 2022. Parents had until the 18th of March 2022 to appeal the decision if their application was unsuccessful.

For nursery, reception and year 3 applications, decision letters were issued on the 19th of April 2022.

The table below provides a summary of the breakdown of the 9016 applications received.

	Pre-Nursery Jan 2023	Pre-Nursery April 2023	Nursery Sept 2022	Reception Sept 2022	Junior Sept 2022	Year 7 Sept 2022	Total
Online	954	396	1836	2176	63	2401	7826
Paper	93	45	519	263	3	264	1190
<b>Total</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>2355</b>	<b>2439</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2665</b>	<b>9016</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> preference	N/A	N/A	2162	2377	62	2528	7129
2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	N/A	N/A	99	18	0	37	154
3 <sup>rd</sup> preference			14	1	0	3	18
Age ineligible to apply	406	34	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
School place	421	176	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
REP	220	211	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Parent refused place/no longer required			80	43	7	97	
No place allocated		20					

Of the 7301 single applications made for nursery, reception, junior and year 7 children, 97.64% were offered their first preference and 2.11% their second and 0.25% their third.

For pre-nursery January 2023, 1,027 single applications were received. Of these 406 were not age eligible; 421 children were offered places in 67 schools; and 220 were offered places in 32 Registered Education Providers (REPs).

For pre-nursery April 2023, 441 applications were received, however 34 were ineligible due to age. Of the remaining 407; 176 were offered places in 48 schools, 211 were offered a place across 34 REPs and 20 did not receive an offer due to no suitable provision being available in their local area.

#### **4.3 Appeals Processes**

Parents/carers wishing to appeal against the outcome of their application for secondary admission had until the 18th of March 2022 to notify the LA and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 for Reception and year 3. It is the parents/carers' responsibility to prove that an appeal request has been sent and therefore parents are strongly advised that all appeal requests are sent via recorded delivery or a tracked e-mail for evidence purposes.

For the September 2022 admission round, the LA received 23 appeals; 20 were successful, 1 unsuccessful and 2 withdrew.

#### **4.4 Late Applications**

For September 2022 applications, a late application will only be accepted by the Admissions Authority when a good reason is given for the lateness of the application (e.g. house move into the area). Where a good reason is given, a late application will be accepted, provided it is received before offers of places are made at the preferred school(s).

#### **4.5 Parental Responsibility**

Only persons holding responsibility for the named child can make an application and they will be required to make a declaration to this effect as part of the application process. Ordinarily, it is expected that this person resides at the same address as the child and is referred to as the parent for admission purposes. Where parental responsibility is equally shared, the Council will ask the child's parents to determine which parent should submit the application. If parents cannot agree and neither has obtained a court order stating who should be making the application, the Council will accept an application from the parent in receipt of Child Benefit for the child. The Council is not able to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately.

If an application is received from a stepparent, they will need to produce a parental responsibility order confirming that they have parental responsibility. Such documentation is required to proceed with processing the application.

#### 4.6 All Through Schools

The parents and carers of children already attending an all through school, do not need to apply for a secondary school place as they will automatically transfer from year 6 to year 7 in the same school, unless they wish to attend a different secondary school.

Children will still have to apply for a pre-nursery, nursery and reception place at the relevant time.

#### 4.7 Timetable 2023/2024

Each LA must publish an annual composite prospectus which sets out the determined admissions arrangements, including a timetable for the admissions process detailing the relevant dates for the receipt and determination of applications and for the receipt of appeals.

For the academic year 2023/24, the admission timetable is set out in the table below and is published in the Starting Schools booklet.

