

School Places – Paper to note

Data from Local Education Authorities' School Organisation Plans

In November I included some information in my report on demographic change and its impact on pupil numbers and the provision of school places.

This paper provides more detailed data on pupil numbers and capacity. It has been extracted from information provided by LEAs as part of their School Organisation Planning process between 2001 and 2004.

The data being produced by LEAs and published in School Organisation Plans has become more reliable in the last few years but it cannot be guaranteed to be consistent from year to year. In particular the Education (School Organisation Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2003 changed the timetable for producing a draft School Organisation Plan from the end of September to the end of December. The September 2003 figures and the September 2004 figures are therefore based on pupil numbers at the start of the academic year and may not be directly comparable with previous years which used figures collected in January.

Analysis

Primary

An analysis of the numbers on roll at primary level compared with capacity demonstrates that whilst LEAs have been removing surplus capacity, the rate at which this is being achieved is slower than the decline in the school population.

Primary Schools	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003	Sept 2004
Number On Roll	262,913	257,839	256,387	247,845**	243,258
MOE*	298,440	296,462	295,952	294,837	293,025
Net Surplus places***	35,527	38,623	39,565	46,992	49,767
% surplus	11.9	13.0	13.4	15.9	17.0

*MOE = More Open Enrolment. This figure represents the number of places which are available based mainly on the physical capacity of the school.

** The apparent dramatic fall in numbers on roll is not replicated in schools census information and is likely to be accounted for by the change from Jan to Sept figures and by correct treatment of nursery pupils.

*** Net surplus capacity is the number of empty places offset by the number of excess pupils in schools which are overfull

Secondary

At Secondary level, numbers on roll increased to a peak by September 2003 but have now started a gradual decline, which can be expected to continue. Surplus capacity is bound to rise in the next few years unless action is taken to remove places. The reported number of places at secondary schools has increased in the last few years.

Secondary Schools	Jan	Jan	Jan	Sept	Sept 2004
-------------------	-----	-----	-----	------	-----------

	2000	2001	2002	2003	
Number On Roll	205,608	210,732	211,974	216,274	215,990
MOE*	226,866	232,894	235,645	238,711	239,084
Net Surplus places***	21,258	22,162	23,671	22,437	23,094
% surplus	9.4	9.5	10.1	9.4	9.7

Surplus Capacity

- The percentage of unfilled capacity in the primary school sector has increased each year for the last five years. In the secondary sector the level of total capacity unfilled has been fairly static to date.
- Overall forecasts of falling pupil populations would indicate that the trend at primary schools will continue, and increasing levels of unfilled capacity at secondary schools can now be expected.
- Programmes of rationalisation take some time to produce reduced surplus.

Unfilled places (gross)

This table shows the number of school places which are empty as a percentage of total capacity without netting off shortfalls of places at schools which are oversubscribed.

	Jan 2000 %	Jan 2001 %	Jan 2002 %	Sept 2003 %	Sept 2004 %
Primary	14.1	15.5	15.7	17.3	18.5
Secondary	11.4	11.7	12.1	11.5	12.0
All Schools	12.9	13.7	14.1	14.7	15.6

The LEAs with the highest percentage of gross unfilled places in the primary sector in recent years have been:

Jan 2000 %	Jan 2001 %	Jan 2002 %	Sept 2003 %	Sept 2004 %
Carms 22.3	Carms 24.9	Carms 24.9	Carms 29.1	Cered 30.8
Flint 19.0	Cered 22.2	Cered 23.6	Cered 25.3	Carm 30.4
Ang 17.8	Powys 21.4	Powys 21.3	Wrex 22.7	Powys 27.7
RCT 17.8	RCT 19.3	RCT 21.0	Merthyr 21.2	Cardiff 23.5
Cardiff 17.6	Vale 18.3	Merthyr 19.9	Cardiff 21.0	RCT 23.3

The LEAs with the highest percentage of gross unfilled places in the secondary sector have been:

