

Analysis:

School Admissions – 2020/21 Admissions Round Analysis

The Admissions team have successfully implemented the School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2020/21, which is evidenced by the following assessment:

- 100% of applications were processed within 48 hours and 100% of standard in-year transfer requests were processed within 15 days of receipt in accordance with the WG School Admissions Code (2013) and Blaenau Gwent’s School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education 2019/20.
- Transfer rates have fluctuated over the last 4 academic sessions, from 140 in 2016/17, up to 343 in 2017/18 and then a slight increase of 355 in 2018/19. The rate of **229 in 2019/2020 – 151 primary transfers, 78 secondary transfers. Figures are much lower due to covid.** The primary reason for in-year transfer has been inward migration of families into the Blaenau Gwent area.
- Complex transfers were received on a weekly basis and referred to the SEN team for consideration at ALN Panel.
- The admissions officer has attended all ALN Panel meetings and/ or liaised directly with the SEN team on pupil placement.
- There were 3 appeals held for the reception year group during the summer period 2020, which is less than the number of appeals held in 2019. All 3 appeals were upheld in favour of the Council due to them being class size appeals.
- The numbers of in-time applications received for pupils who applied for a school place during the 2020/21 admission round, increased slightly for nursery and reception but decreased for secondary when compared to 2019/20, this was due to the birth rate for that year being lower. Please refer to Figure 1 overleaf for the in-time percentage comparisons:

Figure 1: In-time Application (%)

Percentage of In-time Applications 2018/19	Percentage of In-time Applications 2019/20	Percentage of In-time Applications 2020/21
Nursery – 58%	Nursery – 51%	Nursery – 60%
Reception – 79%	Reception – 74%	Reception – 75%
Secondary – 71%	Secondary – 89%	Secondary – 79%

- The Council were able to sustain 100% of parental first preferences for a 4 years period in respect of both nursery and secondary place allocation, and 99% of first preferences were met for the reception year group (please refer to **Figure 2** below). This is attributable to the effective monitoring and management of school capacities and pupil places along with the continued achievement of surplus place reduction, whereby school admission numbers for primary schools with a high surplus have been reduced over the last year and in turn the admission number has also been reduced.
- First preferences met for late applications are also extremely high due to effective pupil place management processes

Figure 2: First Preferences Met %

% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2017/18	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2018/19	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2019/20	% of First Preferences Met for In-time Applications 2020/21
Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%
Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 99%
Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%
% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2017/18	% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2018/19	% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2019/20	% of First Preferences Met for Late Applications 2020/21
Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 100%	Nursery – 99%	Nursery – 100%
Reception – 97%	Reception – 96%	Reception – 99%	Reception – 100%
Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%	Secondary – 100%

The Welsh Government School Admissions Code (2013) dictates that Councils must review their admissions policies annually for consultation and publication by April 15th in the academic year preceding the admissions round. Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy outlines the arrangements, criteria and relevant legislation that underpin school admission processes and methodology. The primary changes to the policy document for the 2020/21 academic session were as follows:

- A review of the nursery, primary and secondary admission numbers in line with the annual capacity review. This is an annual process which reviews changes to school plans and physical space within the school, which affect the provision of teaching and learning. This is carried out in line with the Welsh Government Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011). The final agreed capacity calculations are then used to inform admission numbers.
- A review of the dates for the admission round(s), associated processing and offer deadlines.

The Admissions Policy for 2021/22 was consulted upon and published in line with the Welsh Government's deadline (April 2020). The pilot phase of on-line admission arrangements was launched on September 1st 2016. Online applications have increased overall within the last academic session as outline below:

2017/18

- 158 out of a possible 976 applications received online for nursery;
- 6 out of a possible 796 applications received online for reception; and,
- 16 out of a possible 685 application received online for secondary.

2018/19

- 94 out of a possible 705 applications received online for nursery;
- 93 out of a possible 586 applications received online for reception; and,
- 58 out of a possible 770 application received online for secondary.

2019/20

- 205 out of a possible 659 applications received online for nursery;
- 186 out of a possible 676 applications received online for reception; and,
- 161 out of a possible 654 application received online for secondary.

2020/21

- 248 out of a possible 519 applications received online for nursery;
- 216 out of a possible 559 applications received online for reception; and,
- 185 out of a possible 426 applications received online for secondary.

The aim of the team is to become completely paperless in preparation for the 2022/23 admission round, with the team now being in the process of organising training for Capita One Online System.

The Admissions Forum met twice times over the last year (September 2019 – August 2020), with the minimum number of meetings required being 3. The Forum has sustained a good level of attendance at each meeting. The Forum has worked closely with the Education Transformation team in order to:

- improve school and Council awareness and partnership approaches in respect of the implementation and monitoring of the admissions round;

- improve tracking processes from live birth to secondary education (whilst ensuring alignment with Inclusion);
- address issues i.e. ensure that when in-year transfers are allocated a place a start date is offered within 10 days; and,
- explore a wider ranging data set i.e. Flying Start, placement outside of the chronological year group, home tuition and attendance data etc. Ensuring that there is a holistic approach to the management of pupil places.