
The Annual Report of Her
Majesty's Chief Inspector
of Education and Training
in Wales

2012-2013



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Ann Keane.
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
of Education and Training
in Wales

Foreword

My annual report this year draws on findings from 2012-2013, which is the third year of the current inspection cycle and it also reflects on findings from the whole of the first half of the cycle. The inspections that have been undertaken over the last three years represent half the schools and other education and training providers in Wales.

The report includes sections on:

- what needs to improve;
- findings from inspections in all the sectors of education and training that we inspect; and
- national performance data, including detailed data on inspection outcomes and from learner and parent questionnaire responses.

This foreword draws out some of the conclusions from inspection and other evidence and identifies progress, good practice and continuing challenges.

Standards

Although we are not seeing improvements in standards across the board, some sectors, such as special and independent schools, are maintaining their high performance.

Standards in primary schools are similar to what they were last year. Seven in ten primary schools inspected in 2012-2013 are good and around one in four is adequate. Although only one is unsatisfactory, very few are excellent. Around a half of the primary schools inspected will be monitored in 'follow-up' visits.

Standards in secondary schools are more variable than those in primary schools. Fewer than half of secondary schools are good or better and the proportion that is unsatisfactory has increased from one in seven to one in four. One in seven is excellent. Over two-thirds of secondary schools will be monitored in 'follow-up' visits.

Standards in all special and in many independent schools are good or excellent, which is similar to the position last year. Standards are good in nearly all nursery settings for under-fives. Standards are more variable in other sectors, with no excellent standards in further education, adult and community learning, or in local authorities this year.

It is disappointing that those schools that are excellent are in a small minority. However, where standards are excellent, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently stimulating and motivating. There is little difference between the performance of different groups of pupils, including pupils entitled to free school meals. Pupils in these schools have good problem-solving skills, reflect well on their own progress and know what to do to improve their work. Most pupils develop their literacy skills very well to underpin their work across the curriculum: they develop higher-order reading and writing skills. Standards in Welsh are generally good. It is a common feature of schools that perform well that their core subject departments have sound leadership, especially in Welsh, English and mathematics.

In all providers that are excellent, sound systems exist to deliver a provision that is customised to meet the needs of all groups of learners, including the disadvantaged, and that quality is maintained by means of an annual cycle of honest self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

Wellbeing

Across all school sectors, nearly all pupils say that they feel safe in school and many think that their school deals well with bullying. Most pupils claim that they have plenty of opportunities to exercise in school and that the school helps them to keep healthy, although the proportion of secondary school pupils who think that the school teaches them to be healthy is smaller than that in primary and special schools. Although many schools take account of pupils' views on some aspects of school life, too little attention is given to what pupils think about what and how they learn.

Over the past three years, pupil attendance in secondary schools has improved. Attendance in primary schools has also improved but to a lesser degree. Persistent absenteeism has been reducing in both primary and secondary schools but remains an issue.

Pupils' wellbeing, including behaviour, is good or better in most **primary** and **special schools**. Most pupils enjoy school and take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

In many **secondary schools**, behaviour is generally good and pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. However, wellbeing is only adequate or unsatisfactory in over a third of secondary schools and in over half of the **pupil referral units** inspected this year. Where wellbeing is only adequate or unsatisfactory, teachers do not motivate pupils to concentrate on completing their work. In the few secondary schools where wellbeing is unsatisfactory, teachers do not manage behaviour and pupils show a lack of respect for others.

Nearly all learners in **post-16** providers say that they feel safe in their place of learning and nearly all think that their learning has improved their life skills. Most are positive about their wellbeing: they say that they are motivated to complete their programmes and they comment positively about the progress that they are making.

Mitigating the impact of poverty in schools

The Welsh Government's seventh core aim for all children and young people is that they "are not disadvantaged by poverty". Nevertheless it is the case that too many pupils, at present, continue to be disadvantaged by poverty. Schools with high proportions of pupils entitled to free schools meals do not currently perform as well as those with pupils from more advantaged backgrounds. The Minister for Education and Skills has made addressing the impact of poverty on attainment a particular priority and the allocation of pupil deprivation grants to schools should help to support new initiatives.

Mitigating the impact of poverty has to go beyond making decisions about how a school will use the grant itself. In order to make a difference, tackling the impact of poverty has to be central to whole-school planning. School leaders do not currently put a high enough priority on this. Although most schools provide staff with extensive training on teaching literacy to all pupils, fewer prioritise numeracy and very few plan training on how to alleviate the effects of poverty on individual learners for whom disadvantage creates barriers to learning.

There are many reasons why disadvantaged learners underachieve, and schools need to address these simultaneously if they are to succeed in helping these pupils to do well at school. Taking a 'whole-school' approach means that all staff need to understand the role they have to play in the overall plan. Schools should have a suite of distinct initiatives to support disadvantaged learners as well as general policies and practices that apply to all pupils, in terms of:

- tracking pupil progress;
- coaching and mentoring individuals;
- improving literacy and critical thinking skills;
- developing social and emotional skills;
- support for wellbeing including attendance and behaviour;
- offering a relevant and motivating curriculum;
- listening to learners; and
- engaging with parents.

The multiple strands of a team approach to disadvantage should go beyond the school to include its local authority and regional consortia as well as relevant external organisations, specialist services and agencies, such as youth, health and social services. Establishing mutual understanding and aligning initiatives so they all pull in the same direction are key elements of this process.

High-level leadership skills are required for setting up these networks of agencies, enabling them to collaborate, and getting co-operation to achieve common goals. Currently, there are not enough leadership development opportunities available for headteachers and other senior school leaders to help them develop these leadership skills. Leaders lack a one-stop-shop of leadership expertise that they can call on for guidance and informal advice, sourcing of training courses, and the matching of partners for coaching and mentoring.

Due to thoughtful and active leadership, some schools are making notable progress in mitigating the impact of disadvantage, as exemplified below.

In Mount Stuart Primary School in Cardiff, 31% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 89% of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are excellent features in leadership and provision in the school, which result in outstanding outcomes for pupils. Staff monitor teaching and learning systematically to provide a sound platform on which to plan delivery in responsive and imaginative ways.

There are outstanding collaborative working arrangements between the school, the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service and other organisations, which ensure that pupils from groups in danger of under-achieving make at least good and often excellent progress, especially in their oracy and writing skills.

School staff work alongside staff from outside agencies so that they can learn from specialist workers how to continue the specialist programmes with the pupil between visits from outside agencies. The school also works exceptionally well with parents and the local community. There is a very effective partnership with a local business, whose employees read with pupils each week. Innovative family literacy sessions and open mornings promote close relationships and enable parents to support their children at home. These well-managed partnerships have a positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Schools like Mount Stuart take a whole-school approach to tackling disadvantage and have strong and consistent leadership on that approach. The headteachers make sure that they develop the expertise of staff, strengthen links with the community and engage parental support for learning.

Some schools are genuinely community-focused. The characteristics of community-focused schools are well rehearsed. In addition to the general features of supportive schools, as noted above, they have:

- out-of-school-hours learning;
- nurture groups for pupils, some of which include parents;
- family learning opportunities;
- parenting programmes;
- on-site multi-agency support;
- strong links with the local community and opportunities for community-participation; and
- the commitment of local employers.

Mitigating the impact of poverty in post-16 provision

Further education colleges have made considerable efforts to reduce the impact of deprivation on learners' progress through subsidising transport costs, because the cost incurred by families or carers to support young adults attending further education can often be a barrier to attendance. The Welsh Government continues to offer an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to the most disadvantaged learners to encourage them to continue their education. Many colleges also focus particularly on trying to recruit learners from disadvantaged areas where participation has traditionally been lower than in other areas. Learners from deprived areas can achieve well. The success rates of learners who receive the EMA may not be captured at a national level but there is evidence from several colleges that learners in receipt of the EMA do as well as others on the same courses, although these can be at levels below level 2.

Overall, adult community learning partnerships make an effort to recruit learners from the most deprived areas in Wales. These learners account for about a quarter of all adult learners in the community and they achieve slightly lower success rates than other learners. Local authority providers do not do enough to make sure that those programmes intended to help learners from deprived areas are well co-ordinated. For example, family learning programmes are not integrated into Family First planning well enough. Similarly, Community First partnerships and adult community learning partnerships need to join forces in a sustained programme to deliver learning that is targeted at specific needs in deprived areas.

When older members of a family attend adult community learning and achieve qualifications for the first time in their lives, this sends a positive message to younger family members to motivate them to succeed in education or training.

Literacy and numeracy in schools

The key to achieving full access to the curriculum lies in the standards of pupils' literacy. To have a chance of achieving well – however privileged or underprivileged their background – pupils must be able to read and to understand what they are reading, and they must be able to communicate their thoughts and thinking process clearly. The 2012 PISA results demonstrate that standards in literacy and numeracy are still not good enough across Wales, but we do have schools that are leading the way. Some schools are making significant progress, as exemplified in the case studies below:

In St Phillip Evans Roman Catholic Primary School, Cardiff, pupils make progress in their literacy skills as they move through the school. The school has maintained improvements in outcomes at key stage 2 for the last four years while the percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals has risen. Senior leaders monitor teaching and pupils' progress very carefully, and staff welcome this approach to continuous improvement. Teachers work together to make sure that their expectations are consistent across the school and this secures high standards of literacy.

St Joseph's RC High School, Newport, has a good track record in helping those who join the school with weaker skills to make progress. The school aims for continuous improvement in pupils' literacy skills throughout their school career. To achieve this, teachers make detailed plans to develop pupils' literacy skills to reflect individual pupil needs at all levels. Literacy is led well across the school, and a literacy steering group supports whole-school initiatives such as customised professional development opportunities for teachers, which have a positive impact on pupils' standards.

The importance of leadership for literacy and numeracy

Within any school it is good and excellent teaching from leaders of language subjects and mathematics that provides the basis on which to build opportunities to apply literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The teaching of other subjects cannot be expected to include the basics of number or grammar in science, music or history classes. The groundwork must be done in language and mathematics. What other subjects should offer are stimulating opportunities to apply that learning in the contexts of those subjects where it is relevant. This should not mean that literacy and numeracy become mantras to be repeated in every lesson in the school day no matter what the topic. Inspectors certainly do not have literacy and numeracy boxes that must be ticked whenever they observe lessons during inspections. What can be expected is that, where opportunities occur naturally in the curriculum to reinforce learning in literacy and numeracy, teachers should take advantage of them. And that means that all teachers need to be involved in cross-curriculum and cross-stage planning.

While literacy and numeracy should not need to be dragged artificially into every lesson, an understanding of the language being used is a pre-requisite for interaction in each case. There should exist, in pupils' folders and assignments across the curriculum, evidence of progress in writing and comprehension. And evidence of progress in numeracy should be reflected in the way that pupils apply their mathematical learning to help to solve problems or to explain data in science, geography or technology. But evidence of progress in literacy and numeracy should not need to involve generating portfolios of evidence from activities that are discrete from the mainstream curriculum or that are over-prescribed and scaffolded. Learning should be flexible enough so that pupils can transfer skills easily as appropriate.

National initiatives in literacy and numeracy

The national literacy and numeracy framework (LNF) and national support programme (NSP) are now in place for schools and should help leaders to set specific standards for teachers to use in their planning and assessment. The LNF establishes clear expectations for literacy and numeracy at key stages 2 and 3 and the new syllabuses being designed for GCSE English/Welsh and mathematics offer an opportunity to build on these standards. These GCSE syllabuses should also take account of an analysis of our strengths and weaknesses in the PISA 2012 outcomes. In section 1 of this report, I set out what can be learned from taking a close look at PISA outcomes in mathematics.

Alongside the introduction of the LNF and the annual pupil tests, we must not forget the need to engage teachers across all sectors in professional development if we want to achieve confident implementation of plans to improve levels of literacy and numeracy. Establishing centres of excellence in specific schools where there are already strengths in language or mathematics would create repositories of expertise and resource in clusters of schools across Wales.

It would be the responsibility of the staff in these centres of excellence to keep teachers elsewhere updated by means of a customised programme of training and support, based on good practice and research. That would mean that these centres would lead and enable a change of culture in other schools, so that initiatives could be implemented robustly and consistently.

Any such model for leading change should involve teachers whose expertise and commitment are currently having an impact on standards in their own classrooms. And regional consortia and providers of teacher education have a role to play as partners with the centres of excellence, so that support could be brokered across clusters of schools as well as benefiting teacher trainees.

Literacy and numeracy in post-16 provision

Post-16 providers succeed in identifying the literacy and numeracy deficits of learners through initial screening on entry and offer additional support to individuals. Nevertheless, they have further to go to plan courses that help all learners to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in real contexts. The work-based learning sector has begun to adapt delivery to help learners to make more progress, but some work-based learning providers still do not make sure that all learners leave their training with good levels of functional literacy and numeracy. Embedding literacy and numeracy across the post-16 curriculum requires leadership and collaboration from staff in all learning areas.

In Yale College (Mid and North Wales Skills Consortium), all work-based learners are assessed on entry to their programme. The results of this diagnostic assessment are used to develop individualised learning programmes in literacy and numeracy. Teachers and trainer mentors use regular learning reviews to support and monitor learners' progress. In the classroom, literacy and numeracy are well embedded in vocational learning schemes. Teachers plan ways to develop the specific literacy and numeracy skills that learners will need in their vocational context. They have high and specific expectations when they mark work, are guided by the literacy and numeracy targets that have been agreed on in individual learning plans, and give feedback to encourage learners to progress quickly towards those targets.

Students in post-16 education who have not attained the equivalent of a level 2 in Welsh or English and mathematics by the age of 16 are not always encouraged to persist in working towards level 2. In order to raise levels of achievement across the board, those who have already achieved at level 2 before enrolling need to be encouraged more systematically to work at a higher level in these essential subjects.

Leadership in schools

It is clear from reading our recently published report on 'Twelve secondary school improvement journeys' that one of the key factors in any journey of improvement is strong and visionary leadership. There has not been enough support at a national level in Wales to develop leaders systematically by offering training, coaching and mentoring programmes for aspiring middle and senior managers.

Leadership is currently good or better in 77% of primary schools and 55% of secondary schools. But 5% of schools are 'in need of significant improvement' and 4% require 'special measures'. Follow-up visits are needed in 70% of the secondary schools we inspected this year and in 48% of primary schools. Fifteen per cent of secondary schools have excellent standards. We need to change the balance of those percentages so that more schools are excellent and fewer require monitoring. This is the challenge for leaders and governors.

Excellent leaders understand that improving teaching and learning should be the main focus of school improvement. In a few schools, leaders have been successful in improving teaching significantly by developing teachers' professional skills and expertise. The best schools are ahead of the game in making sure that teachers understand new approaches to planning for learning. They provide regular, planned opportunities for staff to reflect on their teaching, and organise meetings, working groups, INSET, and teaching workshops that complement each other and build teachers' confidence. They use a wider professional context in a cluster or family to develop subject and learning area pedagogy and to evaluate the effect of the training provided.

Excellent schools actively learn from their mistakes and take seriously suggestions from pupils on how to improve their learning experiences. They place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' confidence in using language and in thinking creatively about problems and issues although, even in the better schools, pupils' basic number skills are often not strong enough.

Conversely, the schools that struggle are usually those that fail to identify or prioritise correctly what they need to improve. Their leaders lack self-awareness, and self-evaluation processes lack rigour, often because they are not based on direct observation of teaching and of pupils' work, or on the views of parents and pupils. The need to manage performance, in particular to improve teaching, is often missed or not tackled. Inspection reports in all sectors often contain recommendations about teaching and there is a more detailed analysis of these and other recommendations from inspection reports in section 1 of this annual report.

Partnership working and leadership

Few schools can go it alone and few individuals can sustain high quality in isolation from others. A good deal of organisational improvement involves working in partnerships between one individual and others and between one team and another inside a school. There are external partnerships with parents and with agencies such as children's services, educational psychologists and education welfare officers, which have to be managed carefully if the support being delivered jointly between the school and these agencies is going to improve children's life chances.

The work that schools do with regional consortia, with each other and with other agencies requires networks of individuals or groups to co-operate. There are particular skills of leadership involved in making, using and retaining contacts in a network, and larger skills involved in leading across networks in order to achieve collective objectives. The skill of facilitation is important in this context. By that I do not just mean chairing meetings but also setting up networks of individuals and enabling them to collaborate and co-operate, and setting up the conditions under which they can deliver to objectives and be innovative.

Working collaboratively requires skills to establish mutual understanding of the outcomes to be achieved, which means exercising skills of negotiating with and influencing others. Establishing a mutually understood sense of purpose is crucial. It means that leaders have to understand how to find and use those lines of influence that lead from strategy to the operation of delivering change or innovation. This includes understanding how partners and networks work and what the constraints on them are.

Leaders must devise a model for influencing behaviours in a way that enables goals to be achieved, even in situations where they are not line managing the individuals delivering the service because they are employed by another agency. Joint appointments across agencies can be a useful tool to encourage joint responsibility and accountability for delivery in these circumstances.

We need to think in a more sophisticated way about how to frame our expectations of the kind of leadership that will lead to change. It is not enough to issue guidance and set policy or to inspect compliance. A 'command and control' model of leadership is only sustainable in extreme situations. A school or other provider in special measures requires external intervention because the existing leadership arrangements are dysfunctional, but this situation is still relatively rare.

More commonly, establishing shared objectives and planning change should be more subtle and should have to do with changing mindsets in the best sense, with widening horizons, with aligning initiatives and actions, with influencing others, with developing potential and with facilitating learning. For this to work across Wales, everyone in the education system needs to be willing to learn more, learn better and apply their learning. That includes children, young people, teachers, support staff, advisers, inspectors, heads, managers, directors and policy-makers.

Local authority education services

We have now completed the cycle of local authority education service inspections. By the end of the 2012-2013 academic year we had completed 21 inspections, with the final inspection of Ceredigion falling into the autumn term of 2013. In the period between 2010 and 2013, 15 local authorities have been found to need follow-up inspection. Where the areas for improvement are pronounced, as for schools, a local authority is designated as being in a category 'causing concern', which means that they are in need of special measures or significant improvement. Over a quarter of local authorities inspected have been placed in a category 'causing concern'. By now, however, several are being found, in follow-up monitoring, to be making improvements.

I outlined in some detail in last year's annual report the shortcomings that inspectors identify in these local authority services. Similar shortcomings, as well as strengths, have been apparent in this year's inspections. There is a detailed chapter on the findings from this year's inspections of local authority services for children and young people in section 2 of this report.

The migration of school improvement services from 22 local authorities to four regional consortia has by now been completed. However, the arrangements for governance and delivery in the four regional consortia have varied too much, as pointed out in the Hill report, and acted upon by the Minister for Education and Skills. The national model for delivery of school improvement services has been under review and is complicated by the fact that the school improvement service remains a duty of the local authority and is subject to scrutiny in the context of local democratic accountability.

We still currently face issues of structural complexity and failures of capacity, capability and scrutiny in relation to the delivery of the range of education services for children and young people, but there are also strengths, offering opportunities to share solutions that can deliver efficient public services even in times of austerity. And, of course, making structural changes will not be enough on its own to bring about improvements in provision and standards in the classroom. We need to find more ways of supporting teachers to build capacity and to make their own changes to update their knowledge base and teaching skills.

Conclusion

Even though progress in closing the gap with England in GCSE results and in improving PISA outcomes continues to be uneven, and even though inspection outcomes are not showing an upward trend yet in most sectors, many individual providers that were initially identified as needing follow-up inspections during the current inspection cycle have made significant improvements. The case studies below illustrate the improvements that we found when we followed up on core inspections that first identified a need to improve.

Ysgol Penrhyn New Broughton Primary School near Wrexham was inspected in 2011 and was found to require special measures.

In April 2013, after several monitoring visits, inspectors found that the school no longer required special measures. Pupils' performance had improved steadily since 2011 and performance in the core subject indicator places the school now in the top 25% of similar schools.

The school now has an extended leadership team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Duties are shared between more staff and staff meet regularly to discuss the progress of new initiatives.

The school has a robust system for collecting first-hand evidence of standards. There is scrutiny of pupils' books and lesson observations. Teachers have audited their coverage of skills across the curriculum and this has identified gaps. As a result, they have produced plans for pupils to practise and apply skills at an appropriate level across all subject areas.

