

Secondary School Place review **(October 2020)**



Background

As part of the Council's continual review of the supply of and demand for school places, it has become necessary to undertake a review of English medium secondary school places.

The Council is experiencing large year 6 catchment area cohorts that are progressing through to secondary sector over the next four years, this will put pressure on the demand for secondary school places in the Vale and particularly for the Barry area. Living within a schools catchment area is a high priority for entry to secondary education after the removal of the feeder school system in September 2020. The large cohorts are expected to decline from 2024/25 onwards. Year 6 cohorts for Denominational and Welsh medium schools will meet future demand are not reflected in this review of secondary education together with Stanwell which currently operates a feeder school system for entry to secondary education.

In order to manage the future demand for secondary school places at the year 7 intake, the Council has reviewed the effectiveness of catchment areas and admission arrangements in order to manage demand in the short term.

Catchment Areas

A school catchment area is a geographically defined area of addresses drawn up to ensure that all schools in an area receive a fair share of pupils in which children are eligible to attend a local school and are used;

- To give parents an indication of their local school.
- To help schools identify with the communities they serve.
- To prioritise admissions to school when there are more applications than places available.
- As a planning tool to enable the Authority to fulfil its duty to forecast demand for education in an area and to plan to meet that demand.

- As an element of transport policy in order to facilitate the organisation of school transport and control costs.

A catchment area does not prevent a parent from expressing a preference for a particular school if they do not live in its catchment area. Parents can express a preference for any school. Places are allocated according to the published over-subscription criteria.

Aims of the review

- To review the demand for secondary school places to ensure all Vale children have access to a secondary school place in future.
- To promote fair access to school places.

Why are we carrying out a review?

Large year 6 cohorts are expected to transfer to the secondary sector from 2021 onwards putting pressure on future demand for secondary school places

- The Council has changed from a feeder school system to a catchment area basis for entry to secondary education from September 2020 with priority for places now given to residence within catchment area.
- There is potential for catchment area applications to exceed the number of places available.
- A number of pupils from outside the authority boundary gain secondary school places at Vale schools over Vale pupils on proximity grounds i.e. distance from home to school. Parts of Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf are geographically close to some Vale schools. This can impact adversely on some Vale parents when expressing a preference for schools.
- The establishment of mixed sex schooling in the Barry area has changed parental demand in the Barry area.
- Large scale and other housing developments are having an impact on pupil numbers.
- The Council has undertaken extensive remodelling and new builds of secondary schools in the past 10 years.

The following table illustrates parental preference at Vale of Glamorgan secondary schools.

School	Number on Roll		Number living in the school catchment area	Number living outside school catchment area living in the Vale of Glamorgan	Number living outside of the Vale of Glamorgan
Cowbridge	1558		972 (62%)	268 (17%)	318 (20%)
Llantwit	1020		789 (77%)	221 (22%)	10 (1%)
Pencoedtre	1018		755 (74%)	247 (24%)	16 (2%)
St Cyres	1218		607 (50%)	255 (21%)	356 (29%)
Stanwell	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
St Richard Gwyn	789		751 (95%)	0	38 (5%)
Whitmore	1073		657 (61%)	408 (38%)	8 (1%)
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg	1089		1075 (99%)	0	14 (1%)
Total	7765		5606 (72%)	1399 (18%)	760 (10%)

In total 760 (10%) pupils attend Vale secondary schools whilst living outside the authority boundary area. These pupils mainly attend Cowbridge and St Cyres schools as their catchment areas border other local authority areas. As a result of the rise in the Vale of Glamorgan primary school population, the pressure for secondary school places from Vale residents is also increasing.

There is sufficient capacity overall in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet the needs of the future secondary school population, but current admission arrangements require review to ensure Vale pupils have access to a school place in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The review concentrates on the 5 English medium secondary schools for whom the Council is the admission authority.