Jan 2000 %	Jan 2001 %	Jan 2002 %	Sept 2003 %	Sept 2004 %
Merthyr 21.6	Merthyr 21.6	Merthyr 23.3	Merthyr 25.5	Merthyr 26.4
Bridg 21.5	Bridg 21.0	Bridg 20.9	Bridge 20.4	RCT 20.3
Swans 18.8	Swan 20.6	Wrex 20.8	RCT 18.7	Bridg 20.2
Wrex 18.3	Wrex 19.5	Swans 20.3	Caerph 18.4	Wrexham 14.9
Gwyn 14.0	Powys 13.9	BGwent 15.3	BGwent 14.2	Caerph 14.8

N.B Secondary schools which closed in Merthyr and Caerphilly in September 2005 will have reduced the percentage in these two authorities

Schools with significant surplus capacity

- In September 2004 almost 24% of schools overall had a significant level of surplus places. "Significant surplus" capacity is defined as an occupancy rate of 75% or less, and at least 30 empty places. (Small primary schools may thus have quite a high percentage of unfilled places but if the number does not exceed 30 places it is not regarded as "significant surplus".) The proportion of primary schools with significant surplus has increased slightly since last year.
- All LEAs have some primary schools with significant surplus capacity. Out of 22 LEAs, 16 have significant surplus in their secondary schools.

Percentage of schools with significant surplus capacity

	Jan 2000 %	Jan 2001 %	Jan 2002 %	Sept 2003 %	Sept 2004 %
Primary	18.8	20.0	20.5	24.9	25.0
Secondary	18.4	12.7	14.1	16.7	16.3
All Schools	18.8	19.1	19.7	23.9	23.9

Small schools with significant surplus capacity

- The percentage of small schools with a significant level of unfilled places (i.e. over 30 places and more than 25% surplus) has increased substantially since January 2000. Small schools are defined here as primary schools with fewer than 90 pupils, secondary schools without a sixth form with fewer than 600 pupils and secondary schools with a sixth form with fewer than 700 pupils.

Percentage of small schools with significant surplus capacity

	Jan 2000 %	Jan 2001 %	Jan 2002 %	Sept 2003 %	Sept 2004 %
Primary	28.8	37.4	30.0	37.1	38.8
Secondary	23.3	29.0	33.3	33.3	39.3
All Schools	28.2	36.4	30.4	36.8	38.9

Oversubscribed Schools

- The percentage of overfilled places in the primary sector is 1.5% overall. In the secondary sector it is 2.3%.
- All LEAs have some primary schools filled beyond capacity.
 - 20 LEAs have secondary schools filled beyond capacity, the 2 exceptions being Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil.

Percentage of over-filled places

	Jan 2000 %	Jan 2001 %	Jan 2002 %	Sept 2003 %	Sept 2004 %
Primary	3.3	2.4	2.2	1.7	1.5
Secondary	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3
All Schools	2.8	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.9

The LEAs with the highest percentage of over-filled places in the primary sector in recent years have been:

Jan 2000	%	Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Bridgend	9.3	BGwent	6.9	Caerphilly	6.1	Newport	5.1	Newport	4.9
BGwent	7.6	Caerphilly	6.2	Newport	5.8	Caerphilly	4.1	Denbigh	2.8
Wrexham	7.3	NeathPT	5.3	Wrexham	3.3	Pembs	3.6	Caerphilly	2.6
Caerphilly	7.0	Newport	3.9	Vale	2.7	Vale	3.2	Gwynedd	2.4
Newport	6.2	Wrexham	3.4	Bridgend	2.5	Denbs	2.4	Vale	2.2

The LEAs with the highest percentage of over-filled places in the secondary sector in recent years have been:

Jan 2000	%	Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Conwy	6.3	Conwy	6.2	Mons	9.1	Conwy	7.8	Conwy	7.2
BGwent	5.3	Mons	6.2	Wrexham	6.9	Mons	4.7	Wrexham	6.2
Torfaen	5.2	Wrexham	4.0	Conwy	4.8	Torfaen	4.6	Cardiff	5.0
Newport	4.6	Flint	3.4	Cardiff	3.7	Cardiff	4.2	Newport	3.7
Vale	3.8	Cardiff	3.3	Torfaen	3.6	Newport	3.7	Torfaen	3.6