Teachers have set clear success criteria when planning lessons. The challenges they set match the range of pupils' needs, including those of the more able. All teachers follow the school's marking policy consistently and pupils themselves are involved in setting targets that are based on knowing where they need to improve.

The systematic teaching of phonics throughout the school has helped to raise standards in reading and spelling. In structured, guided reading sessions, pupils are enthusiastic about and understand the texts they read. Standards of pupils' writing have improved in recent months in all subjects.

More pupils than in the past make progress in mathematics too and practise their numeracy skills systematically across the curriculum.

In October 2011, inspectors found that the partnership provision for **adult and community learning (ACL) in Wrexham** was unsatisfactory. Estyn followed up in March 2013 and found that Wrexham's ACL partnership had made good progress.

The partnership had identified what learners in the community needed. It had consulted extensively with current learners and with adults not in learning. It had used focus groups of learners as well as labour-market information to identify what kind of learning was needed. As a result, the partnership could respond with a curriculum plan based on a needs analysis, which also reflected the national priorities.

The partnership now routinely monitors data to evaluate current provision, to make sure that it continues to meet the needs of learners. Analyses of the data consider gender balance in recruitment as well as post-code representation and travel-to-learn distances.

The partnership has revised its quality development plan to include more specific and measureable targets and time scales. The revised plan identifies the people responsible for completing each action. As a result, providers in the partnership now meet higher expectations and quality assurance systems are being put in place that will monitor the benefits for learners in the classroom or workshop.

Please click [here](#) to visit the Estyn website to view a short film about how providers have been using my annual report to make improvements in their settings.

There are case studies throughout this report that illustrate best practice and journeys of improvement. I congratulate you if your school or provider is among them and I urge those of you who are not there yet to see what you can gain from getting in touch with the school or provider that exemplifies best practice in an area of concern for you.

Ann Keane

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of
Education and Training in Wales





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About HMCI's Annual Report

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. We are independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales. The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education in Wales.

Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities;
- primary schools;
- secondary schools;
- special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- independent schools;
- further education;
- independent specialist colleges;
- adult community learning;
- local authority education services for children and young people;
- teacher education and training;
- Welsh for adults;
- work-based learning; and
- learning in the Justice sector.

Our inspection work is aimed at raising standards and quality in education and training across Wales.

In a number of sectors, we work with other regulators and inspectorates to inspect provision. We work in partnership with Ofsted to inspect work-based learning provision that operates both in Wales and England. Our inspectors liaise with CSSIW to inspect residential schools and local authority secure children's homes. We also take part in inspections, led by HMI Probation, of youth offending teams (YOTs) in Wales and we join HMI Prisons and Ofsted to inspect institutions for young offenders in England that have significant numbers of Welsh young people. In addition, we include inspectors from the Wales Audit Office when we inspect local authority education services.

We also provide advice on specific matters to the Welsh Government in response to an annual remit from the Minister for Education. Our advice provides evidence of the effect of the Welsh Government's strategies, policies and initiatives on the education and training of learners.

We make public good practice based on inspection evidence. We have a unique and independent view of standards and quality across all aspects of education and training in Wales, and this contributes to the policies for education and training introduced across Wales.

If you want to find out more about what we do and how we work, please follow this link: www.estyn.gov.uk

The inspection cycle covered in this report

A new six-year cycle of inspections began in September 2010. When we inspect we use our Common Inspection Framework for education and training in Wales. This framework covers three key questions and ten quality indicators and they are organised as follows:

How good are outcomes?

- 1.1 Standards
- 1.2 Wellbeing

How good is provision?

- 2.1 Learning experiences
- 2.2 Teaching
- 2.3 Care, support and guidance
- 2.4 Learning environment

How good are leadership and management?

- 3.1 Leadership
- 3.2 Improving quality
- 3.3 Partnership working
- 3.4 Resource management

We also make two overall judgements about current performance and prospects for improvement.

We use the following four-point scale to show our inspection judgements.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

In inspections of local authority education services for children and young people, we report on provision under four headings:

- 2.1 Support for school improvement
- 2.2 Support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion
- 2.3 Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing
- 2.4 Access and school places

Follow-up

During an inspection, we consider whether the provider needs any follow-up activity.

This can range from identifying excellent practice to recommending special measures. The table below illustrates the different types of follow-up and to which sectors they apply.

	Maintained Schools	Pupil referral units (PRUs)	Local authorities	Non-maintained settings	Post-16	Initial teacher training
Excellent practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local authority monitoring	✓			✓		
Estyn monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Focused improvement				✓		
Significant improvement	✓	✓	✓			
Special measures	✓	✓	✓			
Re-inspection					✓	✓

Category	Explanation
Excellent practice	If a provider gains any excellent judgements and is, therefore, identified as having sector-leading practice in one or more areas they will be invited to write a case study to share with other providers. The case study may be published on the Estyn website.
Local authority monitoring	Local authorities will work with the provider to address the recommendations highlighted in the report. Local authority officers will discuss progress with Estyn's local authority link inspector. About a year after the publication of the inspection report, the local authority will write a report for Estyn, explaining how the provider has progressed.
Estyn monitoring	Normally, this level of activity will be required when at least one of the overall judgements for a provider is adequate, but it is not causing concern to the extent of requiring significant improvement or special measures. Normally a small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the provider to judge progress around a year to 18 months after the publication of the report.
Focused improvement	If a non-maintained setting is identified as requiring focused improvement, Estyn will inform the Welsh Government of its concerns. The setting's management committee / proprietor must send their action plans to Estyn for approval. An Estyn inspector will visit the setting every term for up to three terms following the publication of the inspection report. If the setting does not make enough progress, Estyn will contact the local authority to suggest that funding is withdrawn from the setting as it is failing to provide an acceptable standard education.
Significant improvement	Estyn will inform the Welsh Government that the provider has been placed in a statutory category. The provider must send its action plan to Estyn for approval. A small team of Estyn inspectors will usually visit the provider to judge progress around a year to 18 months after the publication of the inspection report. If progress is insufficient, the team will consider whether the provider requires special measures.
Special measures	If a provider is identified as requiring special measures, Estyn will inform the Welsh Government that it has been placed in a statutory category. The provider must send its action plan to Estyn for approval. A small team of Estyn inspectors will usually visit the provider every term following the publication of the inspection report. Inspectors will focus on the progress the provider has made towards addressing the recommendations highlighted in the report. Estyn will continue to carry out monitoring visits until the Chief Inspector decides that the provider has improved enough to remove it from special measures.
Estyn monitoring: post-16	If a post-16 or initial teacher training provider is identified as needing Estyn team monitoring, a small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the provider to judge progress around a year later. If inspectors judge that insufficient progress has been made, this may result in a full re-inspection. Following Estyn monitoring, a letter will be published on the Estyn website, reporting on the findings of the monitoring visit.
Re-inspection	If a post-16 or initial teacher training provider is identified as needing a full re-inspection, the inspectorate will write a letter to the provider, copied to DfES, and, in the case of initial teacher training, to the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCW) identifying the areas that require improvement, and will carry out a full re-inspection of the provider within a year to 18 months. After the re-inspection, Estyn will publish a full report evaluating the progress made by the provider. If the team judges that insufficient progress has been made at the end of a re-inspection, this will be reported to DfES, and to HEFCW in the case of initial teacher training, as part of their contract management procedures.

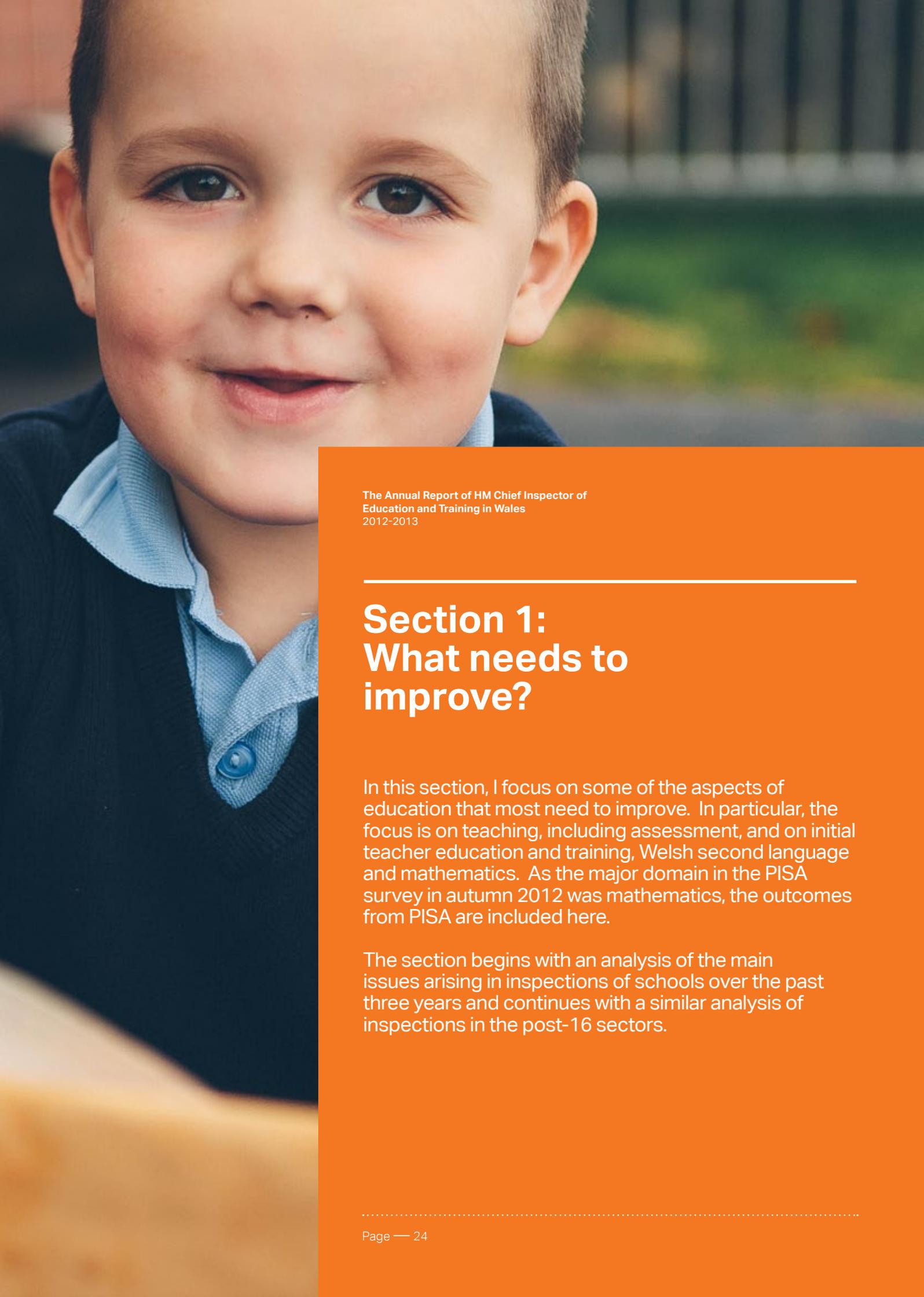
Explanation of words and phrases used to describe our evaluations

The words and phrases used in the left hand column below are those that we use to describe our evaluations. The phrases in the right hand column are the more precise explanations.

nearly all	with very few exceptions
most	90% or more
many	70% or more
a majority	over 60%
half or around a half	close to 50%
a minority	below 40%
few	below 20%
very few	less than 10%

Notes about the data used in this report

- 1 The data we show in charts or discuss within the text of report derives from Estyn's database of inspection grades. Data from other sources is referenced in the report, and is mainly derived from the Welsh Government's Statistical Directorate.
- 2 Figures in charts are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Totals may therefore not be equal to 100%.



Section 1: What needs to improve?

In this section, I focus on some of the aspects of education that most need to improve. In particular, the focus is on teaching, including assessment, and on initial teacher education and training, Welsh second language and mathematics. As the major domain in the PISA survey in autumn 2012 was mathematics, the outcomes from PISA are included here.

The section begins with an analysis of the main issues arising in inspections of schools over the past three years and continues with a similar analysis of inspections in the post-16 sectors.



Teaching



Assessment



Literacy & numeracy



Self-evaluation & planning for improvement



Pupils' Welsh second language skills

The top five recommendations from school inspections

Teaching



The quality of teaching in a school has a direct impact on the standards that pupils achieve. It is the single most important factor in helping pupils to achieve their potential.

The quality of teaching is an aspect of provision that often requires a recommendation in school inspections. Very often, the recommendation is about the need to improve the consistency of teaching in schools where, although there may be some good and sometimes even excellent teaching, there are also serious weaknesses that limit pupils' progress in some subjects or classes.

Literacy & numeracy



Recommendations about literacy and numeracy are also frequent. Even some schools that have mainly good performance need to do more to improve the way they teach and assess literacy and numeracy. Of the three core subjects, pupils' performance is weakest in mathematics, and it is unlikely that pupils will be able to apply sound numeracy skills across the curriculum if there are weaknesses in their learning in mathematics. And if pupils cannot read with understanding at an age-appropriate level, the content of many lessons will be difficult to understand because comprehension is a fundamental pre-requisite of learning.

Pupils' Welsh second language skills



Inspectors make recommendations to develop pupils' Welsh second language skills in over a quarter of English-medium schools. Pupils' progress in learning Welsh decreases as they get older, so that, although a majority of pupils make good progress in Welsh language development in the Foundation Phase, their progress slows down in subsequent key stages.

Self-evaluation & planning for improvement



In just over a quarter of schools there is a recommendation to improve self-evaluation and planning for improvement. This recommendation is closely linked to improving teaching and standards, because leaders who do not gather enough first-hand evidence about teaching and learning cannot identify the best teaching or to give support to those who need it. Teaching and assessment are not likely to improve where managers do not take full responsibility for the quality of the core business of the school.

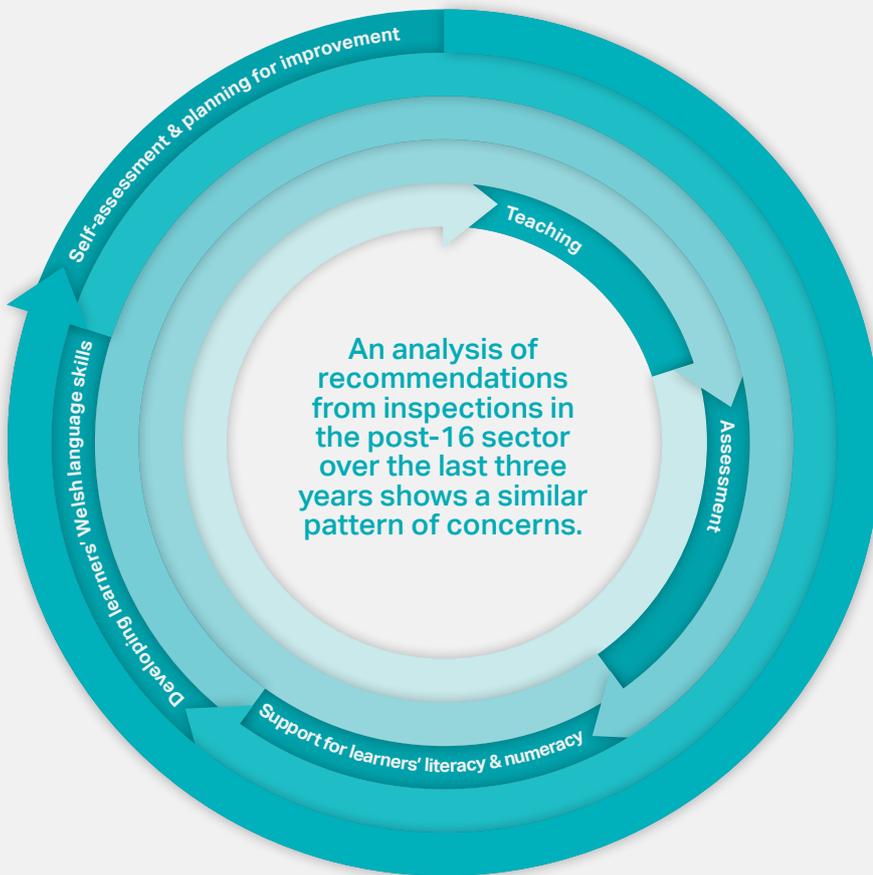
Assessment



The most common recommendation in inspection reports is about the need to improve assessment, with nearly 40% of schools inspected having this as a significant area for improvement. Even in schools with good inspection outcomes overall, assessment is frequently identified as a shortcoming. This is often to do with the quality of teachers'

marking and the degree to which pupils understand and respond to it. Without feedback that they can understand, pupils do not know what it is they need to do to improve. And if teachers do not know how well pupils are doing, neither can they plan lessons to remedy gaps in learning.

The top five recommendations from post-16 provider inspections



Developing learners' Welsh language skills



Nearly half of providers have a recommendation to improve learners' Welsh language skills. Too many post-16 providers do not offer enough Welsh language or bilingual provision.

Self-assessment and planning for improvement



Where recommendations to improve self-assessment and planning for improvement appear, there are usually also recommendations about improving the quality of teaching, assessment and professional development opportunities.

Teaching



The most common recommendation is about teaching, with 60% of providers having some aspect of teaching as a significant area for improvement. As with schools, many providers have teachers who are good and excellent, but this good practice is often not consistent across the provision.

Assessment



Over half of providers have a recommendation to improve assessment. This includes issues such as following up the initial screening of all learners with support to meet the learning needs identified, and tracking learners' progress to inform planning.

Support for learners' literacy and numeracy



Support for learners' literacy and numeracy is an aspect for improvement in half of the inspections of post-16 providers. This recommendation is associated with the need to improve standards, which are good or better in only around half of all post-16 providers inspected.

How good is teaching in schools?

Teaching in primary schools

At the mid-point in the inspection cycle, we have inspected 664 primary schools. Of the primary schools inspected so far, many have teaching that is good or better. Less than 1% of primary schools have unsatisfactory teaching. However, over the last three years, the proportion of schools where teaching is adequate or unsatisfactory overall has increased from 18% in 2010-2011 to 26% in 2012-2013. The proportion of excellent teaching has fallen in primary schools from 3% in 2010-2011 to 1% in 2012-2013, when only two primary schools, out of the 208 we inspected, has excellent teaching across the whole school.

Teaching in secondary schools

We have inspected 106 secondary schools so far in this cycle. Teaching is good or better in only just over half of these schools. The proportion of teaching that is adequate or unsatisfactory has increased in each year of the inspection cycle. However, the proportion of excellent teaching has also increased each year, from 10% in 2010-2011 to 15% in 2012-2013.

Teaching in maintained special schools

We have inspected 22 special schools in the last three years. Nearly all of these schools have teaching that is good or better overall. Over the last three years the proportion of schools inspected that have excellent teaching has decreased from 25% in 2010 to 13% in 2013. However, the proportion of schools where teaching is good or better overall has increased, and in the last two years all special schools inspected have teaching that is good or better overall.

Figure 1.1:
Percentages of inspection judgements on teaching in primary schools, 2010-2013

664 Schools

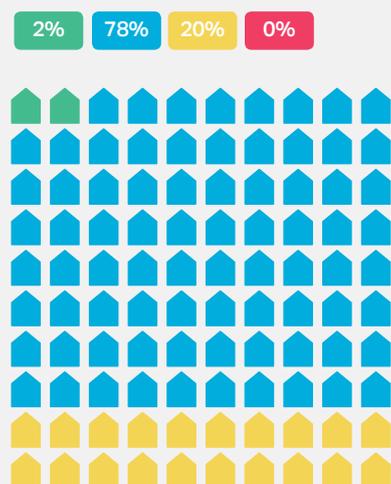


Figure 1.2:
Percentages of inspection judgements on teaching in secondary schools, 2010-2013

106 Schools

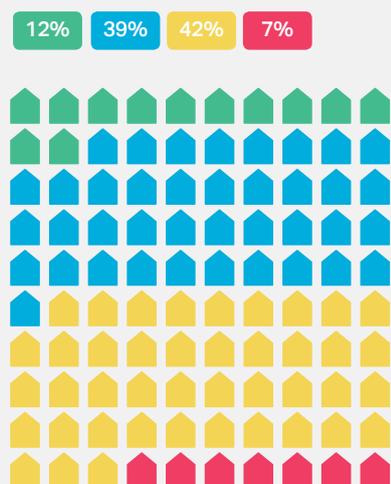
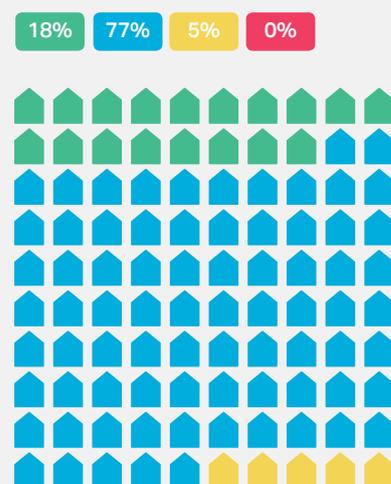


Figure 1.3:
Percentages of inspection judgements on teaching in maintained special schools, 2010-2013

22 Schools



- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Unsatisfactory

What have we said about good and excellent teaching in schools?