Demand for places living in school catchment areas

Barry Area

The Barry area is served by:

- Pencoedre High School and Whitmore High School for English medium secondary education
- St Richard Gwyn for a denominational education
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg for Welsh medium secondary education

The following table illustrates the demand for English medium secondary school places over the next seven years, excluding children attending St Helen's and St Joseph's RC primary schools, from those living in the Barry area which indicates particular pressure for school places over the next three years. Anticipated numbers emanating from the Barry Waterfront development are included for those houses yet to be built and occupied.

There will be an anticipated shortfall of English secondary school places up until the 2025 intake recognising that parental preference will play a part. The net requirement for school places is also reliant on the utilisation of available places at St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School and parents accepting places at that school. Parents may not wish for a denominational setting. The data reflects the change to school catchment areas agreed by Cabinet and operational from September 2021.

English medium primary pupil numbers living in the Barry area requiring a school place by age group and year of entry to year 7 of secondary school (excludes St Helens and St Josephs pupils)

	Rec (YR 7 intake 2027)	Year 1 (YR 7 intake 2026)	Year 2 (YR 7 intake 2025)	Year 3 (YR 7 intake 2024)	Year 4 (YR 7 intake 2023)	Year 5 (YR 7 intake 2022)	Year 6 (YR 7 intake 2021)
Pencoedre catchment	270	301	291	316	347	332	333
Whitmore catchment	180	195	184	197	191	222	220
Waterfront housing development	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

Total Barry pupils requiring secondary school places	465	511	490	528	553	569	568
<u>The availability of Places</u>							
Places available at Pencoedtre (210) and Whitmore (180)	390	390	390	390	390	390	390
Places available at St Richard Gwyn after feeder schools	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
Number of Barry pupils who are admitted to other secondary schools	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
<u>Total places available for Barry pupils</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>510</u>
Net school place requirement surplus+/-/shortfall-	+45	-1	+20	-18	-43	-59	-58

Cowbridge Area

The Cowbridge area is served by:

- Cowbridge Comprehensive for English medium secondary education
- St Richard Gwyn for a denominational education
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg for Welsh medium secondary education

The following table illustrates the demand for secondary school places over the next seven years from those living in the Cowbridge catchment area. The data reflects the change to school catchment areas operational from September 2021. Cowbridge regularly receives applications from resident outside of the Vale of Glamorgan area. There are generally sufficient school places to meet future demand from pupils living within the school catchment recognising that parental preference will play a part. Pupil numbers will be monitored for the 2024 intake.

English medium primary pupil numbers living in the Cowbridge area requiring a school place by age group and year of entry to year 7 of secondary school

	Rec (YR 7 intake 2027)	Year 1 (YR 7 intake 2026)	Year 2 (YR 7 intake 2025)	Year 3 (YR 7 intake 2024)	Year 4 (YR 7 intake 2023)	Year 5 (YR 7 intake 2022)	Year 6 (YR 7 intake 2021)
Cowbridge catchment area	199	199	190	237	186	200	225
Approved Housing development	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total Cowbridge pupils requiring secondary school places	219	219	210	257	206	2203	245
Places available at Cowbridge Comprehensive School	240	240	240	240	240	240	240
Net school place requirement surplus+/shortfall-	+21	+21	+30	-17	+34	+20	-5

Llantwit Area

The Llantwit area is served by:

- Llantwit Major School for English medium secondary education
- St Richard Gwyn for a denominational education
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg for Welsh medium secondary education

The following table illustrates the demand for secondary school places over the next seven years from those living in the Llantwit catchment area. The data reflects the change to school catchment areas operational from September 2021. There are sufficient school places to meet future demand from pupils living within the school catchment area recognising that parental preference will play a part.

