

Admission Forum Annual Report for the 2021-2022 Academic Year

Admission forum area: Bridgend

Secretary to the Forum: Mrs D Davies

Contact details: email: Dawn.Davies@bridgend.gov.uk

Core membership and attendance of the forum

Name	Position	Time served as forum member as at 1 September 2021*	Membership by category (see table below)
1. Mr R Davies	Chair Group Manager (Business Support) Bridgend County Borough Council Education and Family Support Directorate	7 years (Re-elected 2019)	LA
2. Mr J Tarran	Vice Chair Headteacher Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School	8 years (Re-elected 2018)	S/VA
3. Mrs D Davies	Secretary Principal Officer - Business Strategy and Performance Bridgend County Borough Council Education and Family Support Directorate	4 years	LA
4. Ms R Garner	ALN (additional learning needs) Lead Early Years, Cognition and Learning, and CMMI (complex medical and motor impairment) Bridgend County Borough Council Education and Family Support Directorate	0 (new member from 1 September 2021)	LA/SEN/ALN

5. Ms Beth Davies	Childcare Manager Bridgend County Borough Council Education and Family Support Directorate	0 (new member from 1 September 2021)	LA
6. Mr A Slade	Headteacher Porthcawl Comprehensive School	4 years	S/CV
7. Mrs K John	Headteacher Brackla Primary School	4 years	S/CV
8. Mrs R Dixon	Headteacher Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr	0 (new member from 1 September 2021)	S/CV
9. Mr W Bond	Community governor Heronbridge School	13 years (12 years under membership category LA; 1 year under membership category L/COM 2021) (Re-elected September 2020)	L/COM
10. Cllr Dr C Smith	Councillor, Llangwydd	5 years (4 years under membership category LA; a new L/COM member from 1 September 2021 until membership ceased in March 2022.) (Re-elected September 2020)	L/COM

***If served more than 4 years also include date of re-election.**

Acronyms for Core Members		
Members Nominated by	Core Membership	Acronym
LA - any member or officer of the authority	1 to 5	LA, LA/SEN/ALN, LA/LAC
Church in Wales Diocesan representatives	1 to 3	CIW
Roman Catholic Diocesan representatives	1 to 3	RC
Schools - community and voluntary controlled	1 to 3	S/CV
Schools – foundation	1 to 3	S/F
Schools - voluntary aided	1 to 3	S/VA
Parent governor representatives	1 to 3	PG
Representatives of the local community	Up to 3	L/COM

Meeting dates and attendance (Please note that nothing in the Education (Admission Forums (Wales) Regulations 2003¹ precludes some or all members taking part virtually). Regulation 9 of the 2003 Regulations provides that core members can regulate their own procedure subject to any provision in those regulations)

	Date	Number of forum members in attendance - by category
First meeting	6 January 2022	10 4 x LA; 1 x S/VA; 3 x S/CV; 2 x L/COM
Second meeting	23 May 2022	8 3 x LA; 1 x S/VA; 3 x S/CV; 1 x L/COM
Third meeting	Not applicable	

¹ [The Education \(Admission Forums\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

Has your authority established a joint forum with an adjoining local authority?

If yes, can you provide details of the authority concerned and how successful this has been.

Not applicable.

Please confirm whether admission authorities within the forum area have completed the consultation and determination of admission arrangements process within the timescales required by the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006² [including consultation on the arrangements³ by 1 March in the determination year and determination of the final arrangements by 15 April of that year].

If any admission authority has not met the timescales, please give details here.

How many consultation documents have you seen from admission authorities (not including other local authorities)?

Admission arrangements must be consulted upon for the ‘determination year’, beginning two years before the school year in which the arrangements will apply. Therefore, in the 2021-2022 academic year, arrangements were being determined for the 2023-2024 academic year.

All admission authorities within Bridgend completed the consultation and determination of admission arrangements for 2023-2024 within the timescale stipulated in the Regulations.

Consultation documents received by the local authority from admission authorities outside of Bridgend that are not local authorities – St David’s Church in Wales Primary School, Colwinston.