Where teaching is good or excellent, teachers have secure subject knowledge and they understand how children and young people learn. Teachers plan to build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding sequentially, both in National Curriculum subjects and in literacy and numeracy. They use their expertise to plan thought-provoking and interesting experiences for pupils. Their lessons are well structured and have clear learning goals that set challenging targets for pupils of all abilities. Teachers are flexible. They involve pupils in planning what and how they learn. They cater to pupils who are at different levels of understanding in a class, to reinforce or to extend learning.

Good teachers model language well and use imaginative ways to develop learners' understanding of new words and terms by, for instance, exploring the origin of words or linking them to usages in the other languages that learners study. The best teachers ask questions and initiate debate that develop learners' thinking skills by using open-ended questions, building in thinking time, and challenging their understanding. They identify and rectify common mistakes and misconceptions when checking students' learning.

Good teachers motivate their pupils to find out more and teach them to be confident, self-regulating learners. They teach pupils to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in their work, and provide them with regular opportunities to put these skills into practice. Adopting these approaches means giving freedom to pupils to explore ideas, make mistakes and experiment with their own strategies.

Pupils' circumstances or disadvantage are never used as an excuse for teachers' poor classroom management or failure to set high expectations. Teachers and support staff in schools where there is very good teaching have very well-developed skills in managing pupils' behaviour. They know their pupils well and they find practical and calming solutions in situations where pupils have difficulty controlling their behaviour. In schools where there are larger proportions of pupils with emotional and behavioural issues, staff plan sessions for groups of pupils, such as anger management classes, or provide structured opportunities for pupils to discuss their emotions.

Good teachers evaluate their own teaching, and consider the efficacy of the teaching approaches and resources that they use. They use opportunities for professional development well, and find time to observe and learn from their peers and work with colleagues to plan jointly.

In schools where assessment is good or excellent, pupils are set fair but challenging targets. Teachers monitor pupils' progress by asking skilful questions and setting tasks, in class and for homework, that can be assessed formatively. They make sure that pupils know how to achieve the learning goals, and they plan frequent opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress and that of their peers. These teachers help pupils to evaluate their own work against the objectives of the learning, so that they understand how well they have achieved. They give praise when work is well done but also offer constructive feedback that helps pupils to modify work in progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately so that pupils understand how to improve.

By monitoring pupils' progress over time, teachers can see where they need to provide more individual support, guidance and intervention. Teachers and support staff use what they learn from monitoring to plan schemes of work and lessons that are responsive and innovative. All good planning and teaching take good account of pupils' backgrounds, including the range of pressures and limitations experienced by disadvantaged learners, or by pupils who have English as an additional language.

St Philip Evans Roman Catholic Primary School, Cardiff, is a voluntary aided primary school with 355 pupils on roll aged from three to 11 years, including 49 children who attend part-time in the nursery. About 40% of pupils learn English as an additional language. About a quarter of pupils are currently entitled to receive free school meals. Seventeen per cent of pupils have additional learning needs.

All staff are involved in the planning process and everyone knows what they have a particular responsibility for. However, it is the collaborative nature of planning that creates such imaginative lessons. Teachers start their planning with an understanding of their pupils. They know who has which additional learning needs, and which are the most able or the most disadvantaged, whatever their level of ability. They consider the different needs of pupils so they can plan lessons that are challenging for all. Staff pay attention to the pupils' own ideas about their learning.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils suggest learning activities for the class. This approach has helped pupils to work more independently because they have more responsibility for their learning. In key stage 2, teachers and pupils often plan the learning goals for lessons together.

Teachers manage their classes exceptionally well. Teachers deliver all lessons with pace, momentum and confidence, based on up-to-date subject knowledge and a wide range of teaching strategies. Across the school, teachers develop pupils' vocabulary and understanding in interaction. Pupils discuss their work in pairs and groups to foster pupils' literacy and thinking skills. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and their enthusiasm is infectious. This has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' work and the progress that pupils make.

All teachers follow the school's marking and tracking policy. Marking is clear and informative. Self and peer-assessment are well established, often using innovative approaches. Pupils get used to setting high standards for themselves from a young age.

Senior managers have created a positive but rigorous culture of improvement whereby lesson observation, book scrutiny and professional discussion are part of day-to-day work. As a result they achieve consistently high standards across the school.

The result of the good planning, teaching and assessment at the school is that pupils make good progress, with many far exceeding expectations.

Portfield Special School, Haverfordwest, provides education for pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) aged between three and 19 years.

The school caters for pupils with a range of SEN, including: severe learning difficulty (SLD); profound and multiple learning difficulty (PMLD); and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as sensory difficulties. There are 140 pupils on roll, 32% of whom are in receipt of free school meals.

Assessment for learning is a major strength of the school. Staff assess, record and track pupil progress rigorously. Teachers and teaching assistants all keep highly detailed records, often with photographic evidence, of the small steps that pupils make towards achieving their targets. Staff use this data to set customised targets for improvement. Achievement against these targets provides valuable evidence of the impact of teaching and learning on individuals and on different groups of pupils and this helps staff to plan appropriately. Pupils enjoy regular and specific feedback to enable them to recognise their progress in lessons. One result of this is that, because pupils are included in the assessment process, they know what they need to do to improve further.

Another outcome is that nearly all pupils meet their specific individual targets and make very good progress in relation to their needs and abilities. All pupils, including those entitled to free school meals and those who are looked after by a local authority, make sound progress compared with their previous attainments. Boys achieve as well as girls.

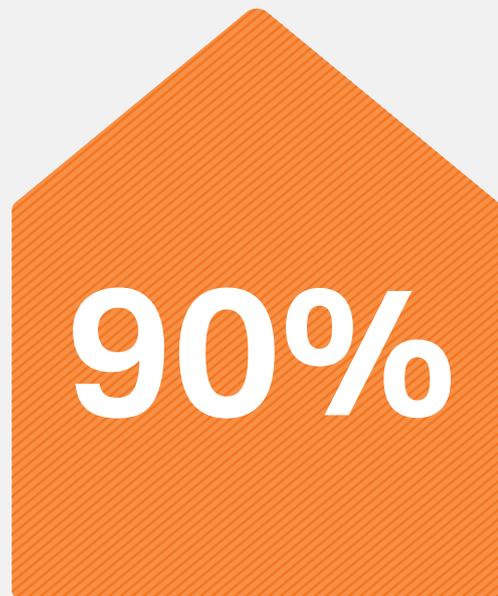
What have we said about adequate and unsatisfactory teaching?

In schools where teaching is only adequate or unsatisfactory, too many teachers plan poor lessons. In some cases this is due to the inadequate knowledge base of some teachers, but this is not always the case. Too frequently it is because these lessons have a poor structure and lack clear learning goals. Planning in such lessons is superficial, contrived or non-existent. Many of the activities do not engage pupils fully because they are slow-paced, repetitive or at too low a level to extend learning. Teachers may talk for too long without actively engaging with pupils. They may require pupils to copy out large quantities of information or complete undemanding worksheets. Where these features are common, teaching is not challenging. Pupils lose interest and start to stray from the tasks being set, which leads to low-level disruption that affects the progress of other pupils in these lessons. Teaching is barely adequate or unsatisfactory when it is badly organised and the school's behaviour management policies and procedures are inconsistently applied.

Sometimes too, teachers rely on a commercially-produced scheme of work to deliver a curriculum without checking on pupils' understanding of the concepts or the acquisition of skills involved and which the scheme claims to cover. And while the scheme may well do so, unless the teacher checks the learning of individual pupils regularly, gaps in understanding can occur that will limit pupils' progress. In these schools, teachers' use of formative assessment is often poor and too many pupils are unaware of how they are doing and what exactly it is that they need to do to improve. The quality of marking is weak: comments on pupils' work are superficial and too congratulatory. Teachers do not make sure that pupils correct their mistakes or refine their work to improve its quality. This means that pupils continue with misconceptions and repeat their mistakes.

Factors that promote good and excellent teaching

The capacity to maintain good and excellent standards of teaching in the classroom is dependent on many factors. For instance, there is a close correlation between excellent teaching and excellent leadership. In those schools where leaders have been successful in improving significantly the quality of teaching and the outcomes for learners, some key features have been evident. The list that follows identifies some of these.



90% of schools where teaching is excellent also have excellent leadership.

Strategic leadership

Leaders, including teachers, in the best schools know their schools well. They have a clearly focused and shared vision for improvement. Leadership roles are defined strategically with a view to distributing clear and interdependent responsibilities within a structure that is designed to improve standards. All leaders in the school have a focus on how they contribute to the core business of teaching and learning. All teaching and support staff understand the school's priorities for development and know what they need to do as part of the larger organism. Leaders listen carefully to learners and staff and maintain an aspirational ethos.

Leaders are familiar with the community that the school serves and understand the background and particular needs of their pupils. This means that leaders can make sure that the school development plan is fully responsive to the school's context. Parents and pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and their views contribute to decision-making about provision and to evaluations of how well the school is performing in the widest sense. Leaders pay increasing attention to addressing the obstacles to learning that exist for some of their pupils. The best leaders do this by planning strategically for pastoral as well as educational support for children and their families, beyond the mainstream curriculum.

Self-evaluation

Staff in good and excellent schools analyse performance data honestly to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and to reflect on how well particular teaching strategies work. Leaders use data on performance, along with lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work, to understand the strengths and areas for development in teaching. This allows them to support teachers where necessary. In schools that have excellent teaching, leaders and teachers share their good practice through peer observation. There is an open approach to lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work, with clear criteria and a timetabled structure, where all staff recognise the benefits of evaluating practice in every classroom. Observers give useful feedback, and teachers decide together on how to improve. On the basis of senior managers' overall school evaluation, there is whole-school discussion and training. Pupils contribute to the evaluation of teaching and learning by completing questionnaires and this helps teachers to plan lessons and schemes of work that are relevant to pupils' aspirations and interests.

Managing performance

In the best schools, leaders have strong systems for managing the performance of all staff, including support staff. These leaders tackle underperformance robustly, using transparent and supportive strategies. They negotiate challenging targets for all staff, and meet frequently with individuals to monitor and discuss their progress. In excellent schools, leaders identify staff to be trained to coach and to mentor their colleagues. This system supports teachers to meet their performance-management targets and gives them the developmental opportunities that they need to improve. These leaders know that their staff constitute their most valuable resource in any strategy to raise standards.

Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Gwynedd, is a naturally bilingual community comprehensive school for pupils and students between 11 and 18 years old. It has 370 pupils, including 50 students in the sixth form. All subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh, and there are units of work in all subjects through the medium of English. Nearly 18% of pupils receive free school meals and 4% of pupils have additional learning needs.

Lesson observation has been a key part of self-evaluation at the school for several years. All teachers are observed annually, leading to an oral discussion at the end of the lesson and a written report soon afterwards, based on Estyn's judgement scale. In the past, it was mainly the senior management team who conducted the observations but, during recent years, independent advisers have been part of the system, along with heads of department and, more recently, other teachers. This can mean that there are two or three individuals in a classroom observing the same lesson. The follow-up discussions between the observers have raised the awareness of all teachers of the characteristics of effective learning and teaching.

All teachers are now both observed by and observe a peer and this provides opportunities to share and develop best practice.

When the first cycle of lesson observations was conducted under the new framework in January 2011, no 'excellent' judgements were awarded. During the following two self-evaluation cycles, the school focused on moving the good lessons to excellent lessons.

The opportunity to observe a fellow teacher and be a part of a wider discussion about that lesson has proved to be excellent in-service training, and has led to beneficial professional discussions among teachers, both formally and informally. This in turn has led to improved consistency in planning good and excellent lessons across the school.

Following each period of observation, a staff meeting is held to discuss the strengths and what needs to improve. In addition, staff discuss the characteristics of excellent lessons.

In the recent inspection, teaching was found to be excellent overall. In key stage 4 in 2012, pupils' performance has placed Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen in the top quarter of schools in relation to all main indicators since 2010-2011.



Providing in-class support

In schools with good and excellent teaching, in-class support for pupils with additional needs helps all pupils to achieve their potential. Support staff are usually well qualified to provide specialist support for individual pupils. They know the pupils they support and understand how to overcome the range of obstacles they face or how to develop their particular abilities and talents. Teachers and support staff use the school's detailed tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress and to inform planning. Support staff collaborate with teachers to plan activities in lessons and to assess pupils' work to ensure that individuals across the ability range are supported to meet their learning goals. Leaders analyse pupils' progress to evaluate the deployment of support staff, and use this information to plan future deployment.

Addressing disadvantage

Leaders in the few schools in challenging circumstances that have excellent leadership plan school systems and procedures that identify and address the particular needs of disadvantaged pupils and their families. When they initiate school development strategies, they ensure that all staff give a high priority to tackling disadvantage and ensuring pupils' wellbeing. Teachers' professional development is focused on the particular needs of pupils in the school. This means that all teachers are knowledgeable about how to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and are aware of how and when to refer needs to specialist services. Support staff are deployed sensitively and many have specific expertise in issues associated with poverty and disadvantage.

A common feature of these excellent schools in areas of deprivation is a team-approach to self-evaluation and planning that includes academic and pastoral staff and colleagues from external support agencies. All of these staff take a thorough approach to pupil tracking, and are confident in handling data and aware of how to tackle the issues created by disadvantage.

Developing teachers' knowledge and expertise

A common feature of excellent leadership that results in excellent teaching is professional development focused on the national priorities for improvement, and on developing teachers' individual skills and expertise in the context of school priorities. The good school plans regular opportunities for staff to reflect on their teaching practice, and leaders organise meetings, working groups, INSET, and teaching workshops to focus on priorities. These opportunities complement each other in building teachers' confidence and skills in delivering a re-calibrated curriculum that reflects the expectations of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. The best schools have been ahead of the game in making sure that their teachers understand how to implement new approaches to teaching and learning literacy and numeracy. Leaders understand that a pre-requisite of delivering literate and numerate cohorts of pupils is securing strong leadership from English/Welsh and mathematics subject teachers and departments.

Good and excellent schools use cluster or family groupings to develop subject pedagogy in a wider professional context, and they evaluate the impact of professional development on pupils' achievement.

Marshfield Primary School is situated in a semi-rural area on the border between Newport and Cardiff in Newport local authority. Just over 4% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals

The school has a strong tradition of developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. An audit of skills demonstrated that numeracy skills were not as well developed as literacy. From 2011 to 2013, the school gave a high priority to improving pupils' numeracy by focusing on leadership, management and provision.

The deputy headteacher is responsible for numeracy across the school. The school had decided that the appointment of the deputy headteacher in this role was important because of the cross-cutting nature of the responsibilities. The deputy headteacher is also the key stage 2 subject leader for mathematics and works closely with the Foundation Phase subject leader. This means that they are well placed to consider transition, progression and continuity issues.

The school prioritises training for staff in teaching numeracy. In addition, the deputy headteacher is one of 15 teachers receiving training from the local authority and carrying out action research as an outstanding teacher of numeracy. There is a professional network in the school, led by the deputy headteacher, to disseminate the good practice from their involvement in the local authority initiative and to improve the teaching of numeracy.

The school has a thorough approach to planning. There is a clear year-by-year progression in numeracy skills and also a portfolio demonstrating where numeracy can be used in each subject in each year group. All staff make sure that they include opportunities to use and reinforce numeracy skills whenever relevant. Expectations are clearly set out so that staff know what is expected and where they could plan for numeracy. Planning is monitored by senior staff to make sure that numeracy is included appropriately. Numeracy is also a focus during lesson observations and book monitoring.

Standards of numeracy have improved across the school. Monitoring shows that all aspects are delivered more consistently than before. The school is well placed to adapt to the numeracy component of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and is already cross-referencing this in day-to-day lesson planning.

Y Pant Comprehensive School, Pontyclun, is an English medium 11-18 mixed comprehensive school with around 1,250 pupils on roll. Twelve per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Senior managers place a strong emphasis on the professional development of all staff. They give staff access to a wide range of training opportunities, including external courses, peer-observation and departmental review. As a result, staff get a variety of opportunities to develop their professional skills, including preparing for and developing their leadership and management roles. This strategy also enables staff to contribute to planning and delivering improvements.

Each year, senior managers consider individual training needs in light of the school priorities and suggestions from staff. The outcome is a programme of twenty seminars. Staff choose 10 seminars from the seminar programme to attend over the academic year in twilight sessions, which are held in lieu of INSET days.

Topics in the INSET programme are wide-ranging and have included raising the achievement of boys, the development of leadership and management roles, dyslexia-friendly learning, philosophy for children and the effective use of learning support assistants. The approach taken by the school helps to provide a training model that meets the professional needs of staff at different stages of their career. Generally, staff from within the school, including learning support assistants, lead the training sessions. After the training, staff complete an evaluation form, which helps leaders and managers check the relevance of the programme in relation to school priorities as well as to the training needs of staff. The whole programme is perceived as dynamic, highly professional and valuable for staff because, while it is clearly linked to the needs of the school, it also provides staff with a degree of professional autonomy over aspects of their training. Staff are invited to plan and lead sessions, which can support the development of aspiring leaders.

The recent inspection found that there was a strong learning culture in the school and standards and teaching were found to be excellent.

Sharing best practice

Good and excellent leaders know who their best teachers are. These leaders also recognise that, if good practice is to be shared, then the outstanding teachers need to have skills in motivating and working with others. These schools train their staff in peer observation and organise 'master classes' for staff to observe good practice, or team-teaching opportunities with excellent practitioners. They also provide opportunities to share practice across classes, phases and subjects and to discuss how best to address key school priorities. They 'buddy up' staff to improve specific aspects of practice, and design innovative approaches to staff peer-support, for example by planning or teaching lessons for and with other teachers. Key developments and areas for debate are communicated by means of newsletters, electronic media, and the production of 'effective practice handbooks'.

Working with other providers and organisations.

Leaders who have a positive impact on the quality of teaching in their schools organise visits to other providers to gather information on best practice and to meet lead practitioners to discuss teaching and learning. They plan joint INSET days with cluster or other schools to reflect on practice, such as how to plan continuity for pupils making the transition from one key stage or school to the next or how to use cross-phase working groups to develop transition strategies. These schools often have links with initial teacher training providers, which they use to develop teachers' mentoring skills. They plan opportunities for staff to work with researchers to develop new approaches in the classroom. They support staff in accredited external study, for example at masters' level. Staff are encouraged to act as external examiners and moderators and to contribute regularly to local and national working groups. In this way, staff in the school continue to develop expertise that they can share with others.

Ysgol Iolo Morganwg is a Welsh-medium primary school in the Vale of Glamorgan for pupils from three to 11 years of age. Three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Pupils and staff at the school have benefited from an innovative partnership with a recently-opened local supermarket. For the pupils, class visits to the shop have enabled them to use their number skills in a real-world environment and to understand the way in which the business works. The benefits for the staff were realised in professional development sessions that were led by the supermarket manager and in which they co-produced a new performance-management framework that was based on good practice at the supermarket. The new framework has enabled staff to identify, refine and achieve stretching/challenging developmental targets that have contributed to measurable improvements in outcomes for pupils of all abilities.

How good is teaching at post-16?



