

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018-2019

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date: 20th March 2019

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

Agenda Item No. 4

School Admissions Process

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide a summary of the annual School Admission process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Consider if any further information is required.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To raise Members' awareness.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A report was provided to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 21st March 2018, which detailed the admissions process. This report provides an update on developments within School Admissions in the last 12 months and planned developments for the next admissions round.

5. ADMISSION YEAR 2018/19

5.1 Normal/Routine Admissions

In September individual letters are provided to every pupil currently registered in Nursery, Year 2 in an Infant school and Year 6, which details their User Identification Number and the application process that they need to undertake to apply for a school place for the following September. Information is also provided to the Welsh Medium primary

schools in Merthyr and two schools in the Vale of Glamorgan for children who plan to attend schools in RCT, e.g. YG Rhydywaun and Y Pant.

5.2 **Applications 2018/19**

For the academic year 2018/19, the Authority processed 9315 applications, of which 7080, i.e. 76% were applied for on-line. There were 1351 pre-nursery, 2594 nursery, 2595 reception, 178 junior and 2597 year 7 applications.

Within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council 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 to these schools are the responsibility of the relevant governing body.

Decision letters were issued for applications for Year 7 places for September 2019 on 1st March 2019. Parents have until 22nd March 2019 to appeal the decision if their application is unsuccessful. For nursery, reception and year 3 applications, decision letters will be issued on the 16th April 219.

The table below summaries the breakdown of the 9315 applications received.

	Pre-Nursery Jan 19	Pre-Nursery April 19	Nursery Sept 18	Reception Sept 18	Junior Sept 18	Yr 7 Sept 18	Total
Online	820	385	1671	2017	143	2041	7080
Paper	86	60	923	578	32	556	2235
Total applications	906	445	2594	2595	178	2597	9315
1 st Preference	N/A	NA	2569	2588	178	2545	7880
2 nd Preference	NA	NA	25	7	0	52	84
Place Refused						54	54
School Place	416	171	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	587
Registered Education Provider	217	90	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	307
No Place Offered	273	184					457

Of the 7964 applications made for nursery, reception, junior and year 6, 98.95% were offered their first preference and the remaining 84 their second choice. There were 54 who refused a place, as they had been offered and accepted a place at a voluntary aided school.

For pre-nursery, of the 906 applications made for a January 2019, 633 places were offered in schools and Registered Education Providers (REPs) and 273 were refused a place. For April 2019, 445 applications were made and places have been offered to 261 children and 184 were refused.

5.3 **Appeals Process**

Parents/carers wishing to appeal against the outcome of their application for admission must give the Authority notice of their appeal by 22nd March 2019 for Secondary and 3rd May 2019 for Primary. It is the parents/carers' responsibility to prove that an appeal request has been sent and therefore we strongly advise that all appeal requests are sent via recorded delivery or a tracked e-mail for evidence purposes.

For the September 2018 admission round, the Authority received 29 appeals from parents/carers whose applications for children to attend community schools had been unsuccessful. Of these 29 appeals the outcome was:-

- Successful - 5
- Unsuccessful - 19
- Withdrawn - 5

There are no appeals in respect of nursery and pre-nursery admissions.

6. **ADMISSION YEAR 2019/20**

6.1 **Late Applications**

For September 2020 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. when a single parent has been ill for some time or a family member has just moved 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).

6.2 **Parental Responsibility**

Only persons holding responsibility for the named child are able to 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 in a position to intervene in disputes between parents over school applications and will request that these are resolved privately. If an application is received from a step parent, 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.

6.3 All Through Schools

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.

6.4 Timetable 2019/20

Each Local Authority must publish an annual composite prospectus which sets out the determined admission 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 2019/20 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 th birthday falls between 01/09/19 – 31/08/20	01/09/2018	19/10/2018	01/03/2019
Primary Year 3 – Infants to Junior	8 th birthday falls between 01/09/19 – 31/08/20	01/09/2018	16/11/2018	16/04/2019
Reception – Age 4 before 1 st Sept 2018	5 th birthday falls between 01/09/19 – 31/08/20	01/09/2018	16/11/2018	16/04/2019
Nursery Class – Age 3 before 01/09/2018	4 th birthday falls between 01/09/19 – 31/08/20	01/09/2018	16/11/2018	16/04/2019
Pre-Nursery January 2020	3 rd birthday falls between 01/09/20 – 31/12/20	02/09/2019	04/10/2019	22/11/2019
Pre-Nursery April 2020	3 rd birthday falls between 01/01/20 – 31/03/20	06/01/2020	14/02/2020	13/03/2020

6.5 Waiting Lists

Following the allocation of places during the normal admission round, any pupil that is refused admission to an oversubscribed school will be placed on the waiting list. The list will be maintained until the 30th 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.