² [The Education \(Determination of Admission Arrangements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

³ This includes consultation on sixth form arrangements for schools with sixth forms which should be carried out at the same time.

What admission arrangements have been put in place to serve the interests of vulnerable children?**Have they proved successful?****What other arrangements have you identified to support these children?**

The following information relates to the local authority's admission arrangements in respect of those schools for which it is the admission authority.

The local authority's centralised admission process allows greater control and monitoring of the admissions of vulnerable children

For admissions rounds and in-year admissions/transfers processed during the 2021-2022 academic year, looked after children or previously looked after children were prioritised for admission to the school of corporate parent/parent/carer choice. Officers in Pupil Services worked closely with the Education Engagement Team to ensure such pupils were able to access appropriate provision.

All children with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or a local authority-maintained individual development plan (IDP) were admitted to the placement named on the final statement. All applications in respect of children with additional learning needs but without a statement of SEN or a local authority-maintained IDP were considered in the same way as all other applications, based on the procedures and admission criteria set out in the 2021-2022 School Admissions Policy.

The local authority did not refuse to admit a child on the basis of their behaviour. (This encompasses children considered to be potentially disruptive, exhibiting challenging behaviours or potentially requiring assessment for special educational needs.) The Mainstream Fair Access Panel considered referrals of vulnerable and hard-to place pupils.

The purpose of the Mainstream Fair Access Panel is to consider the most complex individual cases for admission to mainstream places, ensuring that pupils are placed fairly, in schools that can meet their needs, with negative impacts on the effectiveness of education provision both for the learner and the provider being minimised.

The consideration of an individual case by the Mainstream Fair Access Panel may result in reference to the Additional Learning Needs Panel and/or the Access to Education Panel. These panels have a wider remit in respect of vulnerable and hard to place children, most particularly those that may need to be considered for specialist education provisions.

The local authority's oversubscription criteria, applicable in admissions rounds, set out the relative priority of applications in respect of children with medical or psychological conditions, or particular social circumstances (such as young carers). Applications were prioritised under the criterion where the required evidence from a registered health professional was provided (the reasons why the preferred school was considered to be the most suitable school and the difficulties that would arise if the child had to attend another school) and accepted. For in-year admission/transfer applications in respect of such children where there was no capacity in the year group of the requested school, the same evidence requirements and considerations were applied to make a final determination on whether a place would be offered at the requested school.

No applications in any admissions round were received in respect of children who met the oversubscription criterion relating to children of a serving member of UK service personnel or Crown Servant. No in-year admission/transfer applications were received relating to children of a serving member of UK service personnel or Crown Servant.

From April 2022, families began to arrive in Wales from Ukraine under the national scheme arrangements. Welsh Government advised local authorities that the school admissions legislation in Wales, reflected in the statutory School Admissions Code 2013, and on which admission authorities policies are based, applied fully to admission applications in respect of arriving children. Therefore, such applications would have no exceptional status and admission authorities should process and make decisions on the applications as they would for all other applications for school places. (This same position applies in respect of children arriving in Wales under the two established refugee schemes for families from Syria and Afghanistan, and also the scheme for families from Hong Kong.) The decisions made by the local authority on applications for school admission, and home-to-school transport eligibility, for children arriving from Ukraine reflected this position.

Following an admission decision, communications with the parent/carer and the school regarding starting arrangements reflected the advice issued by the Chief Medical Officer in respect of health screening under the national pathway established for the families arriving in Wales.

In the period to 31 August 2022, the local authority received 51 in-year school admission applications in respect of Ukrainian children. Of these, 28 were in respect of primary-aged learners (including nursery), and 23 were in respect of secondary-aged learners.

- For the 28 applications in respect of primary-aged learners, 15 were accepted and the learners were admitted to the requested schools. The remaining 13 were refused due to there being no places available in the relevant year groups at the requested schools. Alternative schools were offered and in 9 instances, the alternative schools were accepted. In 3 instances, parents

applied for and were offered places at voluntary aided schools. One application that had to be refused was in respect of a Full-time Nursery child and the parent made alternative arrangements.

