

SCHOOL ROLL FORECASTS HIGHLAND 2005/06

May 2006

Summary

- *Declining birth rates in Highland have resulted in school rolls falling consistently over the past decade*
- *Forecasts show that this trend is likely to continue*
- *Sutherland, Caithness and Lochaber are forecast to continue to see the greatest decline in rolls at both primary and secondary level*

Introduction

In conjunction with Education, Culture and Sport Service, the Planning & Development Policy and Information team have prepared school roll forecasts for all Highland primary and secondary schools for the period 2006/07 to 2010/11, as well as longer term forecasts for the Highland Areas.

As with any such forecast, these are based on the best available evidence and are unable to account for any unforeseen initiatives or events which may impact upon the demographics of the Highlands. This is particularly the case when forecasting for small rural schools, where rolls are particularly susceptible to even very small changes in households and thus population.

Current demographic trends

These forecasts should be viewed against the backdrop of demographic trends currently affecting Highland. Due to increased levels of migration, the population of Highland is expected to increase slightly over the next 20 years, however the combined effect of declining birth rates (figure 1), increasing life

expectancy, the older age profile of our immigrants and out migration of our young people mean that Highland's population is likely to continue to age significantly.

By 2024 Highland is projected to have 5,507 fewer children aged 0-15, 9,683 fewer people aged 16-64, but 22,744 more people aged 65 and over. This general pattern of an ageing population is repeated across the Council Areas.

Past trends in school rolls

Despite Highland experiencing significant overall population growth over the past 20 years, school rolls have fallen consistently throughout the same period. This is demonstrated in Figure 2 which compares the cumulative percentage change in total population with that of primary school rolls between 1984 and 2004.

Figure 2: Cumulative % change, total population and primary rolls, Highland 1984-2004

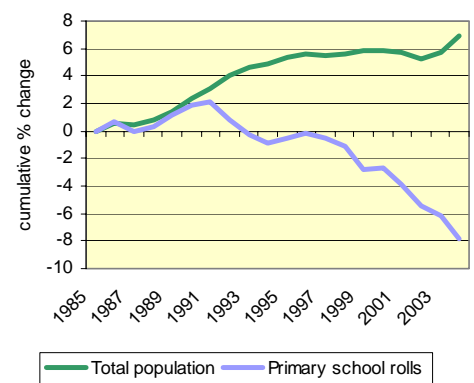
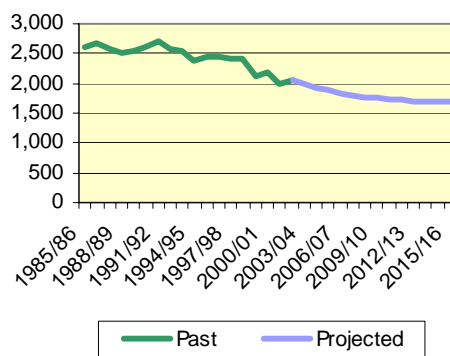


Figure 1: Highland births, past and projected

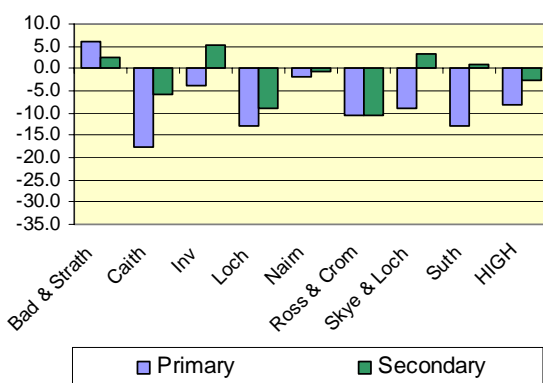


Variations in past rolls throughout the Council Areas are shown in Figure 3. Other than Badenoch & Strathspey, all Council Areas have experienced falling primary school rolls since 1995/96. This has been particularly evident in Caithness (-17.8%), Sutherland (-13.0%) and Lochaber (-12.9%), while Nairn (-1.8%) and Inverness (-3.7%) saw smaller decreases. Badenoch & Strathspey saw a 6.1% rise in primary rolls over the same period. This reflects the particular demographic circumstances of the Area which has seen relatively volatile rolls in the past, falling from around 1,000pa in the late 1970s to around 800pa during most of the 1980s.

The 1990s and early 2000s have seen a gradual return to previous levels (as the large numbers of children born in the 1970s have reached childbearing age). This picture is again changing as, due to the small number of children born in the 1980s, there are now relatively low levels of childbearing aged women in Badenoch & Strathspey, leading to current and future decline in the primary school age group.

The picture in secondary schools has been more mixed, with rolls remaining fairly static or increasing slightly in some Areas. The largest increase was in seen in Inverness (5.4%) and the greatest fall in Ross & Cromarty (-10.5%).