6.6 Admissions at Other Times

During the course of any academic year children transfer between schools due to a number of reasons ranging from house moves and those moving into the County Borough. We advise parents to first contact their present Head Teacher to alert them of the decision and then if parents wish to proceed they should contact the School Admissions Team for advice in making the application to the new school. At present In Year Transfer (IYT) applications are not on-line and must be made via a paper application. Between 01/09/17 and 31/08/18 there were a total of 1047 Primary in year transfer applications and 228 Secondary as detailed in the table below.

Number of IYT Applications

Primary	Pre-Nursery / Nursery	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2016/17	159	134	156	132	128	109	124	68	1010
2017/18	155	147	151	148	154	125	110	57	1047
House Moves 2017/18	91	67	69	58	65	53	46	27	476

Secondary	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Total
2016/17	77	87	71	46	18	299
2017/18	56	66	69	33	4	228
House moves 2017/18	28	35	34	20	2	177

6.7 Welsh Medium Transfers

During the academic year 2017/18, 73 children transferred into a Welsh medium primary school and 88 left, i.e. a net reduction of 15.

Primary	Pre-Nursery / Nursery	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2017/18									
Receiving	6	10	10	7	13	9	15	3	73
Leaving	8	12	14	11	15	17	12	9	88

7. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- 7.1 It is the Authority'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 Head Teacher of the child's current school. There would be an expectation that schools adopt a graduated response to meeting a learner's needs in line with the SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002) requirements.

- 7.2 For learners with significant or complex needs referrals should be made to the Access and Inclusion Service in order to inform further intervention and, if appropriate, referrals to the relevant Local Authority SEN panels. These panels consider if a specialist placement is required. If the threshold criteria for a specialist placement are met, then placements will be agreed and administered by the Access and Inclusion Service in line with the SEN Code of Practice for Wales.

8. FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL

- 8.1 In April 2018, a Fair Access Placement Panel (FAPP) consisting of representatives from schools and the LA was established to discuss and place children considered to be hard to place. This has resulted in unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, being offered suitable school places promptly. For primary school learners requiring a place through the FAP, the functions of the FAPP will be undertaken by the LA's School Admissions Service, in partnership with the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and the Access and Inclusion Service.
- 8.2 Since April 2018, there have been 24 FAPPs and 46 children have been brought forward to discuss and placements made. Of the 46, 21 were managed moves, 12 were parental in year transfer requests and 13 were permanent exclusions. Only 3 have not been placed in a school, as two were withdrawn and 1 is awaiting a placement.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

10. CONSULTATIONS

No consultation exercises have been undertaken.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

13. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

- 13.1 One of the three priorities of the Corporate Plan for RCT is 'Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone'. It is considered that an effective schools admissions service provided well is vital to ensuring that all children in RCT have a school place. In addition by promoting the

online application process the Council has been able to make efficiencies and continue to reduce the Council's running costs.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The admission of pupils into schools is controlled and administered by the Admissions Authority.
- 14.2 76% of all applications were made online.
- 14.3 The majority of applications are allocated their first preference in 98.95% of cases.
- 14.4 For children not allocated their first preference there is an appeal process, the criteria of which must be adhered to, but there is no appeal for pre-nursery or nursery places.
- 14.5 Admissions at other times must be done in consultation with both the leaving and receiving school, but places can only be allocated by the Admissions Authority.
- 14.6 Admission to a specialist setting are only made if the threshold criteria is met, and then are agreed and administered by the Access and Inclusion Service.
- 14.7 The Fair Access Panel, ensures that appropriate protocols are in place for admitting children considered to be hard to place so that unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered suitable school places promptly. Since April 2108, there have been 24 panels and 47 children have been discussed and placed.