Welsh Medium Schools

Surplus places

- In September 2004 the percentage of unfilled places (net) within the Welsh medium primary school sector was 21.2% while in the secondary sector it was 12.4%. This was an increase in the primary sector and a fall in the secondary sector since last year.
- These levels of surplus capacity are higher than the comparable figures for all schools in Wales (18.5% and 12.0% respectively). However overall surplus capacity in the Welsh medium sector has been decreasing at a time when surplus places generally have been increasing.
- Data on Welsh medium places is not available from School Organisation Plans before 2001.

Percentage of unfilled places(net) in Welsh medium schools

	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003	Sept 2004
	%	%	%	%
Primary	20.5	19.0	20.3	21.2
Secondary	15.1	14.4	14.2	12.4
All Schools	19.9	16.9	17.6	16.6

The LEAs with the highest levels of surplus capacity in the Welsh medium primary sector in recent years have been:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Powys	28.4	Monmouth *	51.3	Carmarthen	30.4	Powys	33.2

Flint	26.6	Powys	30.3	Ceredigion	28.2	Ceredigion	32.2
Carmarthen	25.0	Carmarthen	25.0	Flintshire	26.7	Carmarthen	32.1

*Monmouth opened a second Welsh medium primary school in September 2001 thereby roughly doubling their Welsh medium capacity. The school started with only infant pupils but quickly built up numbers.

The LEAs with the highest percentage of unfilled places in the Welsh medium secondary sector in recent years have been:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Vale of Glam	88.8	Vale of Glam	76.6	Vale of Glam	65.3	Wrexham	36.6
Wrexham	41.5	Wrexham	38.0	Wrexham	40.8	Vale of Glam	36.5
Conwy	30.3	Caerphilly	31.9	Flintshire	39.0	Caerphilly	29.0

[NB: Surplus places in the Vale of Glamorgan are largely attributable to Ysgol Bro Morgannwg which was established in September 2000 with Year 7 intake only and will not operate to full capacity until September 2006]

- The percentage of Welsh medium schools with significant surplus capacity is 26.7% in the primary sector and 20.8% in the secondary sector. This compares to the percentages for all schools in Wales, 25.0% primary sector and 16.3% in secondary sector.
- Five LEAs have no Welsh medium secondary schools (Blaenau Gwent, Monmouth, Newport, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil). Of the 17 LEAs with Welsh medium secondary schools, 10 have significant surplus capacity (Anglesey, Caerphilly, Carmarthen, Ceredigion, Conwy, Gwynedd, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham).
- Seven LEAs have no significant surplus capacity in the primary sector (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Pembrokeshire and Torfaen).

Oversubscribed Welsh medium schools

- In Welsh medium primary schools the overall percentage of over-filled places is 1.6%. This is less than the level for all schools in Wales (1.9%).

Percentage of over-filled places in Welsh medium schools

	Jan 2001 %	Jan 2002 %	Sept 2003 %	Sept 2004 %
Primary	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3
Secondary	1.0	1.2	1.7	1.8
All Schools	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6

The LEAs with the highest percentage of over-filled places in the Welsh medium primary sector are:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Wrexham	18.6***	Wrexham	20.8	Wrexham	19.0	Cardiff	3.5
Pembs	2.4	Pembroke	2.8	Cardiff	3.4	Gwynedd	2.4

Ceredigion	2.4	RCT	2.4	Pembroke	3.3	Anglesey	2.0
------------	-----	-----	-----	----------	-----	----------	-----

*** The data provided by Wrexham in 2001, 2002, and 2003 was not complete since they had not included the demountable accommodation at 2 of their Welsh medium schools. In respect of 2004, they have correctly included the demountables, therefore there are no overfilled places in the sector in Wrexham.

