

PUPIL FORECASTING METHODOLOGY

School Organisation



The base methodology for forecasting pupil numbers arose from consultations with Schools Forum, Primary Schools and Secondary Schools and is designed to provide a solid basis for future school capacity changes and development requirements. The following text sets out how the forecasts are derived and what they do & don't include.

OVERVIEW

Currently (2011), predictions are showing a drop in Secondary pupil numbers which is due to bottom out in 2015. From this point on the numbers entering Secondary education will begin to increase. This expected increase will come directly from the increase in Primary numbers we are experiencing now. Total Primary numbers began increasing in 2009, which is being driven by an increasing number in the Reception cohort (from 2007). Primary numbers are predicted to continue rising for the next 10 years (based on the predicted population of 18-30 year old women that live in Plymouth).

FORECAST MODEL

In Plymouth, children have a good choice of schools within their local area, and so movement across the city is greater than in more rural areas. This means that the best option for forecasting school pupils in Plymouth is to use a proportionate approach, which uses a proportion stay-on at city level for each year group.

PRIMARY NUMBERS

Live birth numbers are monitored, month by month, from data exchanged between Plymouth City Council and the NHS. This data provides us with the total number of children born within an academic year, which is our starting point.

Reception

The live birth number (by academic year) is then used to estimate the total reception cohort, 4 years later by applying a %, based on the previous three years average of children that turn up at reception.

This total number is then split and each school's reception class is allocated using the following criteria (in the order shown):

1. School reached 99% of its PAN at reception for last three years – 100% allocated.
2. Number of children born within the school catchment allocated based on historic trends.
3. Remaining children allocated based on % of first choice preference.

Year 1 – 6

The total number in each year group from Year 1 to Year 6 is derived using a three year average stay-on for that cohort. This method is applied city wide then split based on the individual schools stay-on rate. This allows for variation at individual school level but maintains the expected city wide forecast.

SECONDARY NUMBERS

Year 7

Pupils starting at Year 7 are derived from the taking the total Year 6 cohort and applying the average % increase for the past three years. This total figure is split and then allocated to each secondary school based on historic feeder primary school data. The increase from Year 6 – 7 is due to children migrating in from outside the city, attracted by our three grammar schools. On average the increase is around 5-6%.

Year 8 – 11

These figures are derived using the same method as for Years 1 – 6 above.

Post 16

The sixth form forecasts are derived using the standard stay-on method as used throughout this model. An adjustment has been applied due to the recent change in legislation that will rise the participation age from age 16 to 17 in 2014 and from 17 – 18 in 2015. It has been estimated that the total number of children staying on at 'sixth form' will rise to 73% from 2014 onwards.

HOUSING

These forecasts take into account future housing stock growth expected from Plymouth City Council's Core Strategy. Increases based on housing development have been applied city wide. Where a large housing development is being added, particular attention will be made to the nearest schools forecast figures to assess possible changes, if necessary.

FURTHER INFO

These forecasts are presented for information only and should be used as a guide to possible future numbers based on what we know about birth rates, historic pupil data and possible future PAN changes. These forecasts do not take into account any unknown change in legislation or policy that might effect school admission arrangements for future years, nor do they make any attempt to estimate any change in demand based on internal management improvements or curriculum changes.