- For the 23 applications in respect of secondary aged learners, 22 were accepted and the learners were admitted to the requested schools. The remaining application was cancelled prior to the local authority's decision.

One additional family with school-age children from Afghanistan was re-settled in Bridgend during the 2021-2022 school year. Places were offered for the children at the requested schools.

No additional families with school-age children from Syria were re-settled in Bridgend during the 2021-2022 school year.

The local authority's admission decisions on all applications in respect of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children took full account of the Welsh Government Circular No: 003/2008 (Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education) and sections 3.25 and 3.26 of the statutory School Admissions Code for Wales, 2013.

How well have the agreed in-year admission procedures worked?

How many children have been admitted to each school under the procedures?

Have you identified an increase in numbers for in-year admissions, if so, what action has been identified to address the issue?

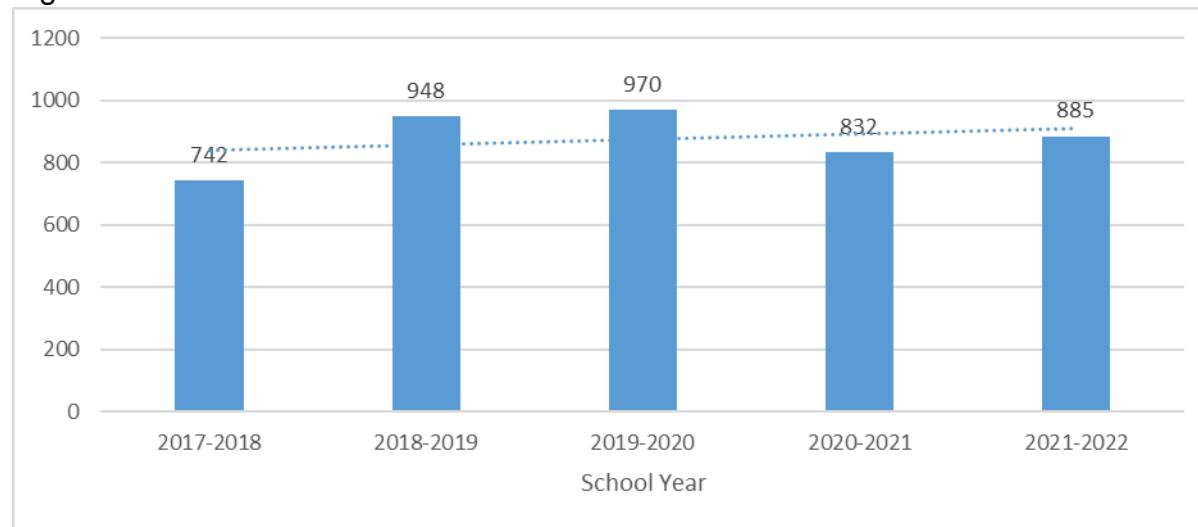
The following information relates to in-year admission/transfer applications made to the local authority in respect of those schools for which it is the admission authority.

In accordance with the local authority's published School Admissions Policy, all in-year admission/transfer requests received during the 2021-2022 school year were considered in strict order of date received and against the requested school's published admissions number and the current class structures and numbers. Account was taken of the specific circumstances of the child and family, if appropriate. If a place was available in the relevant year group at the requested school, the place was offered. If no place was available in the relevant year group at the requested school, the application was refused and the local authority advised the applicant/s of the next nearest school with an available place in the relevant year group and the right of appeal (for applications in respect of statutory-age education).

Mainstream in-year admission/transfer applications in respect of primary-aged children, including nursery

- The number of applications received by the local authority for primary aged-children (including nursery) is detailed in Figure 1. There was an increase in the number of applications received in 2021-2022 compared to 2020-2021, and this would still be the case even if the 28 applications in respect of Ukrainian children were not taken into account. For the five years from 2017-2022, there was a marginally increasing trend in the number of applications received.