The LEAs with the highest percentage of over-filled places in the Welsh medium secondary sector are:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Cardiff	3.6	Swansea	33.5	Swansea	22.3	Torfaen	10.4
Torfaen	3.2	Torfaen	7.1	Torfaen	13.0	Swansea	5.5
Ceredigion	2.8	Pembroke	2.3	Cardiff	3.7	Cardiff	3.8

- Swansea has now opened a further secondary school which should, over a period of years, relieve the pressure on the existing school.
- Torfaen's secondary school is accessed by pupils from Blaenau Gwent, Newport, and Monmouthshire in addition to its own pupils.
- The LEAs with the biggest problems of overcrowding appear to be Cardiff at primary level and Torfaen, Swansea and Cardiff at secondary level. For September 2005 one of Cardiff LEA's primary schools was due to double in size and a new primary school opened in temporary accommodation.

Voluntary Aided schools

Surplus capacity

- The percentage of unfilled places in the VA primary sector is 14.0% while in the secondary sector the figure is 8.6%. These figures are lower than the all Wales averages.
- The percentage of VA schools with significant surplus capacity is 21.5% in the primary sector and 10.5% in the secondary sector. This compares to the percentages for all schools in Wales, 25.0% in the primary sector and 16.3% in the secondary sector.
- Detailed information on VA schools is available only for the last 4 years.

The LEAs with the highest percentage of unfilled places in the voluntary aided primary sector are:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Denbigh	24.8	Powys	27.0	Denbigh	32.5	Merthyr	29.6
Powys	21.4	Merthyr	26.6	Merthyr	31.5	Powys	28.3
Merthyr	20.6	Denbigh	20.7	Powys	25.0	Denbigh	23.0

The LEAs with the highest percentage of unfilled places in the voluntary aided secondary sector are:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Merthyr	45.4	Merthyr	47.2	Merthyr	48.9	Merthyr	46.7
Denbigh	24.0	Newport	21.2	Newport	13.0	NeathPT	12.6
Newport	19.3	Denbigh	16.4	Carmarthen	12.0	Denbigh	11.2

- There is a wide variation in the take up of VA places between LEAs. Thirteen LEAs have no surplus capacity in their VA secondary schools and 2 have no surplus in their VA Primary schools.
- In 2004, 29 of the 144 (20.1%) VA primary schools were classified as small. In the secondary sector 5 out of the 19 VA schools (26.3%) were small.

Oversubscribed VA schools

- The percentage of over-filled places in the VA primary sector is 2.6% while in the secondary sector the figure is 3.7%. These figures are higher than the all Wales averages.

The LEAs with the highest percentage of over-filled places in the voluntary aided primary sector are:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Caerphilly	20.2	NeathPT	9.3	Vale	8.0	Caerphilly	14.2
NeathPT	14.7	Vale of Glam	8.0	NeathPT	6.7	Anglesey	10.7
BGwent	7.4	RCT	7.0	RCT	6.5	Vale	6.2

The LEAs with the highest percentage of over-filled places in the voluntary aided secondary sector are:

Jan 2001	%	Jan 2002	%	Sept 2003	%	Sept 2004	%
Flint	14.7	Wrexham	18.9	Wrexham	19.2	Vale	12.5
Vale of Glam	11.6	Caerphilly	4.5	Denbigh	8.4	Denbigh	8.4
Wrexham	8.6	RCT	4.2	Cardiff	6.6	Cardiff	6.5

Foundation Schools

- There are 12 foundation schools in Wales: 4 primary and 8 secondary. The schools are located in 8 LEA areas.
- The percentage of unfilled places is 8.8% in the primary sector and 1.0% in the secondary sector. Overall, the percentage of surplus capacity is 1.8%. The level of surplus capacity has increased in the primary sector over the past few years and has reduced in the secondary sector.
- There were no foundation schools with significant surplus.
- The percentage of over-filled places in the foundation primary sector is 1.0% while in the secondary sector the figure is 9.1%. This level of oversubscription has increased slightly in the secondary sector in the past few years.