English medium primary pupil numbers living in the Llantwit area requiring a school place by age group and year of entry to year 7 of secondary school

	Rec (YR 7 intake 2027)	Year 1 (YR 7 intake 2026)	Year 2 (YR 7 intake 2025)	Year 3 (YR 7 intake 2024)	Year 4 (YR 7 intake 2023)	Year 5 (YR 7 intake 2022)	Year 6 (YR 7 intake 2021)
Llantwit catchment area	12608	151	124	146	156	168	155
Approved housing development	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Total Llantwit pupils requiring secondary school places	141	166	139	161	171	183	170
Places available at Llantwit School	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
Net school place requirement surplus+/shortfall-	+39	+14	+41	+19	+9	-3	+10

Penarth Area

The Penarth area is served by:

- St Cyres Comprehensive and Stanwell school for English medium secondary education. Stanwell is a foundation school who are their own admissions authority. They have retained the feeder primary school criteria for entry to secondary education
- St Richard Gwyn for a denominational education
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg for Welsh medium secondary education

St Cyres School

The following table illustrates the demand for secondary school places over the next seven years from those living in the Penarth area serving St Cyres school. The data reflects the change to school catchment areas operational from September 2021. St Cyres operates a dual catchment with Stanwell catchment area covering the Penarth and Sully areas. The vast majority of pupils from within the Stanwell catchment area are likely to continue to attend Stanwell School and the change will not impact greatly on St Cyres School. There are sufficient school places to meet future demand from pupils living within the school catchment area recognising that parental preference will play a part.

English medium primary pupil numbers living in the St Cyres area requiring a school place by age group and year of entry to year 7 of secondary school

	Rec (YR 7 intake 2027)	Year 1 (YR 7 intake 2026)	Year 2 (YR 7 intake 2025)	Year 3 (YR 7 intake 2024)	Year 4 (YR 7 intake 2023)	Year 5 (YR 7 intake 2022)	Year 6 (YR 7 intake 2021)
St Cyres catchment area (includes Stanwell dual catchment)	3598	374	393	372	379	383	398
Approved housing development	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Less Stanwell catchment	-196	-201	-222	-195	-217	-242	-234
Total St Cyres pupils requiring secondary school places	171	181	179	185	170	149	172
Places available at St Cyres	210	210	210	210	210	210	210
Net school place requirement surplus+/shortfall-	+39	+29	+31	+25	+40	+61	+38

Stanwell School

The following table illustrates the demand for secondary school places over the next seven years from those living in the Penarth area serving Stanwell school. The data reflects the change to school catchment areas operational from September 2021 with Cyres operating a dual catchment with Stanwell catchment area covering the Penarth and Sully areas. There are sufficient school places to meet future demand from pupils living within the school catchment area recognising that parental preference will play a part.

English medium primary pupil numbers living in the Stanwell catchment area requiring a school place by age group and year of entry to year 7 of secondary school

	Rec (YR 7 intake 2027)	Year 1 (YR 7 intake 2026)	Year 2 (YR 7 intake 2025)	Year 3 (YR 7 intake 2024)	Year 4 (YR 7 intake 2023)	Year 5 (YR 7 intake 2022)	Year 6 (YR 7 intake 2021)
Stanwell catchment area	196	201	222	195	217	242	234
Approved housing development	13	13	13	13	12	12	12
Total Stanwell pupils requiring secondary school places	209	214	235	208	229	254	246
Places available at Stanwell School	299	299	299	299	299	299	299
Net school place requirement surplus+/-/shortfall-	+90	+85	+64	+91	+70	+45	+53

School place challenges

The council is currently seeing large year 6 English medium cohorts that will transfer to the secondary sector from 2021 onwards putting pressure on future demand for secondary school places. This is more prominent in the Barry area where the establishment of mixed sex schooling has changed parental demand and preference considerably together with the additional pupils emanating from the Barry Waterfront Development.

The Council changed from a feeder school system to a catchment area basis for entry to secondary education from September 2020 with priority for places now given to residence within catchment area, this has also had an impact on the demand for secondary school places.

Catchment area revisions have taken place for September 2021 as follows:

Barry Area

Pencoedre High School

- Transfer of the Wenvoe area into St Cyres school catchment area.