Figure 1.4:
Percentages of inspection judgements on teaching in further education colleges, 2010-2013

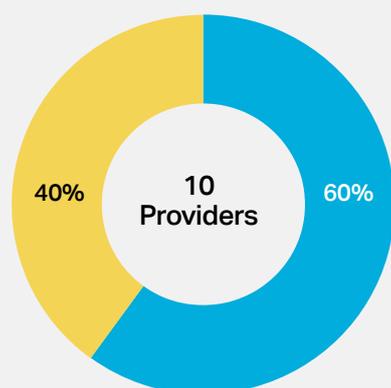


Figure 1.5:
Percentages of inspection judgements on teaching in work-based learning, 2010-2013

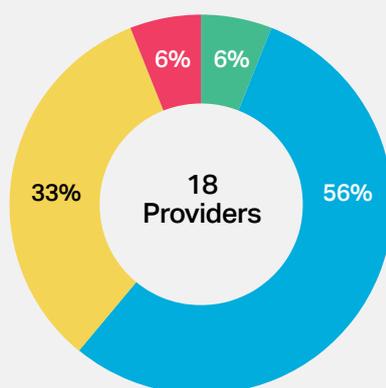
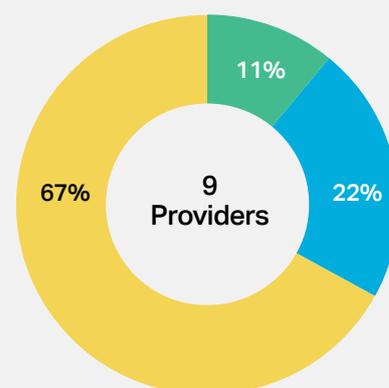


Figure 1.6:
Percentages of inspection judgements on teaching in adult and community learning, 2010-2013



- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Unsatisfactory

The charts above show inspection outcomes for the quality of teaching in further education colleges, work-based learning and adult and community learning 2010-2013.

Across the post-16 sector, during the three years of the inspection cycle, only two providers have had excellent teaching overall. While there is some excellent practice in most providers, this is often not consistent across the provider. While there is a variable amount of good teaching, there is too much that is only adequate.

Factors that promote good and excellent teaching at post-16

Good and excellent teaching at post-16 has many features in common with good and excellent teaching in schools. However, there are some aspects of teaching and leadership that are more particular to post-16 sectors. They are listed below.

Developing teachers' vocational knowledge and expertise

Good and excellent teachers in the post-16 sector have very good subject or vocational knowledge and expertise. Those teaching vocational and occupational courses or training often have recent experience in the workplace that they draw upon in their teaching.

The best teachers plan sessions that have a good balance of theory and practice work. Learning sessions are often timetabled over an extended period and teachers plan these sessions to include a variety of learning tasks for learners both individually and in groups, in ways that build learners' knowledge and skills sequentially and make the best use of the available time. Teachers structure practical workshop sessions to include demonstrations and underpinning knowledge. They also give learners time to develop their own skills and to explore different ways of learning, for example by exploring a range of materials or using a variety of approaches for themselves. The best teachers go beyond the minimum requirements of assessed assignments by using their knowledge of subject-related industries to enhance the employability of their students.

Work experience and links with industry

The best teachers provide 'real world' contexts for their learners by establishing links with industry, organising work experience and linking the learning from work experience to assignments in classes, where appropriate. They use visiting lecturers with first-hand knowledge of the workplace and they provide opportunities for learners to work on projects with business and community partners. Teachers use workplace-relevant technology to promote learning, and take good account of learners' different levels of experience in working with ICT. In work-based learning the best providers look for ways to enhance skills that are relevant to local job opportunities.

Good and excellent teachers in post-16 providers give good support and advice to learners that increase their employment chances and enhance the skills that they need to be more successful in their work and life skills. In work-based learning, the best training advisers help learners to develop understanding of the theory that will enhance their workplace experience.

Initial screening and assessment

Teachers and assessors diagnose learners' learning needs carefully at the beginning of their courses, and make sure that these needs are supported. They guide learners to sources of help, and they monitor the impact of that support. These teachers assess learners' work regularly and keep accurate tracking records. They negotiate targets for improvement, and discuss learners' progress with them. They provide tutorial support that allows learners to explore their approaches to learning and to discuss their ambitions. Teachers work with external assessors to share best practice in assessment.

Yale College (Mid & North Wales Skills Consortium), Wrexham, received a Welsh Government contract in August 2011. The members are Yale College, Wrexham ITeC, Nacro, Myrick Training Services and Glyndŵr University. The consortium has approximately 1,000 work-based learners undertaking training on Welsh Government (WG) funded programmes.

Trainer-mentors and teaching staff use information and learning technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. In the best cases, the use of devices, such as notepad computers and mobile phones is integrated into classroom and workshop activities. Teachers make good use of applications which allow, for example, instant assessment and feedback, links to further information resources using QR codes (Quick Recognition) and instant video replay to give feedback on practical tasks.

The assessment of learners' work is undertaken on-line, based on their e-portfolios. This helps to make feedback quick and accessible and helps learners to manage their time more efficiently. In almost all learning areas the assessment process is managed actively by learners. All learners know how they will be assessed and what progress they are making towards their qualification. Assessors use electronic and manual tracking systems to record learner progress. Nearly all assessors give learners helpful oral and written feedback at the end of their assessment, and plan future assessments well to make sure that learners make progress and are on target to achieve.

Managers and staff analyse data regularly and know how well they are performing as a consortium, as well as how individual partners perform. Staff use this information well to record the progress of learners and to review their performance against that of other training staff across the consortium.

Overall, the rates at which learners complete their programmes and gain their full qualification frameworks are good, with attainment rates above the national average.

Support for literacy, numeracy and employability

Good and excellent teachers in post-16 providers offer support and advice that will increase opportunities for progression and enhance employability. In work-based learning, training advisers help learners to see how to build on their workplace experiences. The best providers take good account of labour market information and the needs of learners within their community to design provision that meets the needs of learners and employers.

Good teaching and training staff have a strong focus on developing learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy and numeracy are integrated into all vocational and occupational assignments where appropriate. Teachers use imaginative strategies to develop learners' skills in a context that is relevant to their main area of learning. In learners' NVQ portfolios and assignment work, teachers, trainers and assessors correct spelling and grammar errors regularly and give detailed, constructive comments to show learners how they can improve.

Working with partners

Leaders in the best examples of partnership delivery hold regular meetings to discuss performance, with representatives from all partners, where they share information about teaching and training and keep staff up-to-date on the partnership's policies, performance and developments.

Where provision is spread over a large geographical area, leaders create electronic systems to share data across courses. This allows staff to monitor any variations in performance, and to share their reflections on teaching and standards.

As part of a systematic observations of teaching sessions, the provider monitors the quality of teaching and learning delivered by sub-contractors, including the scrutiny of the sub-contractors' internal quality systems. The analysis of these observations forms the basis for sharing and discussing good practice to improve teaching and training.

What have we said about adequate and unsatisfactory teaching at post-16?

Adequate and unsatisfactory teaching at post-16 shares many of the same shortcomings that have already been identified above in schools.

Where teaching is only adequate or unsatisfactory in post-16, providers do not do enough to develop learners' literacy and numeracy in real contexts in vocational sessions. In particular, learners are not challenged to improve their skills beyond the level required by their course or qualification frameworks.

In practical and vocational settings, learners are not effectively challenged by teachers, trainers and assessors to develop higher standards of practical competence. In these cases, learners develop only the practical skills and theory knowledge that will allow them to pass assessments. Teachers do not structure longer sessions to make best use of the time, to set a variety of activities for learners or to challenge all learners in the group. Teaching often betrays a lack of connection with current practice in the relevant vocational industry or business.

Teachers do not plan how they will meet the different needs of learners in their individual session or overall plans. They do not take good enough account of learners' prior experiences so that learners can contribute to or lead the learning. Teachers do not use individual learning plans to plan learning, to set realistic goals or to monitor progress.

Initial teacher education and training

We have not been recruiting enough trainee teachers with the best qualifications and we need more consistency in the quality of what is provided for them in initial teacher education and training, in order to give them the best start in their teaching career.

Recruitment

About a half of the trainee teachers who enter teacher training in Wales have good degrees (first class or upper second). This proportion has increased slightly over recent years (in line with overall improvements in degree classifications) and is higher for primary than for secondary trainees. Even so, the proportion is below average – 62% of students in the UK gained a good degree in 2010.

59%

of trainees in Wales training to be primary school teachers in 2010-2011 gained a good degree.

Figure 1.7:
Good degrees on entry to postgraduate programmes in Wales

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Primary Postgraduate	53%	55%	59%
Secondary Postgraduate	50%	52%	52%

52%

of trainees in Wales training to be secondary school teachers in 2010-2011 gained a good degree.

Similarly, the A level entry qualifications for undergraduate primary teacher training are improving, but are still only around the norm (a point score of about 300 for all UK undergraduate courses on average).

281

Average tariff score on entry to primary undergraduate programmes in 2010-2011

Figure 1.8:
Average tariff score on entry to primary undergraduate programmes in Wales

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Primary undergraduate	266	272	281

Standards

There are three centres of initial teacher training in Wales. The three centres offer initial teacher training for primary and secondary trainees at undergraduate and post-graduate level. We inspected two of the centres in the last three years and found in both that standards that trainees achieve are adequate only.

Most of the trainees make generally good progress towards meeting the standards for qualified teacher status. Trainees have positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate good professional characteristics and attitudes. They build positive working relationships with their peers, pupils, and school and university staff. Most trainees develop a suitable range of behaviour management techniques. Nearly all have sound subject knowledge. However, a few trainees have weak literacy and numeracy skills, and a majority of trainees do not plan well enough to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in lessons.

There are also shortcomings in trainees' planning. Many trainees know how to assess pupils' work but, because they are not clear about what they intend pupils to learn, it is difficult for them to reflect on pupils' learning or use the outcomes of assessment to plan future lessons. This weakness in identifying specific learning goals for pupils also means that trainees do not always choose the most appropriate teaching strategy for the lesson.

Training

Most university teacher training tutors have good specialist knowledge, although a few do not have an up-to-date knowledge of school practice. Tutors provide a useful blend of theory and practice and plan sessions that model good teaching. However, tutors and school mentors do not help trainees to develop their planning skills well enough. They do not help trainees to develop their skills in assessing pupils' learning, or to use pupils' outcomes to reflect on how well lessons meet the needs of all learners. Tutors and mentors do not give trainees enough support to plan for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy or ICT skills.

Assessment of trainees' work in university varies too much across tutors and programmes, and tutors do not consistently pick up on trainees' errors. In the school-based training, mentors use their experience well to help trainees to develop their teaching. However, a minority of mentors do not assess trainees' progress accurately, and are over-generous.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good in one centre and unsatisfactory in the other. Where leadership is good, leaders and managers have a clear vision for the development of the centre. However, in both centres there are shortcomings in self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Although centres collect a wide range of information about the provision for initial teacher training, and consider the views of stakeholders, there is limited analysis of training. Leaders do not analyse systematically the quality of training in university or in school and do not have a clear idea of what needs to improve or where there is excellent practice that needs dissemination.

Learning Welsh as a second language

All pupils in maintained schools study Welsh up to the age of 16. As around three-quarters of schools are English-medium, more pupils take a GCSE in Welsh as a second language than in Welsh as a first language. Only 15% sit Welsh first language at 16, whereas 62% sit GCSE Welsh second language. Nearly a quarter of the Year 11 cohort do not sit any GCSE examinations in Welsh.

In post-16, six 'Welsh for adults' centres provide opportunities nationally for adults to learn Welsh in their communities or workplaces. These centres offer a wide range of courses from entry level courses for non-Welsh speakers to proficiency level for advanced Welsh learners. Learners can attend courses of varying intensity and duration, from short taster and residential courses to intensive courses of more than three hours a week over a longer period. In addition the centres offer customised courses for specific workplaces and have also developed a good range of distance and e-learning courses.

During the past five years the number of adult Welsh learners has remained at a fairly constant level, with around 18,000 learners enrolled. There has been a downward trend in enrolments at entry and foundation levels but the number of learners attending proficiency courses has increased. The numbers of learners attending specialist courses, such as Welsh in the workplace, revision courses and short courses have also increased.

Figure 1.9: 2013
Full Welsh second language GCSE course

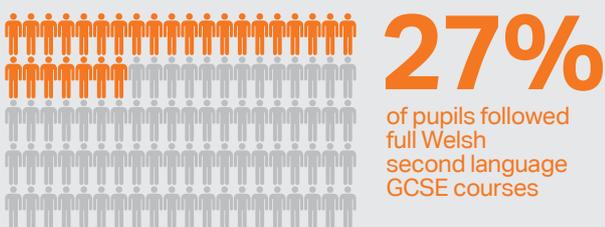
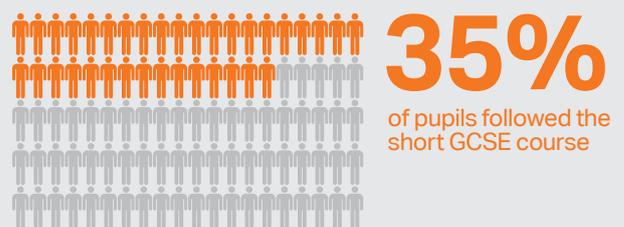


Figure 1.10: 2013
Short Welsh second language GCSE course



How good are outcomes in Welsh as a second language?

There are no published assessment results for Welsh language development in English-medium settings and schools up to the age of seven.

At key stage 2, it is optional for schools to provide details of teacher assessments in Welsh second language to the Welsh Government. In 2013, 95% of pupils from the eligible cohort were assessed in Welsh second language. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4 or above) in Welsh second language was 68%.

In 2013, approximately 83% of pupils at the end of key stage 3 completed Welsh second language assessments, and 73% of them reached or exceeded the expected level. The other 17% of pupils completed Welsh first language assessments.

GCSE Welsh second-language courses do not produce bilingual pupils or young people who are sufficiently confident to use the language in their everyday lives. Welsh is a statutory subject for every pupil until the end of key stage 4. GCSE second language qualifications are, for many pupils, the culmination of 11 years of learning Welsh as a second language. This is a considerable investment by the Welsh Government.

In 2013, 27% of pupils followed full Welsh second-language GCSE courses (slightly higher than in 2012). Of these, 76% achieved A*-C grades. Results from the short course are weaker than those for the full course. Thirty-five per cent followed the short GCSE course and 48% achieved A*-C grades.

Therefore, in general, a fairly low number of pupils follow the Welsh second-language full GCSE courses in key stage 4. In a few English-medium schools like Bryngwyn School, many pupils sit and pass the full GCSE course. In Bryngwyn School, 93% follow the full GCSE course with 82% of them achieving A* to C grades. It is no surprise that, in those schools where teaching is good or excellent, pupils reach high standards in Welsh second language.

In 2007, Estyn published a remit report entitled 'An evaluation of the GCSE Welsh second language short course'. The report identifies several challenges associated with the GCSE short course and these shortcomings are still relevant. They mainly reflect the lack of time allocated to teaching GCSE courses in Welsh second language and the poor quality of much of that teaching, both of which affect the motivation of pupils. The dearth of well-qualified teachers of Welsh as a second language still limits pupils' progress across key stages.

Findings from school Inspections in the current inspection cycle

In Welsh second language, in the majority of schools, pupils make a relatively good start in terms of learning to speak Welsh and listening to Welsh. In the Foundation Phase, the majority of pupils make good progress during whole-group sessions, and they have a positive attitude towards speaking Welsh.

Standards in key stage 2 are improving slowly but, in a significant minority of schools, pupils do not develop their Welsh language skills well enough. Frequently in these schools, teachers do not allocate enough time to improving pupils' Welsh second language skills and many teachers are not confident when using the Welsh language themselves, especially with older pupils in key stage 2. Too often, teachers do not plan jointly to ensure language progression from year to year but often repeat sentence patterns and vocabulary from scratch. Too much use is made of writing frames that require pupils to fill the gaps rather than offering opportunities to structure simple sentences independently. Examples of pupils making good use of the Welsh language across the curriculum are scarce.

Standards in Welsh second language in secondary schools are good in only a few schools. Standards are particularly good in those schools in which standards are excellent in general. However, Welsh second language is an important area that needs to be improved in approximately one in every five schools, where standards are so low that we make a recommendation that improvements need to be made. Even in schools where standards are good, it is rare to find pupils who are confident enough to use the language on a day-to-day basis.

There are not enough opportunities for pupils to improve their ability to use the Welsh language outside Welsh lessons. Very few English-medium secondary schools include actions in their school-improvement plans to increase fluency in Welsh. Very few work with organisations such as the *Urdd* or *Mentrau Iaith* to offer more opportunities for pupils to practise speaking Welsh informally after school hours. However, some individual schools do succeed well where they have teachers who are better qualified and who find imaginative ways to improve pupils' skills in and beyond their timetabled lessons.

What can be done to improve the situation?

Too often, what we see in many Welsh second language lessons reflects traditional and unexciting teaching techniques.

The most successful schools place an emphasis on fostering confidence in speaking (and writing) the language, as opposed to the more passive skills of listening and reading. They do this by linking class work with enjoyable extra-curricular activities and by emphasising the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* across the whole school, so that pupils appreciate and understand the history, geography and culture of Wales. These activities include outdoor activities, or residential periods away from school, for example at *Urdd* camps.

The best schools create links with peers in Welsh-medium schools, both locally and further afield, and they use modern technology, such as e-mail and Twitter. A great deal can be learned from the methodology demonstrated by some Welsh for adults providers, for example by inviting Welsh speakers from the local community to school to speak to the learners.

A few schools raise awareness amongst pupils and parents of the advantages of bilingualism in the job market. The careers service has an important role to play by using labour-market information about the jobs available to Welsh speakers.

Staffing

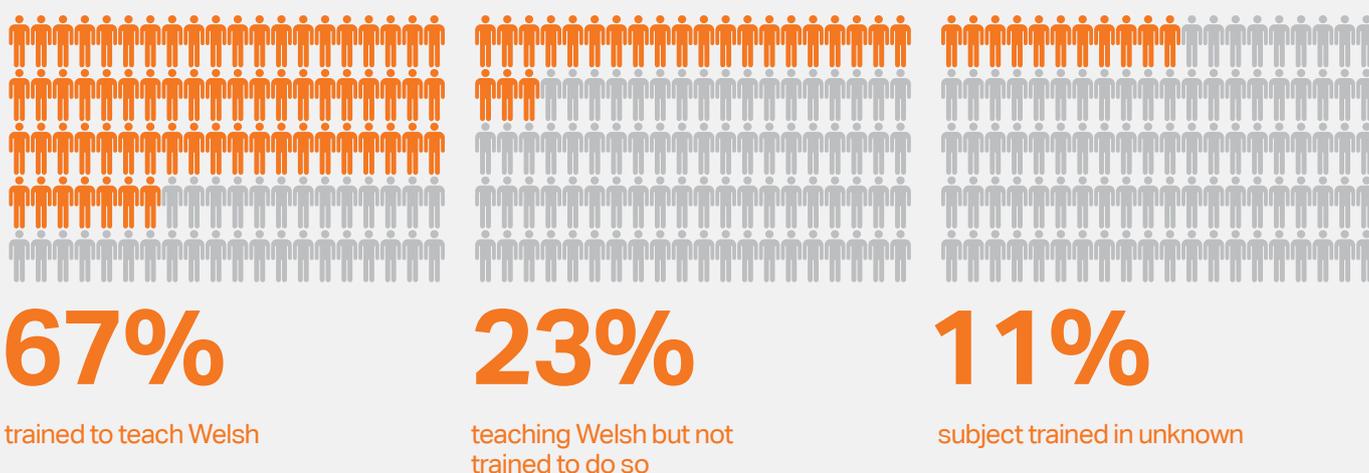
Attracting well-qualified Welsh specialists to teach Welsh second language is a challenge for many English-medium secondary schools. Overall there is limited staffing and leadership capacity. In some schools, teachers who are not subject-specialists are expected to teach Welsh extensively. Too many of these teachers lack competence and confidence.

There are 1,003 teachers registered to teach Welsh as a first or second language working in secondary schools in Wales¹. Of these teachers, only 67% have been trained to teach Welsh and 23% have not been trained to teach the subject. This means that there are at least 226 teachers teaching Welsh in secondary schools who have not been trained to teach the subject, while there is no information on the relevant qualifications of the rest.

A minority of schools organise a programme to help staff to learn Welsh. This helps staff to use the Welsh language with pupils in informal situations around the school but fails to address the need for fluent teachers.