Figure 1



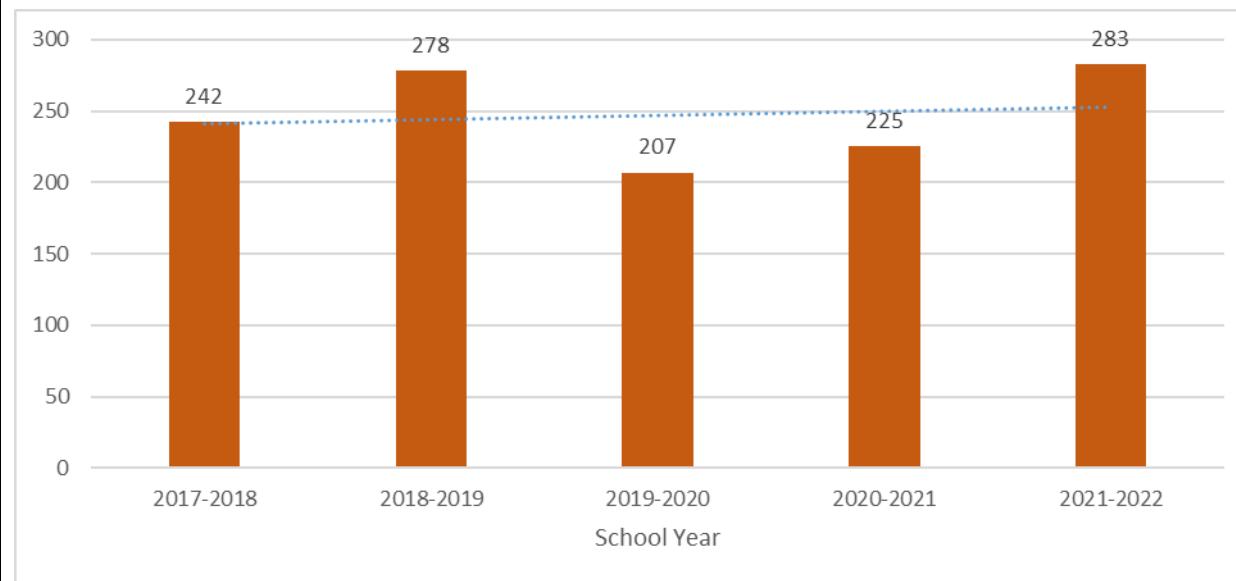
- Of the 885 applications received in 2021-2022:
 - 45 (5.1%) were withdrawn before progression to a decision by the local authority. In the majority of these cases, this was due to the application having been submitted too early, per policy, given the requested admission date; the application had been submitted in error, or the application was withdrawn as the child had been admitted to a specialist provision.
 - 643 (72.7%) were accepted for admission to the requested school.
 - 163 (18.4%) were refused for the requested schools, due to oversubscription of places in the requested year groups.

- 34 (3.8%) were refused because admission would result in an infant class size breach.
- For the 197 applications that had to be refused, an alternative school was offered in respect of 118. For the remainder, an alternative school was not offered as either the learner was already attending the nearest alternative school, or the parent/carer had advised that no alternative school would be considered.
- In 2021-2022, the local authority reported a surplus capacity of places in primary schools, for Reception through to Year 6, of 9.43%.

Mainstream in-year admission/transfer applications in respect of secondary-aged pupils, Years 7 to 11

- The number of applications received by the local authority for secondary-aged pupils (Year 7 to Year 11) is detailed in Figure 2. There was an increase in the number of applications received in 2021-2022 compared to 2020-2021, and this would still be the case even if the 23 applications in respect of Ukrainian children were not taken into account. For the five years from 2017-2022, there was a marginally increasing trend in the number of applications received.