Admission Cohort	Age of Pupil	Applications Available From	Applications to be Returned By	Decision Notifications Issued
Secondary School - Year 7	12 <sup>th</sup> birthday falls between 01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024	01/09/2022	15/10/2022	01/03/2023
Primary School - Year 3 Transfer from Infant to Junior or Primary School	8 <sup>th</sup> birthday falls between 01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024	01/09/2022	11/11/2022	17/04/2023
Primary School Reception Class (i.e. age 4 before 01/09/2023)	5 <sup>th</sup> birthday falls between 01/09/2023– 31/08/2024	01/09/2022	11/11/2022	17/04/2023
Primary School Nursery Class (i.e. age 3 before 01/09/2023)	4 <sup>th</sup> birthday falls between 01/09/2023 – 31/08/2024	01/09/2022	11/11/2022	17/04/2023
Pre-Nursery Admission from January 2024 (Spring Term)	3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday falls between 01/09/2023 – 31/12/2023	01/09/2023	29/09/2023	10/11/2023
Pre-Nursery Admission from April 2024 (Summer Term)	3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday falls between 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024	01/01/2024	09/02/2024	15/03/2024

#### 4.8 Waiting List

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round, any pupil who is refused admission to an oversubscribed school will be placed on the waiting list. The list will be maintained until the 30<sup>th</sup> of September (in line with the School Admission Code). Thereafter, parents/carers must make a fresh application for admission (by completing the application form) and/or provide a written request to remain on the waiting list.

Admissions in respect of pupils on waiting lists are determined by application of the over-subscription criteria, not by the length of time a child has been on the waiting list.

#### 4.9 Admissions at Other Times

During any academic year, children transfer between schools due to several reasons ranging from house moves and those moving into the County Borough. We advise parents to first contact their present headteacher to alert them of the decision to change schools and then if parents wish to proceed, they should contact the school admissions team for advice in making the application to the new school.

For every transfer within the LA, parents must request an in-year transfer (IYT) form from their current headteacher, who must sign and date the form. On receipt of the signed form, the school admissions team will process the application.

Between 01/09/2021 and 31/08/2022, there were 1163 primary and 435 secondary IYT applications, of which 828 (51.81%) were due to a house move.

Of the total IYTs, 377 (32.42%) of primary and 150 (34.48%) secondary children were in receipt of free school meals (FSM) and 40 (3.44%) and 22 (5.06%) were children looked after (CLA).

#### Number of IYT Primary Applications

Primary	PN/N	Rec	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2016/2017	159	134	156	132	128	109	124	68	1010
2017/2018	155	147	151	148	154	125	110	57	1047
2018/2019	133	150	150	174	151	159	131	58	1106
2019/2020	121	102	122	127	110	132	109	51	874
2020/2021	188	177	133	127	131	142	114	62	1074
<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>1163</b>
FSM Children	33	54	51	51	58	46	54	30	377
CLA Children	6	5	4	3	11	2	7	2	40
House moves 2021/22	87	83	88	84	62	84	68	69	625

#### Number of IYT Secondary Applications

Secondary	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2016/2017	77	87	71	46	18	299
2017/2018	56	66	69	33	4	228
2018/2019	79	75	87	49	8	296
2019/2020	48	65	65	27	8	213
2020/2021	77	84	64	47	20	292
<b>2021/2022</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>435</b>
FSM Children	50	32	37	26	5	150
CLA Children	6	3	8	3	2	22
House moves 2021/22	36	52	54	47	14	203

Parents have no legal requirement to provide a reason to transfer their child and the LA can only refuse an application if there are no places available in the selected school.

## 5. WELSH MEDIUM TRANSFERS

The table below summaries the pupil numbers attending English and Welsh medium schools in RCT on PLASC date 22 (18/02/22). The percentage of children attending WM schools has increased slightly from 7,178 to 7,233 and remains at 18.6% of the school population.

	English Medium	Welsh Medium	Total	% Welsh Medium
Primary age 2022	17,885	4,097	21,982	18.64%
Secondary age 2022	13,727	3,136	16,863	18.60%
<b>Total 2022</b>	<b>31,612</b>	<b>7,233</b>	<b>38,846</b>	<b>18.62%</b>
Primary age 2021	17,537	4,021	21,558	18.65%
Secondary age 2021	13,889	3,158	17,057	18.52%
<b>Total 2021</b>	<b>31,436</b>	<b>7,178</b>	<b>38,615</b>	<b>18.60%</b>

### 5.1 Primary Welsh Medium Transfers

During the academic year 2021/2022, the LA processed 1163 primary IYTs.