It is clear from the way that immersion teaching methods work with young children from non-Welsh speaking homes when they join Welsh-medium schools at the age of three or four that early immersion is the most effective way of teaching not only a second language but also a third and fourth language. Young children are highly receptive to language learning. It becomes more difficult later on, although immersion is used at all levels, including for adults. Recent research suggests that there are general cognitive benefits associated with fluency in more than one language and that they go beyond simple language proficiency. However, we do not currently have the capacity in the teaching and learning-support workforce in Wales to enable schools and settings to offer immersion teaching to all children for whom Welsh is a second or third language. Neither do we have a curriculum for Welsh as a second language that requires teachers to use immersion methods.

Figure 1.11: Percentages of registered secondary school teachers of Welsh by initial training



¹ General Teaching Council for Wales Annual Statistics Digest, March 2013

Welsh for adults

Too few learners who start in entry-level classes move on to foundation-level classes in centres where Welsh for adults courses are offered, which means that the number of adults who succeed in becoming confident and fluent Welsh speakers remains low.

We have inspected three centres since September 2010. Teaching is consistently good in two of the three centres inspected but there are very few examples of excellent teaching in any centre. Teachers organise lessons well and use a variety of activities to achieve their learning objectives, including pair and group work in which learners can practise their Welsh vocabulary and syntax. Teachers use good questioning skills to ensure that learners have a full understanding and the pace of work is often brisk.

Welsh for adults teachers generally demonstrate an accurate model of spoken Welsh. They use Welsh consistently during teaching and only rarely use English and then only when needed. Welsh is the main means of communication in sessions and most learners use Welsh when talking to each other and to the teacher. Tutors mark learners' written work regularly and offer appropriate feedback on how to improve the work further. They also provide good oral feedback to their learners.

Welsh teachers often use ICT to develop learners' listening and speaking, reading and writing skills and encourage learners to communicate with each other outside lessons by using technology. All centres arrange varied extra-curricular activities for learners. These activities encourage learners to use Welsh spontaneously in real situations. They create a friendly and supportive Welsh environment.

The way forward

In 2010 the Welsh Government published its Welsh-medium Education Strategy. The aim is to achieve 'an education and training system that ensures an increase in the number of people of all ages and backgrounds who are fluent in Welsh'. In 2012 'A Living Language: A Language for Living' outlined a five-year strategy, which included a similar aim as well as aiming to achieve 'more opportunities for people to use Welsh' and 'increased confidence and fluency in the language'.

Two reviews of Welsh in education have been commissioned by the Minister for Education and Skills more recently and two reports have been published. One is about Welsh for adults and the other is a review of Welsh second language at key stages 3 and 4. Both reports identify unsatisfactory features in curriculum planning for language acquisition, both in schools and for adults, and both reports argue for a coherent curriculum framework that would facilitate progression across all phases of learning, perhaps on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or the National Literacy Framework.

Both reports also identify the challenges that need to be met in order to secure and sustain a fully professional and qualified workforce of teachers in schools and in adult education. In the light of the reviews, the Welsh Government plans to make changes to the organisation and delivery of Welsh for adults. These changes include reorganising funding and provision, and reviewing the accreditation, assessment and curriculum for Welsh for adults programmes.

PISA in the UK

PISA is the programme for international student assessment survey undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Every three years, students from countries around the world take tests in reading, mathematics and science. The main focus of the PISA survey in 2012 was mathematics.

In Wales, 137 secondary schools took part in PISA 2012, with a required pupil participation rate of at least 50% of sampled pupils. These schools will all receive detailed sets of results which should put them into a good position to reflect on their curriculum and its delivery.

**Mean scores attained in
the PISA tests by pupils
in the UK countries,
compared to the OECD
average**

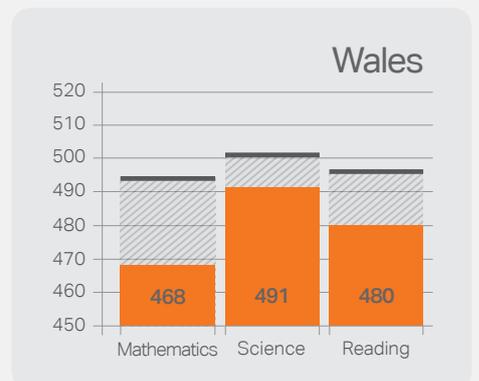
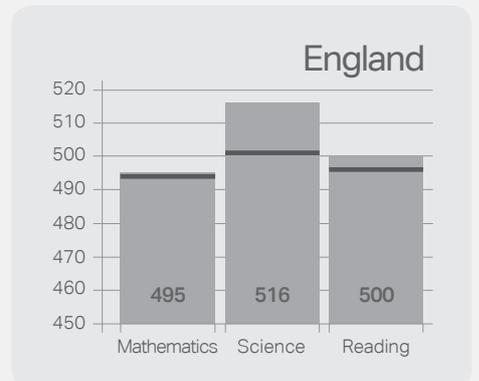
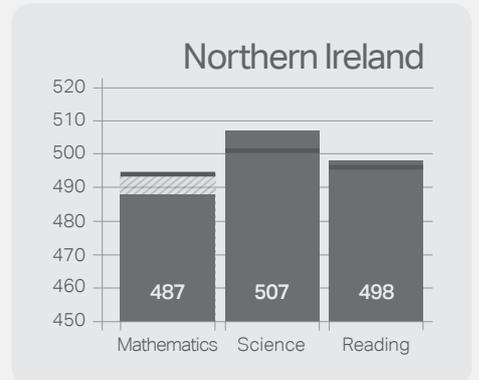
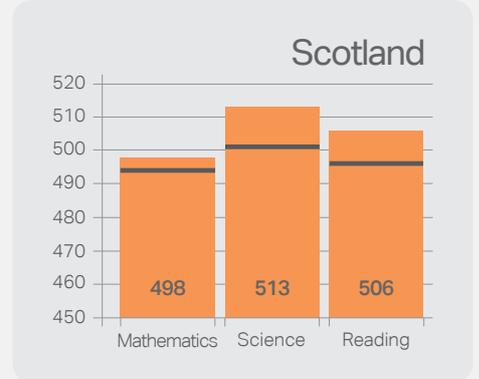


Figure 1.12: Mean scores attained in the PISA tests by pupils in the UK countries compared to the OECD average

- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- England
- Wales
- OECD average

OECD average

Mathematics	Science	Reading
494	501	496



Key findings

In the 2012 PISA survey there were no significant differences in performance in mathematics, science and reading between Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, with the exception of mathematics where Scotland scored significantly higher than Northern Ireland. However, in all subjects, scores for Wales were significantly below those of other UK countries and the OECD average.

PISA uses six proficiency levels to describe the skills of pupils, with level 6 being the highest level. In all subjects Wales had the lowest percentage of pupils working at levels 5 or 6 and the highest percentage working at level 1 or below.

For mathematics 38 countries outperformed Wales compared to 31 in reading and 25 in science. In all three subjects more countries outperformed Wales in 2012 than in 2009.

How good are standards in mathematics?

Mathematics performance in PISA

PISA 2012 is the fifth PISA cycle of tests and the third in which scores for Wales have been identified separately from those in the UK. Mathematics is the main focus in PISA 2012 and is defined by the OECD as follows:

“Mathematical literacy is an individual’s capacity to formulate, employ and interpret mathematics in a variety of contexts. It includes reasoning mathematically and using mathematical concepts, procedures, facts and tools to describe, explain and predict phenomena. It assists individuals in recognising the role that mathematics plays in the world and to make the well-founded judgements and decisions needed by constructive, engaged and reflective citizens.”

The National Foundation for Educational Research report on PISA 2012 notes that mathematical literacy has four content categories (‘quantity’, ‘uncertainty and data’, ‘change and relationships’ and ‘space and shape’) and three related mathematical processes that have to do with the ability:

- 1 to formulate situations mathematically;
- 2 to employ mathematical concepts, facts and procedures; and
- 3 to interpret, apply and evaluate mathematical outcomes.

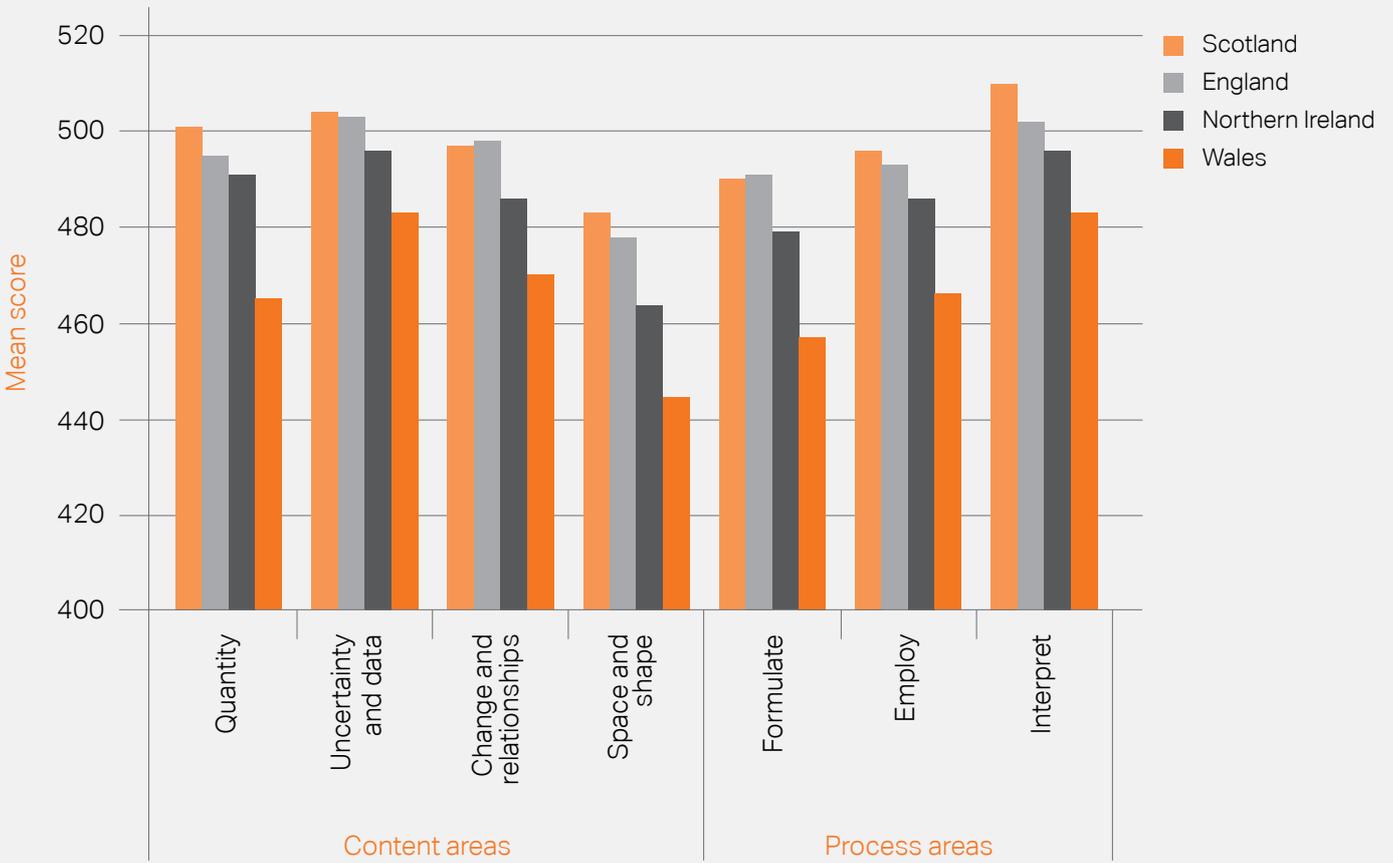
Scores vary in all participating countries across these categories of content and process and the report suggests that where there is wide variation in scores across the categories, as there is in Wales:

“this could have some implications for teaching and learning or might suggest that the balance of these areas in the curriculum should be evaluated”.

The PISA 2012 results show that Wales’ performance in mathematics has declined since 2006. There is also a widening gap between high and low achievers. In 2012 boys continued to outperform girls in mathematics, although there is a smaller gap between boys’ and girls’ performance than in 2009.

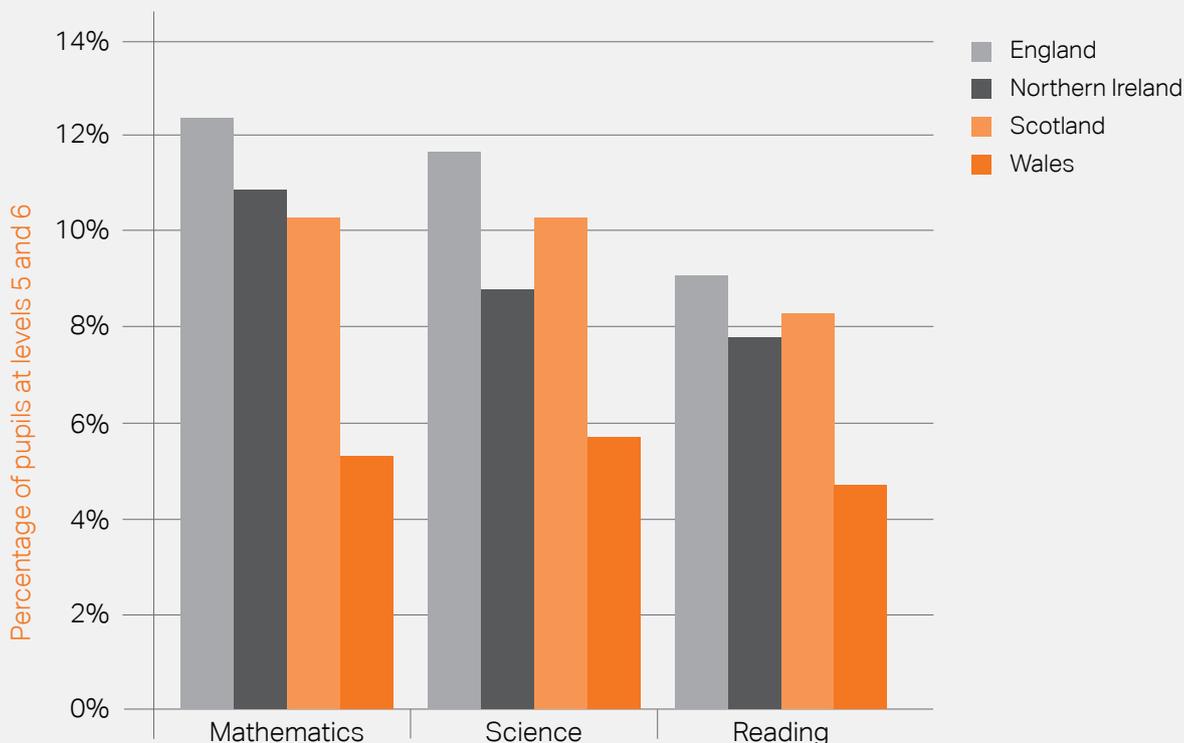
The PISA 2012 results put Wales in a position for mathematics that is significantly below the OECD mean as well as being below the positions of all of its closest neighbours in the UK and of most of those in the EU.

Figure 1.13: Mean performance on the mathematics areas, by UK country (PISA 2012)



For the four content areas in mathematics, Wales achieved its highest score on the 'uncertainty and data' scale and its lowest on the 'space and shape' scale. In the three process areas Wales scored best on the ability of pupils to interpret, evaluate and apply, and lowest on the ability to formulate situations mathematically.

Figure 1.14: The percentage of students at the higher levels of proficiency (levels 5 & 6)



Analysis by the NFER of the PISA 2012 data shows that Wales' performance in mathematics at each of the six levels of proficiency used by PISA to classify attainment is lower than the OECD average. The proportion of pupils in Wales reaching the highest levels of 5 and 6 is around half that in each of the other three home countries. This argues the case for a detailed study of the findings of the OECD and NFER analyses by secondary schools, by designers of new GCSE qualifications and by those involved in building capacity in the teaching profession.

It is surprising in the circumstances that, in response to questionnaires, pupils in Wales show a high level of interest, enjoyment, confidence and conscientiousness in mathematics, more so than the OECD average.

The responsibility for the deteriorating position of Wales in mathematics by comparison with other countries, both in PISA scores and GCSE results, is not wholly that of key stage 4 teachers. The building blocks of competence in mathematics are laid down much earlier in a pupil's schooling and unless these building blocks are secure it is too late at key stage 4 to remedy all deficiencies. Over the past few years Estyn has published several reports about standards in mathematics and numeracy in primary and secondary schools whose findings have been well publicised. We found that some teachers in all key stages had gaps in mathematical understanding and in pedagogy.

Outcomes at key stage 4

The percentage of pupils achieving a grade C or above in GCSE mathematics has increased by nine percentage points since 2008. However, mathematics remains the lowest performing core subject at key stage 4, and GCSE results in mathematics have been lower in Wales than in England for some years.

Progression from key stage 3 to key stage 4 is weaker in mathematics than in the other core subjects. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level (level 5 or above) at the end of key stage 3 in 2011, compared to the proportion of GCSE entries at grade C or above at GCSE two years later in 2013, was lower in mathematics than in the other core subjects.

Figure 1.15: The proportion of pupils who achieved level 5 and above at key stage 3 in 2011 compared to the proportion of GCSE entries at grade C or above in 2013

	2011	2013	
	Pupils achieving key stage 3 level 5+ ²	GCSE entries at grades C+ ³	Percentage points difference
English	76%	66%	-10
Welsh first language	81%	73%	-8
Mathematics	78%	60%	-18
Science	80%	75%	-8

Source: School Statistics, Welsh Government⁴

The table below shows that, even though a higher proportion of pupils achieve level 6 or above in mathematics at key stage 3 compared to the other core subjects, fewer pupils in the same cohort have gone on to achieve A*, A or B grades at key stage 4 two years later.

Figure 1.16: The proportion of pupils who achieved level 6 and above at key stage 3 in 2011 compared to the proportion of GCSE entries at grade B or above in 2013

	2011	2013	
	Pupils achieving key stage 3 level 6+ ²	GCSE entries at grades B+ ³	Percentage points difference
English	35%	37%	2
Welsh first language	38%	43%	4
Mathematics	47%	27%	-19
Science	39%	43%	4

Source: School Statistics, Welsh Government⁴

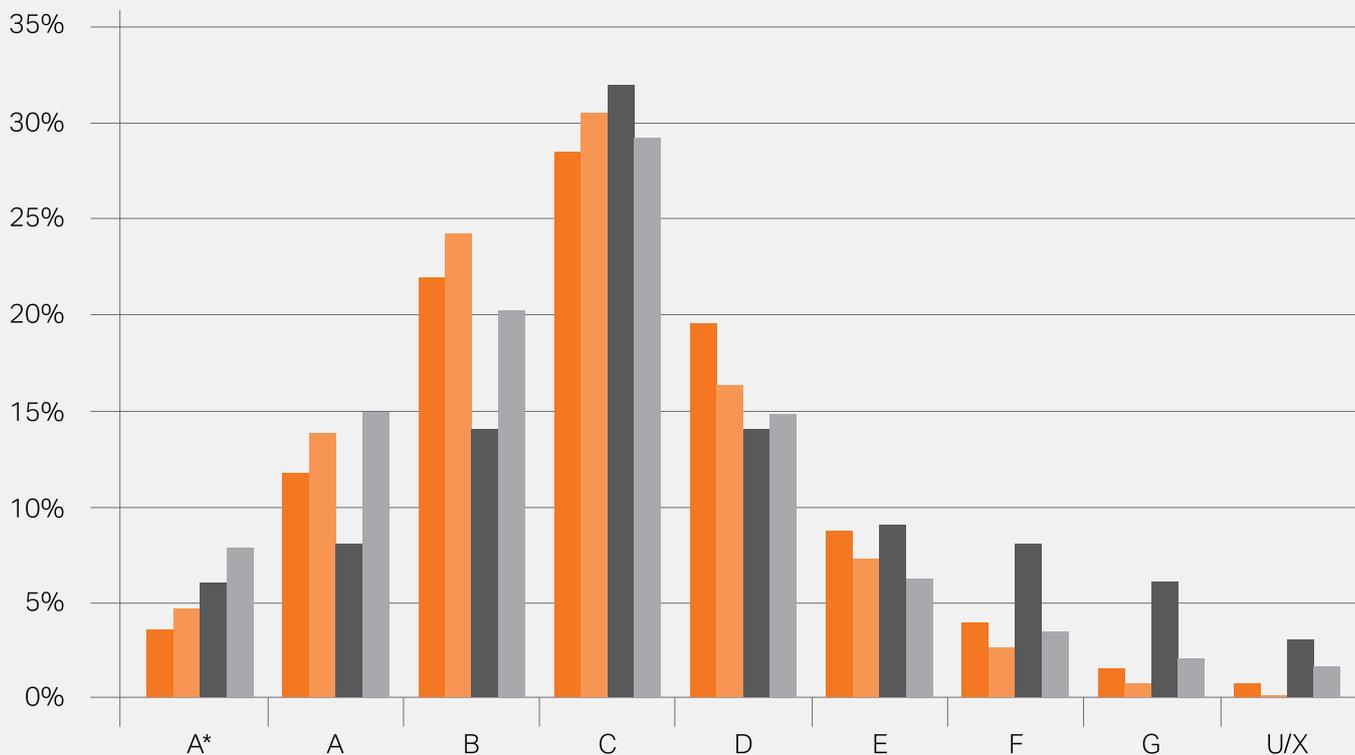
² Figures for Welsh first language are calculated on a Welsh first language cohort basis. Figures for English, mathematics and science are calculated on a whole Wales cohort basis.