Figure 2



- Of the 283 applications received in 2021-2022:
 - 12 (4.2%) were withdrawn before progression to a decision by the local authority. In the majority of these cases, this was due to the application being withdrawn as the child had been admitted to a specialist provision.
 - 249 (88%) were accepted for admission to the requested school.
 - 20 (7.1%) were refused for the requested schools, due to oversubscription of places in the requested year groups.
 - 2 (0.7%) were referred to the Mainstream Fair Access Panel, and subsequently the Access to Education Panel for consideration of specialist provisions.
 - For the 20 applications that had to be refused, an alternative school was offered in respect of 14. For the remainder, an alternative school was not offered as either the learner was already attending the nearest alternative school, or the parent/carer had advised that no alternative school would be considered.
- In 2021-2022, the local authority reported a surplus capacity of places in secondary schools, for Year 7 through to Year 13, of 18%.

Please provide a short summary of the key admission issues identified for the area and how the forum has addressed them.

The following information relates to the local authority's admission arrangements in respect of those schools for which it is the admission authority.

- **Clarity of oversubscription criteria for Welsh-medium schools.**

The forum noted that a response to the consultation on the 2022-2023 School Admissions Policy was that the oversubscription criteria for Welsh-medium schools were not sufficiently clear. In consequence, separate oversubscription criteria were included in the approved 2022-2023 School Admissions Policy to ensure it was explicit that there are no catchment areas for Welsh-medium schools. The forum did not request any further action.

- **Closing date for the Part-time Nursery admissions round.**

Some parents had expressed difficulties with the early closing date for the Part-time Nursery admission round and 16% of Part-time Nursery applications for January and April 2022 were late applications. The forum noted that the concern had already been recognised and had been addressed in the 2022-2023 School Admissions Policy in that the closing date for the admissions round, for places in January and April 2023, had been extended from March to the end of August 2022. The forum did not request any further action.

- **The number of available Part-time Nursery places in schools.**

The forum noted that variation year-on-year is inevitable given the factors that determine the number of such places and that this is explained each year in the School Admissions Policy. The forum noted that if there are no Part-time Nursery places available at a school, but the Full-time Nursery number is low, the local authority consults with the school on whether it is appropriate to convert some of the unfilled Full-time Nursery places to Part-time Nursery places, for that year. The forum did not request any further action.

- **The number of available Part-time Nursery places in Welsh-medium schools.**

The forum noted that 25 of the 44 applications for places at Welsh-medium school for January 2022 and April 2022 had been refused, due to oversubscription. The forum was assured that the local authority was actively examining means to increase the number of Welsh-medium nursery places for the future and the forum did not request any further action.

- **Oversubscription for Reception places for September 2022 in the Bridgend Northeast area.**

The forum noted that places at Coety Primary School, Litchard Primary School and Coychurch (Llangrallo) Primary School had, once again, been oversubscribed, evidencing the ongoing pressure on places in this geographical area. Information on the actions either in progress or under consideration in relation to increasing capacity was in the public domain and the forum did not request any further action.

- **Oversubscription for Reception places for September 2022 at West Park Primary School**

The forum noted that places at the school, in the west of the county, had been oversubscribed, but as there was significant unfilled capacity at the other primary schools in the area, the forum did not request any action.

- **Oversubscription for Full-time Nursery places for September 2022 in the Bridgend Northeast area.**

The forum noted that places at nine English-medium schools had been oversubscribed. The allocation process had been particularly difficult due to the number of oversubscribed schools in the northeast, with many applicants selecting those schools as either a first, second or third preference. Despite oversubscription, overall, just under 96% of applicants received an offer of a place at their first preference school, with 98.7% of applicants receiving either their first, second or third preference school. Information on the actions either in progress or under consideration in relation to increasing capacity in the northeast of the county was in the public domain and the forum did not request any further action.

- **School admissions for children arriving in Bridgend from Ukraine**

The forum received comprehensive information on the handling of applications, the challenges that had arisen and actions taken. Also, the numbers of applications received and outcomes. The forum did not request any further actions.

