

ELL2-05-05-(p.2)Annex C

Surplus Capacity Information (Extracted From Published School Organisation Plans)

The data being published by LEAs has become more reliable in the last few years. Information is now published with a September count date, so may not therefore be directly comparable with earlier information published with a January count date. The marked increase in surplus capacity in primary schools between January 2002 and September 2003 is probably due in part to the change in count date. SOP pupil numbers should not include nursery age pupils at schools.

Most LEAs now check their capacity figures each year, and we have reasonable confidence in the most recent data but apparent trends across years may not be wholly accurate.

Collated information from School Organisation Plans, may not therefore be statistically robust, and the numbers on roll as published in plans is not the equivalent to the Schools Census information collated annually by the Welsh Assembly Government's Statistics Directorate.

Analysis

An analysis of the data produced since School Organisation Plans were first published reveals the following:

- The percentage of unfilled places within the primary school sector has increased over the last five years, with a marked increase between the last two SOP rounds.
- In the secondary sector levels of surplus capacity are more static. There was an apparent increase in unfilled places between January 2000 and January 2002 but this fell back by almost the same amount by September 2003.
- The overall trend is of increasing surplus and forecasts of pupil populations indicate this will continue to be the case.
- Programmes of rationalisation take some time to produce reduced surplus.
- LEA action to make other use of school premises would reduce surplus and over time LEAs could also decide to remove demountable buildings from sites if they are no longer required.
- It is possible that opportunities will become available in many schools to make use of spare capacity for community based activities. Authorities need to consider this option prior to any more radical proposals for the removal of capacity.
- 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 1999	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003
NOR	269,707	262,913	257,839	256,387	247,845**
MOE*	299,539	298,440	296,462	295,952	294,837

***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 which should not be included in SOPs. The numbers on roll as published in SOPs are not comparable with pupil numbers in statistical publications.

- At Secondary level, numbers on roll have increased over the period, but there is still surplus capacity. There appears to have been an increase in the total capacity available to secondary schools since January 1999.

Secondary Schools	Jan 1999	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003
NOR	203,984	205,608	210,732	211,974	216,274
MOE*	230,188	226,866	232,894	235,645	238,711

Overall surplus capacity***

	Jan 1999	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Sept 2003
Primary	14.1%	14.2%	15.5%	15.6%	17.3%
Secondary	13.1%	11.3%	11.4%	12.1%	11.5%
All Schools	13.6%	12.9%	13.7%	14.1%	14.7%

***Source Published School Organisation Plans 1999 – 2004

If local authorities were to take no action to remove surplus places, and pupil numbers fall to the level

contained in the forecast information the following situation could be apparent by 2013

Sector	Capacity of schools	Number on roll (FTE)****	Surplus places	% surplus capacity
Primary	294,837	242,500	52,337	17.75
Secondary	238,711	190,600	48,111	20.15
Total	533,548	433,100	100,448	18.83

**** From Schools in Wales 2004 forecast figures for January 2013, but note that these figures include a forecast for nursery pupils on roll.