Figure 3: Past school rolls by Council Area (% change 1995/06 - 2005/06)



Highland's position in Scotland

The Scottish Executive's recent publication, *Pupils in Scotland (2005)* shows that since 1997 school rolls have fallen in 27 of the 32 local authorities in Scotland. The authority with the greatest increase in pupil numbers was East Renfrewshire (+5.9%) and the authority with the largest decrease was Aberdeen City (-14.9%). Highland had the 11th lowest decline in school rolls since 1997 (-4.6). This represents a smaller fall than the Scottish average of -6.6%.

Highland School Roll Forecasts

The Highland Council's school roll forecasts show a continuation of the general trend already experienced in Highland (Figure 4). Primary rolls are forecast to continue to decline while secondary rolls are forecast to remain reasonably stable for the first few years of the forecast before beginning to drop as the falling primary rolls feed through to secondary schools.

Again, it should be stressed that the forecast cannot take into account any unforeseen events that may affect demography either nationally or locally.

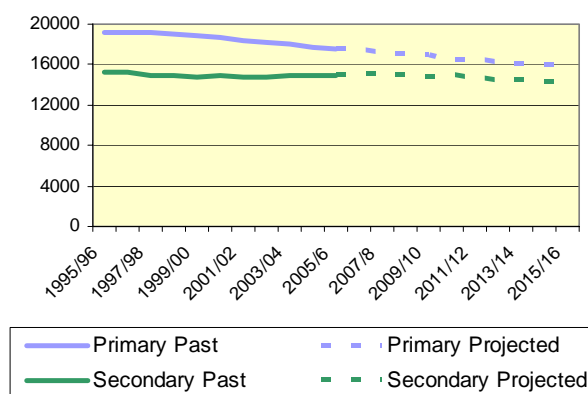
Factors behind changes in school rolls

Birth rates

School rolls are falling due to declining birth rates. This is exacerbated by the older age profile of our in-

migrants and high levels of out-migration amongst young people. This has led to proportionally low numbers of childbearing aged women within Highland's population.

Figure 4: Past and projected school Rolls, Highland



The effect of this varies in different areas depending on the current demographic profile of an area. For example, Sutherland and Badenoch & Strathspey Areas have very small proportion of women of childbearing age (aged 15-44) within their current populations (29.3% and 33.5% respectively) compared with Inverness (38.7%). Therefore while all Areas will experience a fall in birth rates the effect of this in terms of actual number of births will be more severe on Sutherland and Badenoch & Strathspey than on Inverness. All Highland Areas are well below the Scottish average of 40.2% in this respect.

House building

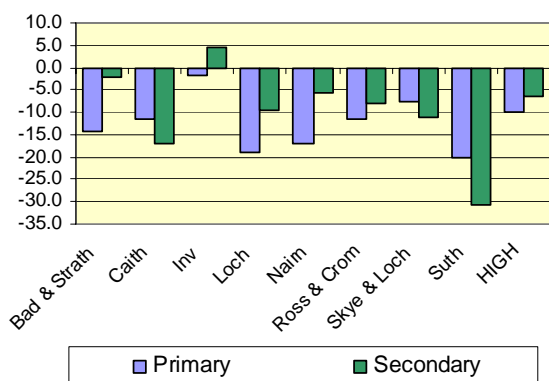
The other important factor that impacts upon school rolls is house building. Due to overall declining populations in the school age population, the only catchments expected to see growth are those with high levels of new house building. Average house building rates are expected to grow in all Areas particularly in parts of Inverness.

Information on future levels of house building by primary school catchment comes from the Planning & Development Service and consists of an analysis of both land allocations in Local Plans and existing planning applications. This information will continue to improve as the Council's Housing Land Audit is developed further.

School Roll Forecasts for Council Areas

The projected percentage change in rolls between 2005/06 and 2015/16 is shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6 provides past and projected roll figures for each Area.

Figure 5: Future school rolls by Council Area (% change 2005/06 – 2015/16)



Primary school forecasts

Due to small roll numbers and subsequent susceptibility to small changes in population, primary school forecasting is subject to greater levels of uncertainty than secondary forecasts. Particular care needs to be taken when interpreting the results of very small rural schools.

While all Areas will see decreases in their school rolls over the long term, the speed and extent of the decline will vary by Area depending on current demographic profile and levels of house building.

Areas with high levels of house building or higher proportions of women of childbearing age such as Inverness and Skye & Lochalsh will see their primary rolls remaining relatively stable for the first few years of the forecast before beginning to decline. Other Areas, such as Sutherland and Badenoch & Strathspey where the current demographic profile is characterised by an already older population with older in-migrants and low numbers of women of childbearing age, are forecast to see their school age population begin to decline more rapidly.

Over the short term to 2010/11 all Areas other than Inverness are forecast to see falls in primary rolls, with the greatest declines in Badenoch & Strathspey (-16.0%) and Sutherland (-14.9%). Inverness is forecast to remain stable (-0.1%). By 2015/16 the primary rolls in all Areas are expected to see some decline, with the smallest in Inverness (-1.6%) and the greatest in Sutherland (-20.3%) and Lochaber (-18.8%).

Secondary school forecasts

The Areas which have seen either increases or very small declines in primary rolls over the past decade (Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey and Nairn) are forecast to see their secondary rolls remain stable over the short term.