- **'Virtual' admission appeal hearings.**

The forum noted that the COVID-19 emergency legislation that permitted 'virtual' appeal hearings was to end on 30 September 2022. It was of concern that, after that date, appeals hearings would need to revert to face-to-face, as there was a view that many panel members may not wish to participate in face-to-face hearings any longer. Panel members are volunteers. Not having to travel and being able to participate from home had been beneficial. Prior to lockdown, the local authority has been experiencing difficulties as regards the availability of suitable venues and the expense. The forum also wished to acknowledge that there had been benefits for parents/carers in presenting their cases from the comfort of their own homes. There was general disappointment that these factors, as well as the difficulty with suitable venues and expense, would arise again. The forum supported these factors being reflected in the local authority's response should a proposed Welsh Government survey on 'virtual appeals' proceed.

- **School admission policies of the voluntary-aided (VA) schools**

The forum noted that some of the policies were extremely concise. It was suggested that the VA schools give consideration to adopting sections of the local authority policy each year, to ensure their policies are comprehensive. It was agreed that the Vice Chair of the forum would discuss the matter with colleagues in VA schools and take the opportunity to highlight the consultation requirements upon all admission authorities.

Is there co-ordinated admission activity in your local authority?

If so which admission authorities in your local authority area are participating?

Has it been successful/beneficial?

There are no co-ordinated admission arrangements in Bridgend.

School admissions and appeals

1. Schools for which the local authority is the admission authority

1.1 Primary (Reception) admission round for September 2021 – applications received and appeals arising

Name of School	Admission number	Number of 1st preference applications for the school (on-time and late)	Number of successful 1st preference applications	Number of appeals	Number of successful appeals	Total number of parental preferences that were met for the school
Abercerdin Primary School	30	27	27	0	-	27
Afon y Felin Primary School	19	20	19	1	0	19
Betws Primary School	30	14	14	0	-	14
Blaengarw Primary School	24	21	21	0	-	21
Brackla Primary School	45	48	45	3	0	45

Bryncethin Primary School	34 (temp. 35)	38	35	0	-	35
Brynmelyn Primary School	60	45	45	0	-	45
Bryntirion Infants School	40	37	37	0	-	37
Caerau Primary School	45 (temp. 60)	61	60	0	-	60
Cefn Cribwr Primary School	20	13	13	0	-	13
Cefn Glas Infants School	66	39	39	0	-	39
Coety Primary School	60	72	60	4	0	60
Corneli Primary School	46	36	36	0	-	36
Coychurch Primary School	19	18	17	1 (2 nd)	0	17 (1 st) 2 (2 nd)
Croesty Primary School	30	18	18	0	-	18
Cwmfelin Primary School	30	24	24	0	-	24
Ffaldu Primary School	30	21	21	0	-	21
Garth Primary School	30	22	22	0	-	22
Litchard Primary School	60	59	58	0	-	58 (1 st) 2 (2 nd)
Llangynwyd Primary School	11 (temp.14)	10	10	0	-	10
Maes yr Haul Primary School	75	57	57	0	-	57
Mynydd Cynffig Primary School	60	55	55	0	-	55

Nantyffyllon Primary School	40	26	26	0	-	26
Nantymoel Primary School	30	30	30	0	-	30
Newton Primary School	34	13	13	0	-	13
Nottage Primary School	60	38	38	0	-	38 (1 st) 5 (2 nd)
Ogmore Vale Primary School	53	27	27	0	-	27
Oldcastle Primary School	60	61	61 (Due to a late application where admission was mandated.)	0	-	60(1 st) 1 (2 nd)
Pencoed Primary School	72	69	69	0	-	69 (1 st) 3 (2 nd)
Penybont Primary School	45	37	37	0	-	37 (1 st) 3 (2 nd)
Pen y Fai Church in Wales Primary School	30	33	30	1	0	30
Pîl Primary School	30	27	27	0	-	27
Plasnewydd Primary School	45	10	10	0	-	10
Porthcawl Primary School	25 (temp.28)	23	23	0	-	23
Tondu Primary School	42	18	18	0	-	18
Trelales Primary School	30	27	27	0	-	27
Tremains Primary School	65	52	52	0	-	52