Whitmore High School

- Removal of the dual catchment status of Rhoose from Whitmore High School.
- Transfer of the Rhoose area to Cowbridge Comprehensive School.

Cowbridge Area

Cowbridge Comprehensive School

- Increase of the school catchment population by incorporating the area of Rhoose into the school catchment area.

Llantwit Area

Llantwit Major School

- Removal of the dual catchment status of Rhoose from Llantwit Major School.
- Transfer of the area of Rhoose into Cowbridge catchment area.

Penarth Area

St Cyres School

- Increase to the school catchment population by incorporating the Wenvoe, Penarth and Sully areas into the school catchment area.

The above changes to catchment areas support demand in most areas but Barry is still experiencing high demand not only as a result of mixed sex schooling but also with the large scale development taking place at Barry Waterfront that is still ongoing.

The Barry area

The Barry area is densely populated particularly in the east. Both English medium schools catchment populations are large where maximum year 7 intake demand from within catchment, excluding parental preference, would exceed the number of places available for pupils over the next 4 year periods. Housing developments are anticipated to introduce a further 105 English medium primary school pupils overall into each catchment area.

The Cowbridge area

Whilst the catchment area is remodelled from September 2021 to include the Rhoose area, the secondary school catchment population is still smaller than the school capacity and for intake/admission number requirements. The school is near full with demand being met from pupils attending who live outside of the school catchment area and outside of the Vale of Glamorgan area. The Cowbridge catchment is able to accommodate future demand from within the school catchment area and doesn't require further adjustment.

The Llantwit area

Llantwit Major School catchment area is remodelled from September removing the dual catchment status of Rhoose from the school and transferring it to the Cowbridge catchment area. Future demand from within the existing catchment areas is less than the school is able to accommodate. The Llantwit catchment is able to accommodate future demand from within the school catchment area and doesn't require further adjustment.

Penarth

St Cyres is remodelled from September 2021 and now incorporates the Wenvoe catchment area as well operating a dual catchment with Stanwell catchment area covering the Penarth area and Sully areas. The majority of pupils from within the Stanwell catchment area are likely to continue to attend Stanwell School and the change is therefore unlikely to have any real impact on St Cyres numbers but does ensure that Penarth pupils will gain a place locally at either school.

St Cyres school catchment data excluding Stanwell figures is still smaller than the capacity of the school and for its intake/admission requirements for entry at year 7. The school reaches its admission number at the year 7 intake with demand being met from outside the catchment area and mainly from the Cardiff area.

Stanwell secondary school catchment population is smaller than the school capacity and intake/admission number requirements and doesn't require any adjustment.

The low catchment populations mean that a number of pupils will gain access from outside the catchment area based on proximity grounds. Some areas of Cardiff are in closer proximity to the schools than other areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Option to Address Catchment School Place Challenges

The demand for year 7 places in future can be met for pupils residing in the catchment areas of Cowbridge Comprehensive, Llantwit Major, Stanwell and St Cyres schools. There is potential to adjust some of these areas to alleviate demand in others.

The dual catchment status of Stanwell and St Cyres from September 2021 will ensure that local Penarth children will gain places at either school.

The area of concern is the Barry area where the numbers living within the schools catchment areas of Whitmore and Pencoedtre exceeds the available places in the area in the short term recognising that parental preference will play a part. The issue is more pertinent to the Pencoedtre catchment area numbers. The Barry area has seen increased demand over the last two years for places at Pencoedtre and Whitmore High Schools mainly as a result of the establishment of coeducation schooling in Barry from September 2018.

A number of Barry parents express a preference for St Cyres School each year. This is primarily from parents whose children are likely attending primary schools in Penarth and Dinas Powys and would have been admitted to St Cyres under previous feeder school arrangements. Around two thirds of these pupils reside in the Pencoedtre catchment area. These parents no longer gain places at Cyres via the feeder system when the school is oversubscribed. Applications are normally considered on proximity grounds. A number of Cardiff children will therefore continue to gain places at St Cyres School on proximity grounds as they live closer to the school than those residing in Barry.