³ Figures are on the basis of the number of GCSE entries by 15-year-olds in the academic year and may include multiple entries per pupil.

⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/end-foundation-phase-outcomes-national-curriculum-teacher-assessment-core-subjects-key-stages-2-3/?lang=en>
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en>

Figure 1.17: The percentage of core subject GCSE entries at each grade at the end of key stage 4 in 2013

English Mathematics
Welsh first language Science



Note: U/X includes pupils who did not achieve enough marks to be awarded a grade, or who were absent from some sections of the examination.

Source: School Statistics, Welsh Government

Over the last five years, the percentage of pupils aged 15 who attained grade C and above in mathematics at GCSE has improved, and the difference with outcomes in English has narrowed. However, a lower proportion of GCSE entries in mathematics were at grades A and B than in the other core subjects, and a much higher proportion of GCSE entries in mathematics were at grades lower than D than in the other core subjects.

Too many schools struggle to motivate and engage pupils who find mathematics difficult, partly because they set their sights too low. They focus too much on pupils who are at the boundary between grades D and C, and getting them to do just enough to achieve a grade C. Too many schools enter pupils for GCSE mathematics early to give them more 'chances' of gaining C grade – they are entered in Year 10 and, if they fail, they are entered again

the following year. The result is that too many pupils are entered before they are ready and do not therefore get the chance to gain the highest grades.

During the last five years, the significant difference between the proportion of pupils gaining a grade C or above in mathematics in Wales compared to England has persisted. The proportion of GCSE entries in Wales at grades higher than grade C, particularly grades A and B, is markedly lower than the proportions in England. This comparison suggests that not enough pupils in Wales reach their full potential in mathematics.

In our recent publication 'Good practice in mathematics at key stage 4', Estyn October 2013, we examine standards, teaching and leadership of mathematics.

⁵ <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcse-key-stage-4>

What have we said about adequate and unsatisfactory standards of mathematics?

In mathematics lessons where standards are only adequate or worse, pupils are unable to recall key mathematical skills to support their learning. For example, pupils struggle with negative numbers in new situations. Pupils are too dependent on using calculators to solve problems. Many pupils are unable to simplify expressions using indices without using a calculator, which undermines their understanding of indices. In lessons where standards are poor, pupils frequently work at low levels because the content of the lesson does not stretch them enough. These lessons often contain a significant proportion of previously taught work, such as able Year 11 pupils working on symmetry, properties of simple shapes and basic volume.

What have we said about good and excellent standards of mathematics?

In the lessons where standards in mathematics are good or excellent, pupils are able to recall mathematical facts quickly and accurately. They demonstrate fluency when dealing with numbers in mental and written calculations and apply them effectively to solve problems in context. They have a firm understanding of algebraic manipulation and link abstract processes to real life situations. They use calculators proficiently and make sensible estimates to verify answers. They quickly identify patterns in their work and make connections between different areas of mathematics. When solving problems, they plan effectively by selecting appropriate mathematical techniques and they organise their work in a systematic way to minimise mistakes. They display high levels of resilience and identify and correct errors in their work. They understand key mathematics concepts well and provide clear reasoning, using appropriate mathematical language, when explaining their work. They interpret statistical information precisely and use a range of mathematical diagrams, graphs and notation efficiently to communicate findings and ideas to others.

What are the common features of good and excellent teaching of mathematics?

In the schools where teaching of mathematics is good or better, teachers set high expectations by planning lessons that have good pace and stretch pupils of all abilities. They stimulate pupils' fascination with mathematics by making links to real-life situations and they give mathematics a real purpose. They explain and convey difficult mathematical concepts in a clear and unfussy way. They set engaging activities that involve pupils in their own learning. They regularly focus on essential core mathematical skills to ensure that pupils develop high levels of recall and fluency in number and algebraic skills. They manage discussion sessions skilfully to develop pupils' thoughts and responses and use a range of open-ended and closed questions to assess understanding of key mathematical concepts. When questioning pupils, they allow thinking and discussion time to enable pupils to share ideas and develop fuller responses. They use mistakes and misconceptions to improve learning and enable pupils to understand mathematical principles and concepts that underpin their work in mathematics and other subjects.

However, where teaching is only adequate or unsatisfactory, teachers do not plan well enough to challenge or to develop the skills and understanding of all pupils. The report 'Good practice in mathematics at key stage 4' identifies aspects of the teaching and leadership of mathematics that require improvement.

What needs to be done?

School leaders need to communicate a clear vision for mathematics and set high expectations for all pupils, and there needs to be a strong focus on the basics of good planning, teaching and assessment. Teaching needs to develop pupils who have a greater fluency and confidence in key aspects of mathematics such as number and algebraic work. Improvements in these aspects will mean that pupils become more resilient learners and better problem solvers.

Programmes of study, covering all key stages, need to focus more closely on these important aspects to ensure better continuity and progression in pupils' mathematical skills between schools and year groups. Teachers need ensure that pupils cover the complete programme of study, in a way that is related to their ability.

Teachers need to plan lessons that are engaging, challenging and relevant, that build on pupils' core mathematical skills and develop confidence and fluency in these areas. Effective questioning skills need to test and develop pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts. Mistakes and misconceptions need to be highlighted and used to improve learning.

Assessment needs to be regular and accurate. It needs to reflect the pupils' own work and ability. Areas for improvement identified from assessment activities need to inform the work of both teachers and pupils. Teachers need to plan to address pupils' areas of weakness and pupils need to be aware of what they need to do to improve. Pupils must have opportunities to revisit and practise areas for improvement and they need to be able to assess their progress in these areas. Senior leaders, teachers, pupils and parents/guardians all need to have a firm understanding of the progress made by pupils in mathematics. Assessment activities need to provide leaders with an accurate picture of pupils' progress. They need quickly to identify pupils who are underachieving and provide appropriate levels of challenge and support.

Leaders need to ensure that pupils entered early for mathematics are ready and have covered the full programme of study. Senior and middle leaders need to ensure high levels of accountability for staff and provide a strong direction for developing high quality teaching and learning. Leaders at all levels need to use regular and robust self-evaluation processes that focus on the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work. Pupil outcomes for all levels of ability need to be paramount. The findings from self-evaluation need to inform improvement planning, and the development points need to focus on the areas of most need. For example, if self-evaluation activities, such as lesson observation and work scrutiny, indicate that pupils have weak skills in number work, then this needs to be a priority in development plans.

More opportunities for the professional development of teachers are needed in mathematics, whether on the basis of a national programme, brokered through regional consortia, or based on primary and secondary school clusters. Such opportunities would need to be linked to the National Support Programme for the Literacy and Numeracy programme.

The introduction of a new GCSE course in numeracy is timely. Its design can benefit from a close analysis of Wales' weaknesses as identified in relation to our performance in PISA's mathematical content and the current GCSE mathematics syllabus.

We do, however, have examples of excellent practice in mathematics teaching and learning in Welsh schools. Below is an account of exemplary practice.

Ysgol Eirias, Conwy, is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school with 1,500 pupils on roll. Thirteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 11% of pupils have special educational needs.

The paragraph below describes a Year 11, higher-tier class, who are set a measuring problem to solve.

The teacher starts the lesson with an effective starter activity to test pupils' recall and understanding of dimensions and circle formulae. Questions become more sophisticated and include links to other areas, such as rearranging formulae. The main task introduces the 'Big Question' on costing the building of a landscaped garden that consists of arcs, segments and sectors, but key information is missing.

This challenges the pupils to think and work together to solve the problems. Clues are available for pupils if they require additional support. A few pupils use the clues.

However, many show resilience and persevere with the task independently. This activity generates good discussion as pupils consider different strategies to solve the problem. Near the end of the lesson the teacher provides pupils with a worked solution and asks them to compare their methods with the one provided. The teacher challenges pupils to improve both methods. Nearly all pupils make excellent progress in the lesson. They make links between different topics and mathematical methods and explain their chosen solution with confidence and understanding.





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Section 2: Sector report Primary schools

In January 2013, there were 1,374 primary schools in Wales. This is 38 fewer than in January 2012. There were 264,186 pupils in primary schools in January 2013, an increase from 262,144 in the previous year. This is the third consecutive annual rise in primary pupil numbers.

This year, we inspected 208 primary schools.

Follow-up: primary schools

Thirty-one primary schools were identified as having excellent practice. This is a similar proportion to last year and represents around one-in-seven of schools inspected. These schools have leaders who share clear aims and high expectations with all members of the school community. Self-evaluation and improvement planning focus sharply on raising standards and engaging pupils fully in their learning.

Around 43% of primary schools need a follow-up visit, either from the local authority or by Estyn. The proportion of schools being monitored by Estyn has increased gradually since 2010. Leaders in a majority of these schools have not developed sufficiently robust systems to identify and address shortcomings in teaching or the curriculum. These schools often struggle to improve pupils' standards because they do not target the right areas for improvement. Most schools that needed local authority or Estyn monitoring last year have made enough progress to be removed from follow-up. A few schools have not improved enough and Estyn has increased the level of monitoring for these schools.

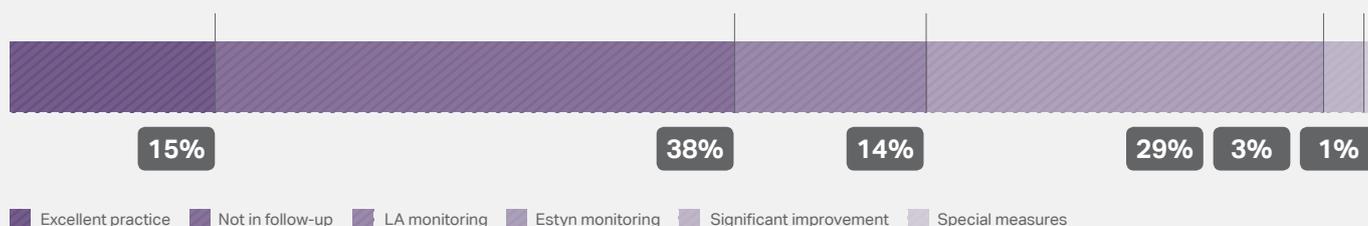
About 5% of primary schools require special measures or significant improvement. This figure has remained fairly steady for the last three years.

All schools that were placed in special measures or significant improvement two years ago have now secured the necessary improvements to be removed from follow-up. Five of the six schools placed in special measures last year have also made good progress and need no further monitoring. Only around a half of those in significant improvement have made enough progress. The rest still require follow-up.

During 2012-2013 monitoring visits, inspectors identified four schools that had been in Estyn monitoring for a year, had not improved sufficiently and now require significant improvement. The common factors in the poor progress made by these schools are:

- they struggle to improve boys' under-attainment and to raise standards in reading and writing;
- teaching and assessment is too inconsistent and there is a lack of challenge for more able pupils;
- self-evaluation lacks rigour and does not focus well enough on pupil standards; and
- governing bodies rely too heavily on the advice of the headteacher.

Figure 2.1: Percentages of primary schools in categories of follow-up⁶



⁶ A few schools are in two categories, for example where a school has excellent practice and also requires local authority monitoring.

Outcomes: primary schools

Standards are good or better in just over 70% of primary schools. This is similar to last year.

Excellent standards

A very few schools have excellent standards. In these schools, pupils are confident and expect to achieve highly. They learn well from their mistakes and are involved in setting their own learning targets. Nearly all of these pupils have good problem-solving skills and apply these well to new learning situations. In these schools, most pupils apply their literacy skills exceptionally well across the curriculum. They use a wide and varied vocabulary, and enjoy experimenting with language.

This year, half of the schools judged as having excellent standards have over a quarter of their pupils entitled to free school meals and a significant proportion of pupils that speak English as an additional language. In these schools, the systematic approach to teaching literacy, targeted additional support, and the expectation that all pupils will achieve at least the expected level, contribute to excellent standards overall.

Good standards

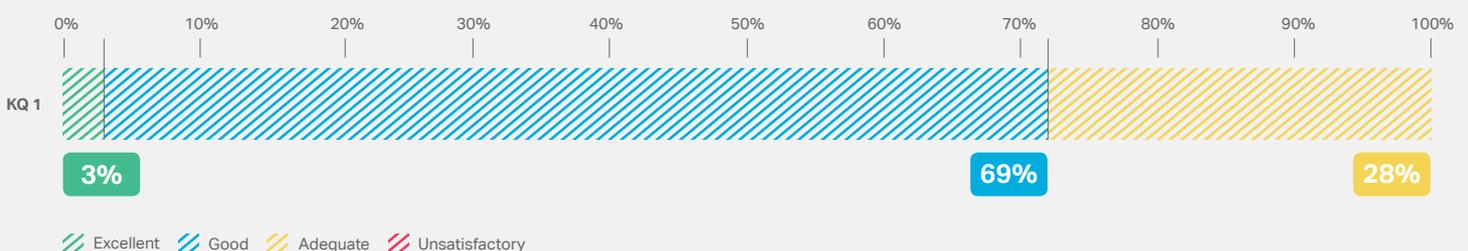
A majority of schools have good standards. Pupils make appropriate progress and achieve well. They speak confidently and listen well to others. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils read with understanding and enjoyment using a range of strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils read enthusiastically and express and justify their opinions about books. Many skim texts

quickly to get an overview of the content and extract relevant information. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase write short texts independently of the teacher in a variety of genres with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. In key stage 2, many write well at length and develop their writing skills across all subjects. A majority structure their writing well and use imaginative vocabulary.

Many pupils develop their numeracy skills appropriately in mathematics lessons. However, a significant minority do not apply their numeracy skills, particularly their number skills and numerical reasoning, at an appropriate level across subjects. For example, pupils often do not know which operation to use when attempting to solve problems expressed in words, or their slow recall of key number facts restricts their ability to work out answers. In a majority of schools, pupils have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Even so, a significant minority of pupils do not use data handling or modelling well enough in ICT lessons or in context within other subjects.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils have a positive attitude towards learning Welsh second language. In key stage 2, a majority of pupils use a suitable range of simple sentence patterns in their oral and written work, and read Welsh texts at an appropriate level. A few pupils speak confidently in Welsh lessons, though many do not use the language outside of structured lessons.

Figure 2.2: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Adequate standards

Standards are adequate in just over a quarter of schools. In nearly all schools judged as requiring Estyn monitoring or which are in significant improvement, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are good in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2. In a majority of these schools, pupils make progress in developing their reading skills in the Foundation Phase and through key stage 2. In a minority of these schools, pupils use their ICT skills well across subjects.

In around half of these schools, pupils in the Foundation Phase do not make enough progress in developing their writing and a minority of pupils do not develop their thinking skills well enough. In these schools, pupils do not have the opportunity to make decisions about their learning and lack confidence when faced with new challenges and problems. By the end of key stage 2, only a few pupils write at length or across curriculum subjects. In a few schools, pupils make a slow start in developing their reading. In around half of these schools, many pupils do not develop their numeracy in mathematics lessons or in other subjects.



Wellbeing

Pupils' wellbeing and behaviour are good or better in most schools. However, in a very few schools, particularly those with a high staff turnover, the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils disrupts the work of others.

Attendance rates⁷ have remained at around 93% since 2002-2003. In 2012-2013 there is a slight decrease in overall attendance compared to the previous year. Over four-fifths of schools with a recommendation to improve pupils' attendance have a greater proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals than the Wales average (20.7%). Nearly half of these schools are in the highest free-school-meal band (32% or more). As reported in previous years, there is a link between the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, the level of absenteeism and pupils' end-of-key-stage outcomes. However, this year, one-third of schools judged as having excellent standards are in the highest free-school-meal group. These schools work closely with parents, through special events and effective communication, to make sure that they understand the need for good attendance.

Most pupils are well motivated and many are beginning to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning, such as working towards individual targets for improvement. Most pupils treat each other with respect and show care and concern for others and know about the importance of healthy living. Most schools have an established school council. However, in many schools, pupils do not have enough of a voice in influencing the school's decision-making process about how to improve provision.

Pupils play a big part in their own provision

At Waunarlwydd Primary School, an initiative to integrate 'children's rights' across the school has given pupils a sense of ownership, and responsibility for the whole process of school improvement.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

⁷ SDR 221/2013 Absenteeism from Primary Schools, 2012/13, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-primary-schools/?lang=en>

Provision: primary schools

Provision is good or better in just under four-in-five schools. This proportion is lower than last year's and reflects shortcomings in teaching. Like last year too few school leaders address adequate teaching. Nearly half of schools, even those where teaching is judged good overall, have a recommendation to improve aspects of teaching or assessment.

In the very few schools with excellent provision, the needs of individual pupils are central to school planning. In the Foundation Phase, planning provides creative opportunities for pupils to learn through play while developing their language, numeracy and thinking.

Most good schools provide a curriculum that interests and stimulates pupils. Experiences in key stage 2 generally build well on learning in the Foundation Phase. Most of these schools develop pupils' reading and writing systematically in language lessons. They plan methodically to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. However, teachers often do not give pupils the opportunity to apply their skills, particularly writing, numeracy and ICT, at a high enough level.

Over a quarter of schools provide learning experiences that are only adequate or worse. Many schools take the stage of development of groups of pupils into account in their planning, but they do not pay enough attention to individual pupils' needs. In a majority of these schools, teachers offer too few opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, ICT and thinking across the curriculum.

In most schools, provision for speaking and listening in Welsh second language is good in the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, the provision for pupils' Welsh language skills is an important area for improvement in a significant minority of schools. Most schools provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and culture of Wales and to learn about education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

This year, only two schools received an excellent judgment for teaching and assessment.

Just under three-quarters of schools have good provision for teaching and assessment. In a majority of these schools, teachers use assessment information effectively to inform daily planning. They know their pupils well and adapt their lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. Most teachers make sure that pupils know what they need to do to succeed and use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding. They provide suitable opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and thinking skills. In these schools, teachers deploy support staff well.

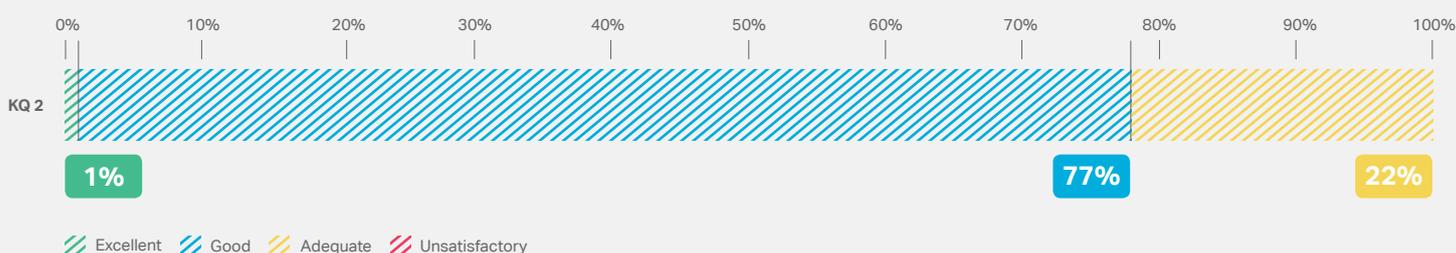
In many schools with only adequate teaching, teachers do not use assessment information well enough. Their expectations of what pupils, particularly more able pupils, can achieve is too low and activities do not meet pupils' needs well. In a few schools, teachers do not secure the interest of all pupils and this leads to low-level disruption.