Tynyrheol Primary School	10	6	6	0	-	6
West Park Primary School	55	63	56 (Due to application of the multiple birth criterion.)	5	0	56
Ysgol Cynwyd Sant	45	34	34	0	-	34
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr	54	61	51	4	1	52 (1 st) 3 (2 nd)
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd	30	25	25	0	-	25 (1 st) 1 (2 nd)
Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr	33	22	22	0	-	22 (1 st) 1 (2 nd)
Totals	1752 (temp. 1774)	1457	1415	19	1	1415 (1st) 21(2nd)

The total number of preferences met does not equal the number of applications received, as some applicants who were not offered the first preference school had not expressed a second or third preference and did not subsequently request admission to any other school for which the local authority is the admission authority.

1.2 Junior school (Year 3) admission round for September 2021 – applications received and appeals arising

Name of school	Admission number	Number of 1st preference applications for the school (on-time and late)	Number of successful 1st preference applications	Number of appeals	Number of successful appeals	Total number of parental preferences that were met for the school
Llangwydd Junior School	90	85	85	0	-	85 (all 1 st)

1.3 Secondary school (Year 7) admission round for September 2021 – applications received and appeals arising

Name of school	Admission number	Number of 1st preference applications for the school (on-time and late)	Number of successful 1st preference applications	Number of appeals	Number of successful appeals	Total number of parental preferences that were met for the school
Brynteg School	333	287	287	0	-	287 (1 st) 14 (2 nd)
Bryntirion Comprehensive School	210	250	210	8	1	211
Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen	276	224	224	0	-	224 (1 st) 1 (2 nd)
Cynffig Comprehensive School	180	150	150	0	-	150 (1 st) 3 (2 nd)
Maesteg School	228	207	207	0	-	207

Pencoed Comprehensive School	214	161	161	0	-	161 (1 st) 3 (2 nd)
Porthcawl Comprehensive School	246	203	203	0	-	203 (1 st) 2 (2 nd)
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd	165	130	130	0	-	130
Totals	1852	1612	1572	8	1	1573 (1st) 23 (2nd)

It is known that, as in previous years, a proportion of the parents/carers who applied for a place for their child at Bryntirion Comprehensive School also applied to Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School.

2. Schools for which the local authority is not the admission authority

2.1 Primary (reception) admission round for September 2021 – applications received and appeals arising

Name of school	Admission number	Number of applications for the school (on-time and late)	Number of successful applications	Number of appeals	Number of successful appeals	Total number of parental preferences that were met for the school
Archdeacon John Lewis Church in Wales Primary School	30	11	11	0	-	11
St Marys Catholic Primary School	30	33	33	0	-	33
St Marys and St Patricks Catholic Primary School	25	26	26	0	-	26

St Roberts Roman Catholic Primary School	22	9	9	0	-	9
TOTALS	107	79	79	0	-	79

2.2 Secondary school (Year 7) admission round for September 2021 – applications received and appeals arising

Name of school	Admission number	Number of applications for the school (on-time and late)	Number of successful applications	Number of appeals	Number of successful appeals	Total number of parental preferences that were met for the school
Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School	131	165	135	16	13	148

It is known that, as in previous years, a proportion of the parents/carers who applied for a place for their child at the school also applied to the local authority for a place at Bryntirion Comprehensive School.

What methods has the forum used to promulgate any advice or decisions it has reached?

Advice or decisions were shared with relevant stakeholders through the local authority's normal communication mechanisms.

Minutes of Bridgend Admission Forum meetings are published on the local authority's website.

Date forum's advice published on the local authority's website:

The minutes of the forum meetings are published to the School Admissions Forum page of the Bridgend County Borough Council website, following their approval.

Please also provide the relevant link:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/school-admissions/the-bridgend-admission-forum/>

Signature: *Dawn Davies* **(Secretary to the forum)**

Date: 21 November 2022

Please return the completed report by 30 November 2022