The demand in Barry for September 2020 resulted in the need to establish an extra class at Whitmore High School to accommodate those pupils without a school place living in Barry. The requirement for an extra class may have been negated if priority for places elsewhere was available to Barry residents. An additional class will not be an option in future due to school capacity concerns. The Council will be working closely with St Richard Gwyn Catholic School to fully utilise

capacity at the school. The Council is co-ordinating admission arrangements for St Richard Gwyn on a trial basis and it is anticipated that this will assist in this process.

There is sufficient capacity overall in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet the needs of the future secondary school population, but arrangements require review to ensure Vale pupils have access to a school place in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Preferred Way Forward

In order to ensure sufficient places to better match demand to the capacity at secondary schools in the Barry and surrounding area, the preferred way forward is to introduce a dual catchment area for St Cyres school to include the Pencoedtre High School catchment area. This would be a temporary arrangement for a three-year period from September 2022 – July 2025 to manage demand as a result of large year 6 cohorts progressing to secondary education that exceeds the capacity of the schools in the area. From September 2025 catchment areas will revert back to their single catchment areas as the year 6 cohorts transferring to secondary education in the Vale of Glamorgan decline and catchment demand can be met at local schools.

A dual catchment area refers to an area serving more than one school. The proposal would include Pencoedtre High Schools catchment area within St Cyres catchment area. Pencoedtre would continue to operate and serve its existing catchment area.

A dual catchment area would provide a wider pool of applicants a greater opportunity of pupils getting into of their school of choice, albeit within a defined geographical area. The dual catchment area would ensure that Vale children have access to a school place in the Vale.

Pencoedtre has very high catchment numbers progressing through to secondary education in the future. A number of Barry parents express a preference for St Cyres, particularly where their children attend Penarth and Dinas Powys based primary schools. These parents no longer gain places, aside from sibling connections, at St Cyres when the school is oversubscribed. This puts pressure back to Barry secondary schools for school places for these pupils. A dual catchment with St Cyres would therefore allow for maximum parental preference as well as supporting Vale pupils to ensure they are offered a place at a Vale secondary school.

The number of children living in Barry catchment areas attending previous feeder schools of St Cyres are as follows for the three pressure years in the Barry area.

Children attending St Cyres previous feeder schools living in Barry catchment areas				
		Year 5 (Year 7 intake 2022)	Year 4 (Year 7 intake 2023)	Year 3 (Year 7 intake 2024)
Pencoedtre catchment		26	25	19
Whitmore catchment		2	3	4
Total		28	28	3
Available places in Barry for the years in question		-59	-43	-18

The above table shows there are insufficient places in the Barry area for the years in question. A dual catchment is likely to see those Barry children in previous feeder schools gain places that would ease the pressure for places in the Barry area.

Pros

The proposal would support the management of school place demand in the Barry area and provide a wider pool of applicants for schools. It would also provide some support for parents who chose a particular primary school in part due to its feeder status. This was of significant concern for some parents during the consultation on the removal of feeder schools.

Cons

The dual catchment of St Cyres may attract applications to a school further away than the current catchment school (i.e. Barry resident applying to St Cyres) which would lead to higher oversubscription in the application of the Councils secondary oversubscription criteria. However, as pupil numbers within the dual catchment area are high overall, places up to the school's admission number would be required at both schools in future to meet demand for places from the Barry area.

The proposal would have school transport implications for secondary pupils living three miles or more to the nearest catchment area school. It is estimated that the cost of additional transport requirements would be in the region of £31,000 per annum for a 35/53 seater vehicle possibly rising to £62,000 over an initial four year period as pupil numbers requiring transport increase each year.

Current and Proposed Catchment Area Maps for Pencoedtre and St Cyres Schools

Pencoedtre Current Catchment Area



St Cyres Current Catchment Area



Proposed Dual Catchment Area for St Cyres