In a significant minority of schools, teachers' written comments do not help pupils to understand how to improve their work. In a few schools, pupils repeat basic errors as teachers' marking has failed to rectify these mistakes. A majority of schools involve pupils in assessing their own learning and that of their peers.

In around a quarter of schools, procedures for end-of-year and end-of-key-stage assessment are not secure. This means that pupils' outcomes and levels are not accurate.

Most schools have at least good procedures to support pupils' wellbeing and emotional development. Schools generally promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. They teach pupils about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Figure 2.3: Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



In schools with excellent care, support and guidance, pupils' rights are central to the everyday life of the school. Pupils learn how to play their part in the resolution of any disagreement. These schools also consult with pupils when making changes to important policies, such as the anti-bullying policy.

Nearly all schools have arrangements for safeguarding pupils that meet requirements. Many schools identify pupils' additional learning needs at an early stage and intervene appropriately. In the very few schools with an adequate or worse judgement for care support and guidance, there is a lack of support to address weaknesses in the basic literacy and numeracy skills of pupils with additional learning needs, and targets in individual learning plans are too generic. This results in poor progress.

Nearly all schools have a positive ethos that celebrates pupils' different backgrounds and cultures well. Most schools are inclusive and many help their pupils to understand their rights and their responsibility to behave appropriately and respectfully to others. This helps pupils to develop tolerant attitudes. Nearly all schools ensure that all pupils have appropriate access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Most schools have good or better learning environments. In a very few schools, staff design imaginative learning spaces, often thinking creatively about how to overcome limitations of size and capacity. In these schools, through careful planning, pupils have access to a wide range of resources that helps them to become independent learners. A very few schools do not make good enough use of their environment. In particular, practitioners (teachers and support staff) in Year 1 and Year 2 do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn outside.



Meeting the needs of pupils with autism

Ysgol y Garnedd has introduced strategies to provide a much better working relationship between teachers and a group of children with autism, which means that the children are able to integrate with the mainstream pupils and general school life.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Leadership and management: primary schools

Leadership overall is good or better in just over three-quarters of schools. This is similar to last year.

In schools with excellent leadership, the senior leadership team shares the same vision and uses a consistent approach to improving the school's work. Leaders focus on improving standards and have high expectations of staff and pupils. In these schools, performance management systems are robust and leaders address underperformance quickly. They analyse all aspects of school life and gather first-hand evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Leaders ensure that staff use the outcomes of data analysis and self-evaluation activities to identify the needs of individual learners.

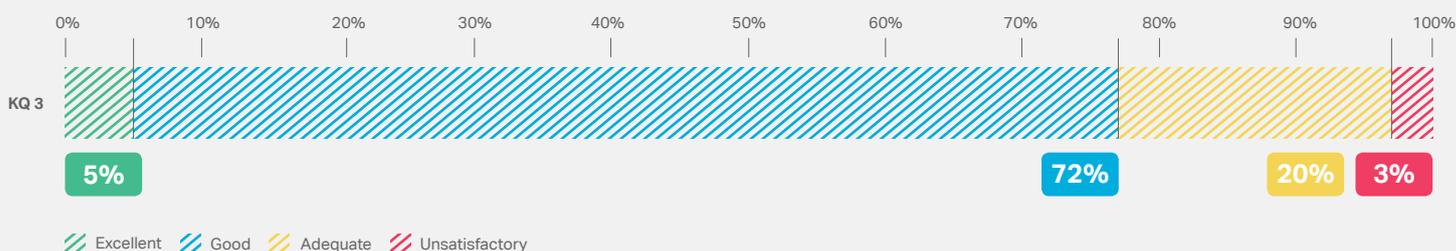
A few schools have adequate standards but good leadership. In most of these schools, the headteacher has been in post for less than two years. These headteachers have a clear vision for school improvement that they communicate well. They establish self-evaluation systems that focus on standards and teaching and an accurate understanding of the school's current position. They use the outcomes of self-evaluation well to inform improvement planning.

A very few schools have good standards but adequate leadership. In these schools, standards are good but not improving. As in most schools with adequate leadership, staff feel appreciated and understand their roles. However, leaders do not focus well enough on improving standards and there is too little robust evaluation of teaching and assessment. Too often in these schools, leaders do not address mediocre teaching quickly enough or ensure that assessment informs teachers' planning. In many of these schools, governors do not challenge leaders enough.

In a few schools, the judgement for leadership is good but the school's arrangements for improving quality are adequate. In nearly all of these schools, the headteacher has a clear vision and sets the strategic direction appropriately. However, the leadership team does not focus well enough on improving standards. In many of these schools, a strong governing body supports and challenges the headteacher. A majority of these schools have recently come through an unsettled period, for example extensive changes to staffing or school amalgamation. A common shortcoming in these schools is that the school does not have effective quality assurance procedures. Although many of these schools consider a sound range of evidence in self-evaluation activities, they do not use this information well enough to focus on a few key areas. In many of these schools, there is too little monitoring of the school development plan.

Many schools make good use of performance data at a school level. Leaders analyse data for trends in performance and to highlight areas for improvement. However, a significant minority of school leaders do not use performance data or outcomes from assessments well enough to track pupil progress through the year or to ensure that teachers use the information regularly to match tasks to individual need and ability.

Figure 2.4: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Many schools provide good professional training for teachers, but only around half involve support staff well enough in these activities. There are generally links between the focus for professional development activities and priorities identified in the school's self-evaluation report. This year, many schools continued to focus on literacy, but only a minority of schools focused on raising standards in numeracy or reducing the impact of poverty. Many headteachers ask staff to evaluate the quality of professional development activities. However, too few headteachers follow up training activities to ensure that all staff put the training into practice consistently, and too few evaluate the impact of staff training on standards and quality.

Nearly all schools have an appropriate range of partnerships. In a very few excellent schools, partnerships with parents, the community and local businesses widen pupils' learning experiences and contribute to improving standards. Many schools have appropriate links with other local schools and moderate pupils' work at the end of the key stage. Links with the secondary school help pupils to become familiar with their new school, but generally links do not focus well enough on improving pupils' standards. In the very few schools with only adequate partnerships, leaders often do not communicate well with parents or encourage staff to take part in activities with other schools.

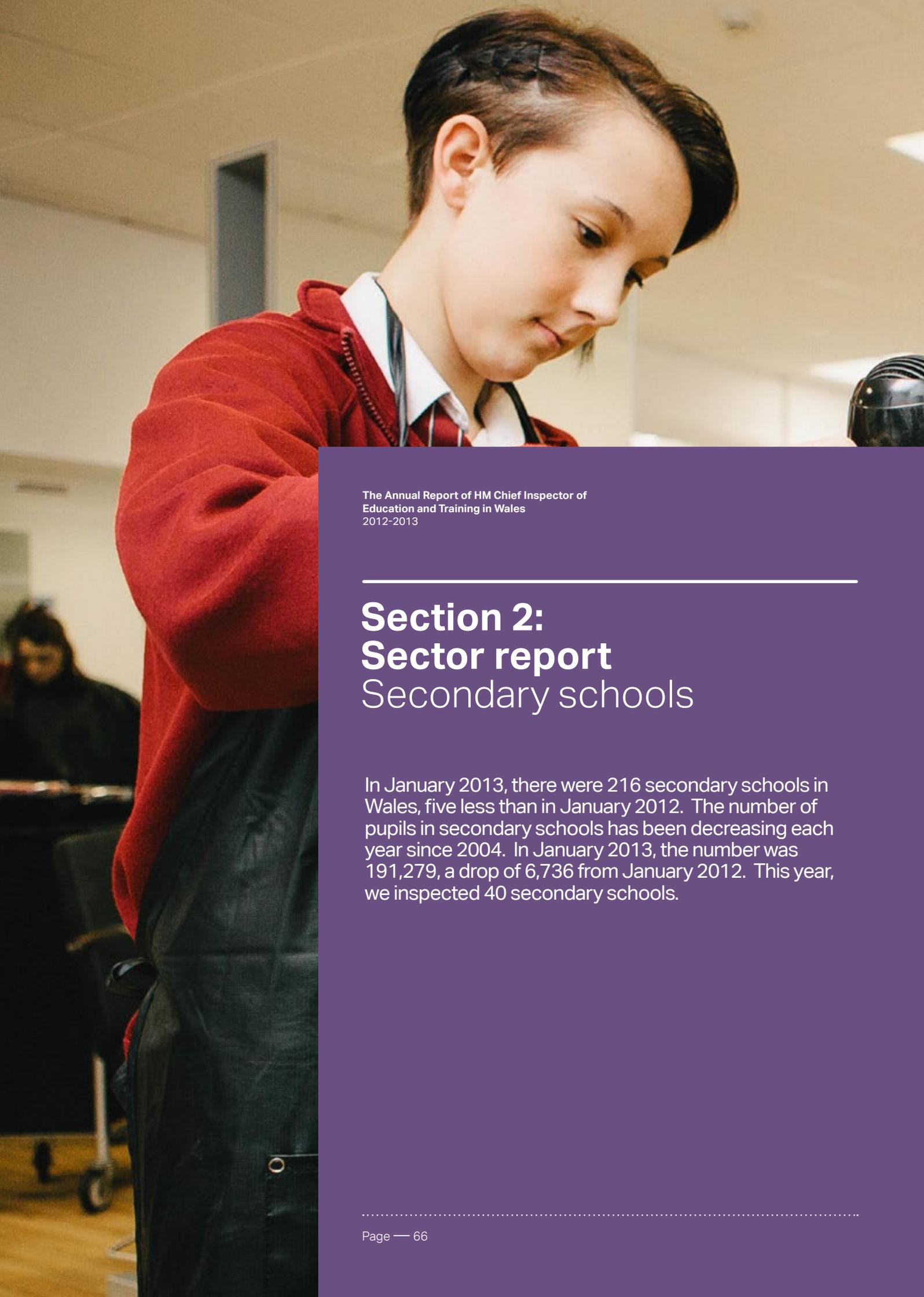
Just over 70% of schools provide good or better value for money. Most schools have enough suitably qualified staff and deploy them appropriately. Most schools have suitable arrangements to cover teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time. Many governing bodies monitor the school's budget well and ensure that pupils have a good supply of resources. However, only a minority of headteachers and governing bodies review rigorously how effectively and efficiently money spent has contributed to raising pupils' standards and improving the quality of teaching and assessment.



Sharing learning through social media

Cogan Nursery School has used technology to share children's learning with their parents/carers to improve the children's ICT, oracy and reading skills.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)



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Section 2: Sector report Secondary schools

In January 2013, there were 216 secondary schools in Wales, five less than in January 2012. The number of pupils in secondary schools has been decreasing each year since 2004. In January 2013, the number was 191,279, a drop of 6,736 from January 2012. This year, we inspected 40 secondary schools.

Follow-up: secondary schools

This year, 10 schools were identified as having sector leading practice, which is a similar proportion to the last two years.

Last year, three schools required monitoring by the local authority and 16 schools required monitoring by Estyn. Many of these schools have made sound progress in addressing their recommendations mainly by improving the consistency of teaching or the level of standards at key stage 3 or key stage 4.

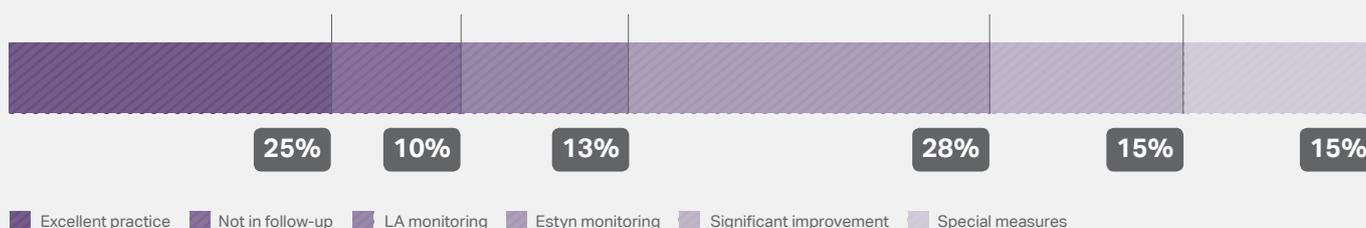
This year, the number of schools requiring monitoring by the local authority rose from three to five, but the number requiring monitoring by Estyn decreased from 16 to 11.

Many of the schools requiring monitoring by Estyn have poor performance in English, Welsh or mathematics. Many also have superficial self-evaluation and imprecise improvement planning. A minority of middle leaders in these schools do not carry out their roles well enough.

This year, the number of secondary schools in need of significant improvement increased from five to six. Although these schools have some strengths, they have weak performance at key stage 4 and many have poor attendance when compared with that of similar schools. Pupils do not achieve well enough in English or Welsh first language and there is too much inconsistency in the work to improve pupils' literacy skills.

This year, there was a significant rise from one to six in the number of schools placed in special measures. These schools have a weak performance when compared with that of similar schools and show little improvement over time. Pupils' behaviour and attendance are often poor, and there are issues with bullying and dissatisfaction among pupils and staff. The key factor in these schools is weak leadership, including a reluctance to hold staff to account for poor standards and teaching.

Figure 2.5: Percentages of secondary schools in categories of follow-up⁸



⁸ A few schools are in two categories, for example where a school has excellent practice and also requires local authority monitoring.

Outcomes: secondary schools

Standards are good or better in just under half of the secondary schools inspected and are excellent in around one-in-seven schools. These are similar proportions to those we reported last year. However, standards are unsatisfactory in around a quarter of schools and this is sharp increase from last year.

Excellent standards

In schools where standards are excellent, most pupils make very good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and higher-order reading and writing skills. Pupils are confident and capable readers, and most have a wide vocabulary and write well for a range of different audiences and purposes. Pupils across the ability range generally progress well in collecting and interpreting data, and making accurate and informed calculations. Many pupils apply these skills appropriately in a range of subjects. However, even in these schools, pupils' numeracy skills are less well developed than their literacy skills.

In these schools, there is also a consistent and very strong performance in external examinations when compared with that in similar schools. There is very little difference in the relative performance of groups of pupils, such as boys and girls. Pupils entitled to free school meals achieve well and their performance compares particularly well with that of disadvantaged pupils in other schools. Standards in Welsh second language are generally good or better.

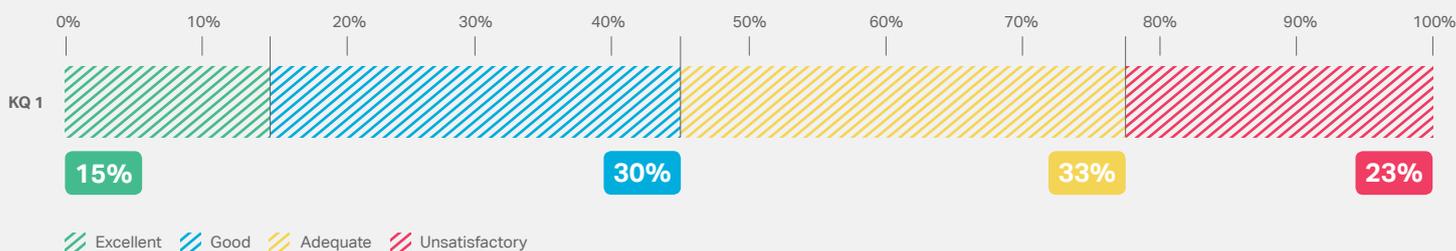
Good standards

In schools where standards are good, performance in key stage 4 examinations shows a trend of improvement and compares well with that in similar schools. Many pupils make good progress from previous key stages and in lessons. Many develop a wide range of literacy skills and generally are confident readers. They write for a range of purposes and understand how they should present information and arguments. In these schools, pupils develop their numeracy skills well although they do not practise or develop their higher-order numeracy skills regularly enough across a range of subjects. Standards for pupils who follow a GCSE course in Welsh second language are usually good in these schools.

Adequate standards

In the third of schools where standards are only adequate, the majority of pupils make sound progress in lessons, although there are often weaknesses in English, Welsh first language or mathematics. These weaknesses are reflected in examination performance that shows some improvement, but is below average in comparison with that of similar schools. The majority of pupils write for a range of purposes, have an appropriate subject vocabulary and work efficiently in groups or pairs. However, a minority of pupils have spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in their written work. In schools with only adequate standards, a common weakness is in Welsh in second language, where low numbers take suitable qualifications at key stage 4.

Figure 2.6: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Unsatisfactory standards

In the quarter of schools where standards are unsatisfactory, the majority of pupils do not make enough progress, and performance in external examinations at key stage 4 is generally well below average in comparison with that of similar schools. The quality of pupils' written work is inconsistent across the curriculum and pupils do not make enough progress in reading and writing. Written work contains frequent spelling or punctuation errors and is often incomplete. Although pupils are willing to contribute to class discussions, the majority lack confidence in speaking, their responses are too brief, and their subject vocabulary is limited. In many of these schools, standards in Welsh second language are low and pupils make little progress in speaking Welsh.

Wellbeing

Most pupils feel safe in school, and say that incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately. Many pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the majority participate regularly in a range of sporting and physical activities.

In many schools, behaviour is good, with pupils demonstrating positive attitudes towards their learning and they are courteous and respectful to others. In a few schools where wellbeing is excellent, nearly all pupils demonstrate very good behaviour, high levels of motivation and purposeful relationships. However, in a minority of schools, a few pupils do not focus well on completing tasks set and show a lack of respect for others. In the very few schools where wellbeing is unsatisfactory, a minority of pupils do not feel that bullying is dealt with effectively, behaviour is poor and a significant minority of pupils display negative attitudes towards their learning.

In the majority of schools, attendance compares well or is in line with that of similar schools. However, in a minority of schools where wellbeing is judged as adequate, it is mostly because attendance compares poorly with that of similar schools and shows little improvement over recent years.

In the majority of schools, pupils contribute appropriately to making decisions about school life. In a few schools where wellbeing is excellent, pupils help to develop key school policies, such as anti-bullying and teaching and learning policies. However, in a few schools, pupils' views have little impact. Even if there is a school council, communication between this group of pupils and other pupils is underdeveloped and ineffective. Often, school council members do not always give feedback to the rest of the pupils.



Ambitious targets improve pupil performance

Cwmtawe Community School has enhanced its tracking system to set challenging targets for all pupils and raise standards.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Provision: secondary schools

All schools inspected meet the statutory requirements for the curriculum. In the few schools where learning experiences are excellent, there is highly effective provision for more able and talented pupils, very good arrangements for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Many schools have suitable strategies and provision to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including useful support for pupils with low levels of literacy or numeracy.

All Welsh-medium or bilingual schools and a majority of English-medium schools promote the Welsh dimension well. Most Welsh-medium or bilingual schools plan to develop pupils' ability to speak and write in Welsh well. However, in a majority of English-medium schools, there are few opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh language outside Welsh language lessons. Provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship is well developed in a majority of schools.

In around a third of schools, strategies to improve literacy and numeracy skills have not had an impact on the standards of pupils' work and there is ineffective co-ordination and monitoring of the development of these skills across all subjects. In a very few schools, there is ineffective provision for the pupils who have the greatest difficulties in reading and writing. In a few schools, provision for Welsh second language is limited and a minority of pupils do not take a key stage 4 qualification.

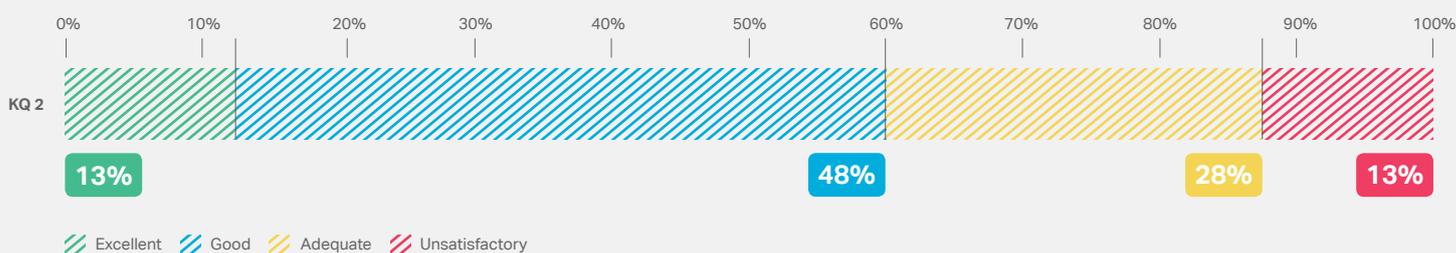
In the few schools where there is excellent teaching, teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They set imaginative tasks and plan stimulating lessons that include progressively challenging activities. Teachers adapt skilfully the pace and challenge of the work and allow pupils enough time to think and reflect on their learning. Teachers use thought-provoking and challenging questions to check pupils' understanding and progress.