Other Areas which have already seen declines at primary level are likely to see more rapid declines at secondary level. This is the case in Sutherland, Caithness and Lochaber which are all expected to see declines by 2010/11.

Over the longer term, however as the effect of declining primary rolls begin to filter through to secondary level, most Areas are forecast to see some decline in secondary rolls, with the greatest decline in Sutherland (-30.8%). The exception to this is Inverness where the relatively stable primary rolls and high levels of house building are forecast to result in an increase in secondary rolls of 4.7% by 2015/16.

A summary of the forecasts for each Highland Secondary school to 2010/11 is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 6: Past and forecast school rolls (1995/96 to 2015/16) and % change by Council Area

Area	PRIMARY SCHOOL ROLLS					SECONDARY SCHOOL ROLLS				
	1995/96	2005/06	2015/16	% Change 1995/96-2005/06	% Change 2005/06-2015/16	1995/96	2005/06	2015/16	% Change 1995/96-2005/06	% Change 2005/06-2015/16
Bad & Strath	937	994	853	6.1	-14.2	736	753	737	2.3	-2.1
Caith	2,411	1,982	1,752	-17.8	-11.6	1,964	1,852	1,536	-5.7	-17.1
Inv	5,832	5,614	5,522	-3.7	-1.6	4,364	4,598	4,814	5.4	4.7
Loch	1,811	1,577	1,280	-12.9	-18.8	1,434	1,305	1,180	-9	-9.6
Nairn	1,029	1,010	838	-1.8	-17	812	808	762	-0.5	-5.7
Ross & Crom	4,861	4,347	3,838	-10.6	-11.7	4,207	3,766	3,469	-10.5	-7.9
Skye & Loch	1,101	1,003	928	-8.9	-7.5	1,003	1,037	920	3.4	-11.3
Suth	1,150	1,001	798	-13	-20.3	792	799	553	0.9	-30.8
High	19,105	17,528	15809	-8.3	-9.8	15,312	14,918	13971	-2.6	-6.3

Methodology

The basic methodology used in preparing the school roll forecasts involves ageing forward the current roll while making adjustments for likely parent requests to other schools and to denominational or Gaelic schools. New primary 1 intake is estimated using a combination of the number of 2, 3 and 4 year olds currently resident in each catchment and birth rate factors.

As discussed, a critical element of the forecasting methodology is an analysis of the likely house building rates in each school catchment. It is assumed that each new house will generate 0.2 primary aged children and 0.15 secondary aged children.

Consistency with population projections

While the forecasted rolls by Area show generally similar trends to the Council's Area population projections, they do not aim to be completely consistent. This is because the school roll forecasts are based on assumptions about both the number of future P1 pupils and on future house building, while the population projections are based wholly on past trends.

Further Information

Forecasts for individual primary and secondary schools in Highland to 2010/11 are available through the Council's Intranet:

<http://ntintra1/plintra/iandr/srf.htm>

or by contacting either the P&D Policy & Information team or the ECS Quality Development team.

Figure 7: Secondary school Forecast 2005/06 to 2010/11

Secondary School	Current (2005/06) roll	House building (2005/06 - 2010/11)	Current capacity	Forecasts (total roll)				
				2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Grantown Grammar	345	215	350	355	365	365	374	388
Kingussie High	408	264	475	431	453	465	474	483
Thurso High	992	333	1,100	1,017	1,035	1,007	984	946
Wick High	860	205	1,030	850	835	824	786	749
Charleston Academy	830	580	820	883	876	865	846	834
Culloden Academy	1,011	623	965	1,022	1,040	1,045	1,038	1,054
Gelenurquhart High	227	113	350	235	244	245	239	232
Inverness High	466	251	810	464	473	481	462	461
Inverness Royal	915	506	1,150	937	965	984	970	995
Kilchuiamen Academy	74	50	125	74	73	63	67	65
Millburn Academy	1,075	435	1,235	1,073	1,078	1,066	1,062	1,092
Ardnamurchan High	126	87	250	140	149	149	151	155
Kinlochleven High	119	54	154	117	128	122	125	132
Lochaber High	913	341	1,345	904	911	896	889	886
Mallaig High	147	47	170	148	144	143	151	147
Nairn Academy	808	399	803	848	872	854	831	830
Alness Academy	509	348	1,100	532	545	552	556	563
Dingwall Academy	1,033	424	1,300	1,024	1,023	1,004	1,002	1,056
Fortrose Academy	689	260	600	701	720	705	689	666
Gairloch High	192	96	250	188	186	175	167	173
Invergordon Academy	438	116	600	468	466	457	464	462
Tain Royal Academy	646	261	900	620	574	562	564	551
Ullapool High	259	94	355	241	236	240	244	247
Plockton High	343	165	351	338	326	318	320	332
Portree High	694	465	915	678	672	653	652	652
Dornoch Academy	261	95	309	247	246	233	221	214
Farr High	89	20	160	87	79	66	59	51
Golspie High	376	122	744	372	363	355	345	330
Kinlochbervie High	73	19	90	74	76	71	69	69