There was a total of 139 WM primary IYTs; 51 children transferred into a WM primary school and 88 left (i.e., a net reduction of 37, compared to a net reduction of 22 in 2020/21).

Of the 88 who left a WM primary school, 63 moved to an English Medium (EM) primary school in RCT.

	Primary	PN/N	Rec	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
2017/2018	Receiving	6	10	10	7	13	9	15	3	<b>73</b>
2017/2018	Leaving	8	12	14	11	15	17	12	9	<b>88</b>
2018/2019	Receiving	14	8	12	8	9	5	7	2	<b>65</b>
2018/2019	Leaving	6	16	13	10	7	10	17	2	<b>81</b>
2019/2020	Receiving	12	16	11	10	5	11	12	5	<b>82</b>
2019/2020	Leaving	7	8	9	12	10	15	9	6	<b>76</b>
2020/2021	Receiving	16	14	9	6	8	5	5	4	<b>67</b>
2020/2021	Leaving	9	12	13	15	12	14	11	3	<b>89</b>
2021/2022	Receiving	14	5	8	8	2	4	7	3	<b>51</b>
2021/2022	Leaving	14	6	8	18	8	10	17	7	<b>88</b>

### 5.2 Secondary Welsh Medium Transfers

During the academic year 2021/2022, the LA processed 435 secondary IYTs.

There was a total of 72 WM secondary IYTs; 42 children transferred into a WM secondary/all through school and 30 left (i.e., a net increase of 12 compared to a net reduction of 19, in 2020/21).

Of the 30 who left a WM secondary school; 26 moved to an EM secondary school in RCT.

	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Total</b>
2017/2018	Receiving	4	1	6	3	0	<b>14</b>
2017/2018	Leaving	4	3	3	1	0	<b>11</b>
2018/2019	Receiving	7	2	4	3	0	<b>16</b>
2018/2019	Leaving	9	15	7	3	0	<b>34</b>
2019/2020	Receiving	1	3	1	0	1	<b>6</b>
2019/2020	Leaving	1	3	4	2	2	<b>12</b>
2020/2021	Receiving	2	2	4			<b>8</b>
2020/2021	Leaving	9	4	10	2	2	<b>27</b>
2021/2022	Receiving	10	12	14	5	4	<b>42</b>
2021/2022	Leaving	5	10	9	4	2	<b>30</b>

### 5.3 Year 7 Welsh Medium Applications September 2022

There continues to be a high level of WM retention between year 6 and year 7. For September 2022, 379 out of the 388 children in year 6 at a WM primary school or WM all-through school in RCT in July 2022, transferred into a WM secondary school or WM all-through school in the County Borough (i.e., 97.68 %) for September 2022, an increase of 2.18 percentage points from September 2021.

In the 2 dual language schools, there were 40 children in WM streams in year 6. Of these, 34 transferred into a WM secondary school or WM all-through school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (i.e., 85%), for September 2022, an increase of 0.26 percentage points from September 2021.

In September 2022, 96.5% of children in year 6 WM primary schools or WM dual language schools continued their education in WM secondary schools or WM all-through schools, an increase of 1.44 percentage points from September 2021.

## 6. ADMISSIONS FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

From the 1st of September 2021, section 48 of the 2018 Act requires the governing body of a maintained school in Wales to admit a child to the school if the school is named in the child's individual development plan. This duty applies despite the limits on infant class sizes and even if admitting the child would result in the school exceeding its admission number. The duty to admit applies at all times, including where a school is named in a plan outside the normal admission round.

Schools may only be named for the purpose of securing admission in certain circumstances, so not all individual development plans will name a school in this way. Where a school is named for that purpose, it is named in section 2D.1 of the individual development plan. Where a school is named in an individual development plan for the purpose of securing admission, the admissions provisions in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 do not generally apply [1].

If a child or the child's parent wishes to appeal against the school named in the child's individual development plan for the purpose securing admission, or the fact that no school is so named, the appeal is to the Education Tribunal for Wales.

It is the LA's policy that all children, as far as is possible within the terms of the Education Act 1996, should be educated in mainstream schools within their local communities. If parents/carers feel that their child may have special education needs they should, in the first instance, arrange to discuss their child's difficulties with the headteacher of the child's current school.

