

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CATCHMENT AREA REVIEW

The authority has recently reviewed the school catchment areas across the authority in order to ensure that there is sufficient space for children to be able to attend their local school from the 2017/18 academic year and in the foreseeable future. As a result of the review, the authority is considering some changes and in order to ensure that any decisions made are in the best interests of the community, the views of parents of the affected schools are being requested.

The proposed changes affect the catchment areas of:

Welsh-medium primary schools

Ysgol Rhyd y Grug - Ysgol Santes Tudful

English-medium primary schools

Caedraw Primary - Twynrodyn Primary

If these changes are agreed, they will come into effect for admission applications for the academic year 2017/18 and beyond. **This will not affect the school place of any pupils attending these schools currently but the revised catchment areas, if agreed, will be used to assist with the allocation of places from September 2017 onwards.**

What is a catchment area?

A school catchment area is a geographically defined area of addresses which is used to ensure that all schools receive a fair share of pupils. Catchment areas are used;

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

Catchment areas do not apply to special schools or units.

Why is this being done?

The authority manages the admission intake to schools using oversubscription criteria which ranks catchment area children as a high priority in the event that there are more applicants than spaces available. A review of catchment areas is therefore necessary to ensure they still reflect the needs of the schools they serve whilst recognising that parental preference is also important.

The above changes are proposed to provide a better balance of places in the school catchment areas when compared to the overall number of school places available. This will ensure, as far as possible, that pupils living in an area will be able to secure a place at their local school. These proposed changes are also designed to provide a closer geographical relationship with schools and ensure schools receive a fair share of pupils. The revised catchment areas will support the council's admission process, promote fair access to primary school places and address high numbers of catchment area applications at certain schools.

What are the proposed changes?

1. Welsh-medium primary schools

The proposal is to alter the catchment areas of Ysgol Santes Tudful and Ysgol Rhyd y Grug and for pupils from the Abercanaid, Pentrebach, and Troedyrhiw areas to be in the catchment area of Ysgol Rhyd y Grug. This proposal will also enable Ysgol Santes Tudful to be able to meet the demand for Welsh-medium education from a growing population in the north of the County Borough. Maps illustrating the changes are available in school and online at: www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/education-consultations/

Ysgol Santes Tudful: Ysgol Rhyd y Grug

- The Welsh-medium school currently serving Abercanaid, Pentrebach and Troedyrhiw areas is Ysgol Santes Tudful. Due to increasing population in the north of the authority the school is full. If Abercanaid, Pentrebach and Troedyrhiw catchment areas are altered to serve Ysgol Rhyd y Grug then Ysgol Santes Tudful will have sufficient space for pupils likely to come from the new housing developments within the revised catchment area. In addition, Ysgol Rhyd y Grug has sufficient space to create more classroom space and this will be put in place for September 2017.
- At present 61 children living in Abercanaid, Pentrebach and Troedyrhiw areas attend Welsh-medium schools of which 44 currently attend Ysgol Santes Tudful.
- Free school transport is provided from the Troedyrhiw area to Ysgol Santes Tudful by virtue of being over the two mile qualification limit. Free school transport would continue to be provided for children who live more than two miles from Ysgol Rhyd y Grug.
- If the proposal to change the catchment areas is agreed, those children currently attending Ysgol Santes Tudful who are in receipt of free school transport from the Abercanaid, Pentrebach and Troedyrhiw areas would continue to receive free transport to Ysgol Santes Tudful until they leave the school.
- Ysgol Rhyd y Grug was moved to a larger refurbished site in 2010 with a view to enabling the growth in Welsh-medium education across the county borough. There is sufficient space to accommodate an additional 90 pupils on the current site.

2. English-medium primary schools

The proposal is to alter the catchment area of Caedraw Primary School to include addresses which are currently in the catchment area of Twynyrodyn Primary School. Maps illustrating the changes are available in school and online at: www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/education-consultations/

Caedraw Primary: Twynyrodyn Primary

- Pupil numbers at Twynyrodyn Primary School have been rising in recent years and additional space has been created within the existing school to cater for this evidenced demand. However, indications show that the rise in pupil numbers is continuing; for the

Nursery age group for September 2015, 58 applications for places have been received by the closing date, with only 45 places available.

- Caedraw Primary School is located less than one mile from Twynyrodyn Primary School, and has some surplus capacity available at the present time. There is also an opportunity to create additional classroom space within the school if it becomes necessary in the future. Part of the catchment area of Twynyrodyn Primary is in fact closer to Caedraw Primary which is not unusual in an urban area but which explains why many families living nearer to Caedraw Primary School apply for a place at the school.

Am I affected?

THIS PROPOSAL, IF AGREED, WILL ONLY AFFECT APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL PLACES FOR SEPTEMBER 2017 ONWARDS. CHILDREN CURRENTLY ATTENDING ANY OF THE SCHOOLS MENTIONED ABOVE WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE TO ATTEND THEIR CURRENT SCHOOL UNTIL TRANSFER TO SECONDARY SCHOOL.

Maps showing current and revised catchment areas are available at your local school. You can also view the information online at www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/education-consultations/

Consultation

Before it makes a decision the authority would like to know your views on this proposal. You can let us know what you think by:

1. Attending an open meeting at any of the following venues:

School	Date	Time
Caedraw Primary School	7 th December 2015	15.30
Twynyrodyn Primary School	5 th January 2016	15.30
Ysgol Rhyd y Grug	12 th January 2016	15.00
Ysgol Santes Tudful	11 th January 2016	17.00

2. Writing to the School Admission Team:

School Admission Team
Catchment Area Review
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Unit 5
Pentrebach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4TQ

3. Emailing:

School.admissions@merthyr.gov.uk

Further information and maps are available online at: www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/education-consultations/

CONSULTATION IS OPEN AND CLOSSES ON 29th JANUARY 2016.