There is an expectation that schools adopt a graduated response to meeting a learner's needs in line with the SEN Code of Practice Wales (2002) requirements. For learners with significant or complex needs, referrals should be made to the Access and Inclusion Service, to inform further intervention from the Educational Psychology Service and/or the Learner Support Service. If appropriate, referrals can be made to the relevant LA SEN panel should a specialist placement be required. If the threshold criteria for a specialist placement is met, then placements are agreed and administered by the Access and Inclusion Service.

## **7. FAIR ACCESS PANEL**

In April 2018, a Fair Access Placement Panel (FAPP) was established. The forum consists of representatives from schools and the LA who discuss and agree to placements for children deemed to be hard to place for a range of reasons. This has resulted in some of the most vulnerable children being offered suitable school places promptly. For primary school learners requiring a school place, the functions of the FAPP are undertaken by the LA's School Admissions Service, in partnership with the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and the Access and Inclusion Service.

In the academic year 2021/22, 55 children were referred to FAPP and placements agreed and actioned. Of the 55 referrals; 40 were managed moves, 12 were parental IYT requests and 3 were withdrawn.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 8.1 There are no negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report.

## **9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) sets out the ten-year plan for the planning and improvement of provision of Welsh medium and Welsh language education. The seven main outcomes outlined with the WESP will only be met by ensuring the availability of Welsh medium education. This report demonstrates that there is availability of Welsh medium places in RCT.

## **10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 10.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.



## **11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no financial implications

## **12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

12.1 The following legislation/regulations are aligned to this report:

- 1) School Admission Code 005/2013
- 2) Schools Admissions appeals Code 007/2003
- 3) School Organisation Code 010/2017.

## **13. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

13.1 The Schools Admissions process links to the Council's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper:
  - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.

13.2 The delivery of the WESP will contribute to all seven wellbeing goals listed within the Future Generation (Wales) Act. In addition, due regard has been made to the Five Ways of Working.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

14.1 The LA processed 9016 applications for Sept 2022, of which 7826 (i.e., 86.80%) were applied for on-line, which is an increase of 5.654 percentage points from 2021/22.

14.2 Of the 7301 single applications made for nursery, reception, junior and year 7 children, 97.64% were offered their first preference, 2.11% their second and 0.25% their third.

14.3 For pre-nursery January 2023, 1,027 single applications were received. Of these 386, were not age eligible, 421 children were offered places in 67 schools and 220 were offered places in 32 Registered Education Providers (REPs).

For pre-nursery April 2023, 441 applications were received, however 34 were ineligible due to age. Of the remaining 407; 176 were offered places in 48 schools, 211 were offered a place across 34 REPs and 20 did not receive an offer due to no suitable provision being available in their local area.

14.4 For the September 2022 admission round, the LA received 23 appeals; 20 were successful, 1 unsuccessful and 2 withdrew.

14.5 In the academic year 2021/22 there were 1163 primary and 435 secondary in-year transfer (IYT) applications, of which 828 (51.81%) were due to a house move.

14.6 There was a total of 139 WM primary IYTs; 51 children transferred into a WM primary school and 88 left (i.e., a net reduction of 37, compared to a net reduction

of 22 in 2020/21). Of the 88 who left a WM primary school, 63 moved to an EM primary school in RCT.

- 14.7 There was a total of 72 WM secondary IYTs; 42 children transferred into a WM secondary/all through school and 30 left (i.e., a net increase of 12 compared to a net reduction of 19, in 2020/2021). Of the 30 who left a WM secondary school, 26 moved to an EM secondary school in RCT.
- 14.8 In September 2022, 96.5% of children in year 6 WM primary schools or WM dual language schools continued their education in WM secondary schools or WM all through schools. An increase of 1.44 percentage points from September 2021.
- 14.9 In the academic year 2021/2022, 55 children were referred to FAPP and placements agreed and actioned. Of the 55, 40 were managed moves, 12 were parental IYT requests and 3 were withdrawn.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION & INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023**

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