In about a quarter of schools where teaching is good, there are suitably high expectations of pupils. Lessons are structured and brisk, often with timed tasks. Teachers question pupils using open questions that probe and deepen understanding while extending their thinking.

There are important areas for improvement in teaching in nearly three-fifths of schools, including unsatisfactory teaching in nearly one in five. In these schools questioning does not develop pupils' thinking enough, which is often the result of teachers making overly-long presentations. Teachers set tasks that do not challenge pupils sufficiently and, too often, the pace of learning is slow. In a few lessons, over-use of structured worksheets limits pupils' thinking for themselves, and ineffective management of pupils' behaviour leads to frequent disruption to pupils' learning.

Assessment practices effectively promote learning in just under half of schools. Here, teachers give pupils useful, subject-specific feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers in these schools often comment on pupils' literacy in line with the whole-school policy. However, assessment is a weakness in the remaining schools where the quality of marking varies from teacher to teacher and subject to subject. In these schools, teacher comments are often too generous and do not give pupils a clear idea of how they can improve their work.

Figure 2.7: Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Most schools have useful systems for tracking pupils' progress and many support underachieving pupils. They provide clear and informative reports to parents.

The provision of care, support and guidance is strong in many schools and is excellent in around a sixth of them. In schools where care, support and guidance are excellent, pastoral leaders use available information, including performance data, to identify problems quickly and arrange timely support. The systems for supporting and guiding pupils are well co-ordinated and have a significant impact on improving attendance, behaviour and attainment.

Most schools develop pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural awareness well and have appropriate anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

In all schools, provision for pupils with additional learning needs is comprehensive and well matched to individual needs. Useful individual education plans are reviewed regularly and teachers ensure that there is an extensive range of well-targeted support.

In a few schools, arrangements for safeguarding do not meet requirements. This is usually because the school does not deal well enough with bullying.

Many schools provide a good or very good learning environment, including a positive ethos and a strong sense of community. In most schools, accommodation provides a stimulating and attractive learning environment. However, in a few schools, the condition of pupils' toilets is of an unacceptably low standard and some areas of the buildings are in poor repair.



Strategies to reduce barriers to progress and ensure support for every pupil

Maesteg School in Bridgend provides an extensive range of intervention strategies, which has increased pupils' self-esteem and aspirations, and has in turn improved pupils' attendance and attainment.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Leadership and management: secondary schools

In the few schools with excellent leadership, there is a strong and well-communicated strategic direction and vision. Priorities are based on a comprehensive and detailed analysis of performance data and substantial evidence from lessons and pupils' books. In these schools, senior and middle leaders provide robust challenge and well-targeted support within their areas of responsibility.

In a majority of schools, senior leaders provide clear direction for the development of the school and successfully promote a culture of high expectations among staff, pupils and parents. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and focus on improving standards and the quality of teaching. Senior and middle leaders use data well to monitor performance and set challenging targets for improvement.

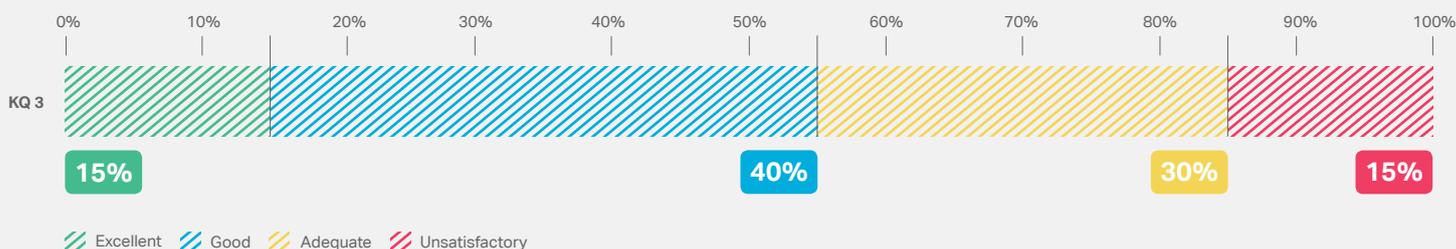
The proportion of schools where leadership is unsatisfactory has increased this year. In around half of schools judged to be no better than adequate, senior and middle leaders do not manage their responsibilities well enough. Lines of accountability are unclear, line management arrangements lack rigour, and senior leaders are inconsistent in monitoring and holding managers to account. Senior and middle leaders do not use data well enough to challenge underperformance and do not have a strong enough focus on improving teaching. In a minority of these schools a new headteacher has started to tackle shortcomings in the leadership and provision, but these recent improvements have not yet raised standards or secured better teaching.

In many schools, governors are well informed and supportive, and show a sound understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. In a few schools, governors do not analyse or understand performance data well enough to challenge the school on standards.

In over two-fifths of schools, there are robust and well-established arrangements for improving quality. These schools draw on first-hand evidence, including lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, which focuses clearly on pupils' standards and skills. In the very few schools where improving quality is excellent, departmental and whole-school self-evaluation and improvement planning are consistently rigorous, accurate and comprehensive. School development plans include challenging targets and clearly identify intended outcomes.

In nearly half of schools where improving quality was no better than adequate, self-evaluation reports do not identify areas for improvement clearly enough and do not use evidence from lesson observation, pupils' surveys and book scrutiny to inform improvement planning. In a minority of schools, judgements on standards and teaching are too generous and leaders do not study the performance data of similar schools. In a minority of schools, improvement plans lack a sharp focus on improving teaching and standards, actions are not precise enough and there are too many targets. A minority of schools have not made enough progress on improving recommendations from their previous inspection.

Figure 2.8: Percentages for judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Many schools develop purposeful partnerships to extend pupils' experiences and to improve their wellbeing. Many schools collaborate with local schools and colleges to widen the range of courses to pupils in key stage 4 and in the sixth form. Working closely with primary schools, many secondary schools have well-established programmes to ensure that pupils make a smooth transition in their learning and wellbeing. This year, partnership working is judged as adequate in a quarter of schools. Most of these schools do not ensure that partnerships impact on pupils' outcomes.

In most schools, staff are well-qualified and experienced and many schools deploy them effectively to make the most of their skills and expertise. In many schools, financial matters are dealt with in a careful and rigorous way, and spending decisions are linked closely to identified whole-school priorities. In a quarter of schools, headteachers, business managers and governors make very good progress in reducing budget deficits. However, one-in-ten schools have a significant budget deficit. Provision for the sixth form is not cost-effective in a very few schools where the majority of classes have small numbers of pupils.



Growing leaders through middle leadership development and training

St. Joseph's RC High School has developed strategies to improve middle leadership. As a result, all middle leaders make an outstanding contribution to the success of the school.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of
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Section 2: **Sector report** Maintained special schools

In January 2013, there were 42 maintained special schools in Wales. This is one fewer than in January 2012. There were 4,321 pupils in special schools in January 2013, an increase from 4,254 in the previous year. This reflects an ongoing trend of rising pupil numbers in special schools.

This year, we inspected eight special schools.

Follow-up: maintained special schools

Three schools produced excellent practice case studies for our website based on their sector-leading practice. Strong joint work with partners is a common feature of these studies. This means that pupils attend classes in mainstream schools, achieve accredited training and take part in after-school clubs for pupils from across the community. A further case study highlights innovative use of technology to support pupils' communication.

One school was identified as needing Estyn monitoring.



Figure 2.9: Numbers of maintained special schools in categories of follow-up



Outcomes: maintained special schools

Standards

Standards are good in seven of the eight schools inspected. In one school, they are excellent.

In all of the schools, nearly all pupils make good progress in meeting their individual learning targets. In relation to their identified needs, pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. They make particularly good progress in developing their communication skills, including non-verbal communication, and use signing, technology or symbols to support their interactions. They use their skills effectively in practical situations to develop their independent learning, for example when shopping or reading instructions and safety notices.

Wellbeing

Pupils' wellbeing is excellent in one and good in seven schools. In the school where wellbeing is excellent, pupils make particularly positive progress in regulating their emotions and managing their behaviour. In this school, very carefully planned support and the timely help from staff ensure that nearly all pupils behave well in and out of the classroom. In all schools, nearly all pupils are polite and attentive and show respect for each other and the staff. A common feature is their enthusiasm and motivation to learn.

Nearly all older pupils gain qualifications appropriate to their abilities. In five of the schools, all pupils leaving school moved to further education, employment or training.

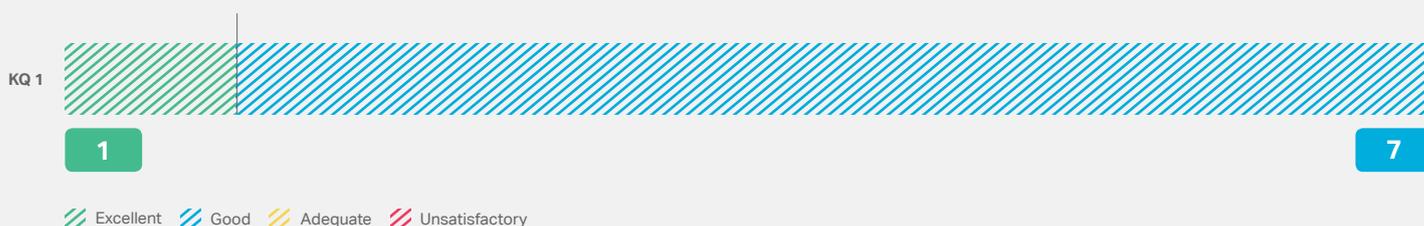
Many pupils benefit from taking part in sports and other activities that support a healthy lifestyle. Almost all pupils attend well.

ICT creates new learning experiences for pupils with SEN

Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre has researched the use of iPads as teaching tools and has used gesture-based technology to increase access levels to the curriculum, which has increased exploration skills, improved independent decision-making, enhanced communication skills and broadened pupils' range of interactions.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.10: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: maintained special schools

In seven schools, provision is good and, in one, it is excellent.

All schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum with stimulating practical experiences tailored to pupils' individual needs. In the school where provision is excellent, nearly all pupils extend their learning and confidence by joining mainstream schools or other settings for sessions that match their interests, abilities and skills. However, a few schools do not provide enough pupils with these valuable opportunities.

Well-planned programmes of personal and social education make a significant contribution to improving pupils' emotional, social and life skills. These programmes, including teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe, are a high priority in all schools.

The use of new technology is increasing the engagement and communication of pupils with complex needs in many schools. In one school, the innovative use of these technologies is sector-leading, and has had a significant impact on pupil outcomes, and has improved access to the curriculum and their general quality of life.

Teaching is good in seven schools and excellent in one school. In these schools, teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and expect them to do their best. In the school where teaching is excellent, procedures for assessment, recording, tracking and evaluation of pupils' achievements are rigorous. However, the analysis of data to monitor pupils' outcomes needs further development in three schools. Nearly all teachers plan work effectively to match pupils' needs and abilities. Nevertheless, in over half of the schools, teachers do not ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

There is good care, support and guidance in all schools. This helps pupils learn how to manage their own feelings and to be considerate for the feelings of others. Specialist professionals such as therapists, nurses and counsellors make an important contribution to schools' provision.

Accommodation in six schools is good. One school does not have the capacity to meet an increasing number of pupils with complex medical needs. In another school, ageing, poorly maintained accommodation creates health and safety issues for pupils.



Figure 2.11: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: maintained special schools

The quality of leadership and management is excellent in one school, good in six schools and adequate in another. Senior leaders at nearly all schools set a clear strategic direction. They create an ethos where all staff, including support staff, are highly valued, and this encourages teamwork.

In the school where leadership is excellent, all staff share responsibility for leadership through the management structure. In the one school where leadership is only adequate, it is too early to see whether the strategies of the new headteacher and leadership team will improve the school.

Generally, managers hold teachers to account and support them in whole-school training. They use data effectively to support this work. Leaders have high expectations of staff performance and encourage staff to share good practice and to develop expertise in specialist areas such as the use of technology to support pupils' communication.

Governing bodies know their schools well, but a minority have not fully developed their role in challenging schools to improve.

Self-evaluation is good in five schools, excellent in two, and adequate in one. Where it is excellent, self-evaluation and improvement planning are routine in the school, with staff, governors, parents and pupils contributing to the process.

Nearly all schools work with partners to make sure that pupils have the right support and a broad range of learning opportunities. These partners include local mainstream schools and colleges as well as specialist services such as speech and language therapy. They support pupils to develop independence and confidence and provide a variety of stimulating experiences.

All schools are well resourced, with appropriate staffing and equipment. The joint work between teachers and support staff is a significant strength of all schools inspected. Support staff are highly skilled in, for example, behaviour management, manual handling and developing pupils' communication. These staff make a strong contribution to pupils' outcomes. A few schools employ their own therapists to supplement those provided by other agencies.

All schools deliver good value for money.

Partnerships pay off for pupils with special educational needs

Portfield Special School has worked with two nearby mainstream secondary schools enabling pupils to access new learning opportunities that would be difficult to provide in Portfield School alone.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.12: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?







The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of
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Section 2: Sector report Independent special schools

In January 2013, there were 32 registered independent special schools in Wales. These schools educate approximately 550 pupils. Many of the schools are small and have fewer than 15 pupils, who mainly come from children's homes linked to the school. The schools cater for a range of needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the pupils attend these schools because they have not managed to cope with larger mainstream settings.

During 2012-2013, four new independent special schools opened. One school that catered for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties closed. Two of the 32 schools have classrooms on two or more sites. During the year, one of these schools opened an additional classroom. In July 2013, nine schools had no pupils. This is because the young people residing in the attached children's homes were attending mainstream schools or alternative educational provision.

In addition to full inspections every six years, Estyn carries out annual monitoring inspections of independent special schools, as the pupils in these schools are particularly vulnerable. This year, we inspected seven independent special schools and carried out annual monitoring visits to thirteen schools.

Follow-up: independent special schools

In all inspections of independent special schools, the inspection team makes a judgement on the extent to which the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. This year, five independent special schools met all the standards. One school failed to meet two out of the seven standards due to shortcomings in the curriculum and its policy for educational visits. Another school only met one of the standards. We shall revisit these two schools as part of the annual monitoring process to make sure that they have made the necessary improvements to maintain their registered status.

Thirteen schools were visited as part of Estyn's annual monitoring process. Many of these schools have made good progress against previous recommendations. However, in around a quarter of these schools, progress has been too slow. Four of the schools do not fully comply with all of the independent school standards.

Four of the schools inspected this year were identified as having sector-leading practice.

Figure 2.13: Numbers of schools in categories of follow-up

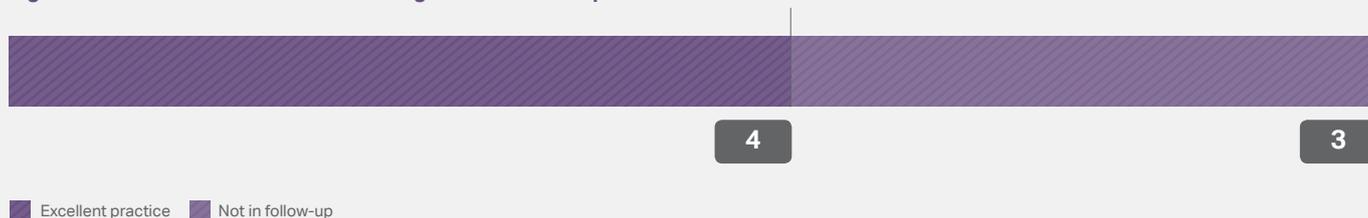
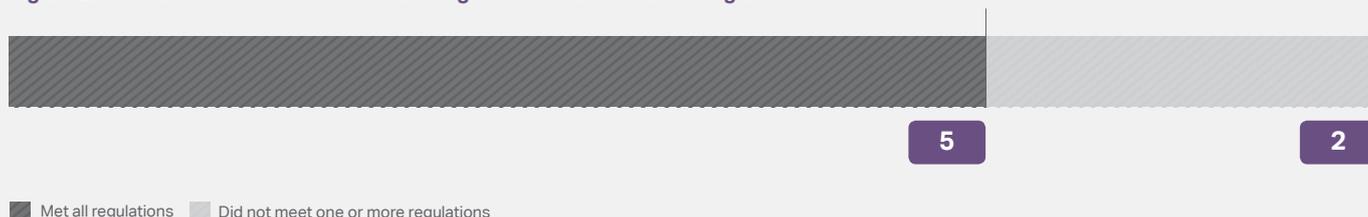


Figure 2.14: Numbers of schools that met regulations / did not meet regulations



Outcomes: independent special schools

Standards

Standards are good or better in five of the seven schools inspected and adequate in the other two. In most of the schools inspected or visited as part of our annual monitoring programme, almost all pupils make good progress in relation to their prior achievement and against individual targets. Many of these pupils had made limited progress prior to starting at the school.

Nearly all pupils make good progress in developing their social and communication skills, in line with their abilities and needs. In one school where standards are excellent, pupils develop the confidence and skills to communicate effectively with staff, peers, visitors and members of the community. Many pupils make good progress with their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. However, not all pupils apply these skills well enough across the curriculum.

In many of the schools, pupils achieve a wide range of qualifications, for example GSCE, Essential Skills Wales, BTEC, City and Guilds and ASDAN. In one of these schools, attainment for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is sector-leading. However, in a minority of schools, pupils are not entered for qualifications that would reflect much of the work that they do.

Wellbeing

In all of the schools, nearly all pupils behave well. Where pupils display challenging behaviour, they learn to manage their feelings and settle down quickly.

In the schools where wellbeing is good or excellent, nearly all pupils attend school regularly. Other pupils who did not engage well in education before starting at their current school show a significant improvement in their attendance and willingness to learn. However, one school does not record absences clearly enough and this means that it is not possible to judge overall levels of attendance. In nearly all of the schools, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy through regular exercise and eating healthy food. They take decisions that affect their lives, for example in choosing the lunch menu and school uniform. There is an active school council in five of the schools. However, in one school, pupils do not have regular opportunities to express their views or influence decisions about school life.

Figure 2.15: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: independent special schools

The quality of learning experiences is good in five of the seven schools inspected. These schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is well matched to the individual needs of the pupils. All of the schools provide a wide range of practical activities that help pupils to gain in confidence and develop valuable life skills. In one school, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of science or their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In another school, the curriculum policy does not give staff a clear direction about what is expected, and there are no schemes of work at key stage 3.

In two of the schools inspected and over a third of the schools visited for annual monitoring, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications.

Teaching is good in five schools and adequate in the other two. Where teaching is good, teachers use a range of strategies and resources to engage pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to support the learning and behaviour needs of pupils. Where there are shortcomings, lessons are not planned well enough to ensure that pupils make enough progress. In a few cases, opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are missed.

Many of the schools have effective systems for recording and tracking the progress that pupils make over time. In a minority of schools, teachers do not use this data enough to inform teachers' planning. In nearly half of the schools visited for annual monitoring, data is not used well enough to track the progress of individual pupils or to help teachers with their planning.

Nearly all of the schools work well with a range of specialists to support the individual needs of pupils. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress.

In six of the schools, care, support and guidance are good or excellent. In one of the two schools where it is excellent, the school works very well with its partners to identify the particular complex needs of individual pupils and to develop appropriate packages of support. In one school, care, support and guidance are unsatisfactory. In this school, staff do not use the information in pupils' statements of special educational need to develop the individual education plans, and arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet requirements.

Creating the culture for achievement

Headlands School is an independent special school that has nurtured the social and emotional skills of the learners, established strong partnerships with local schools and colleges, engaged pupils in discussions about their future aspirations and has developed the range of qualifications available. This has improved the opportunities for pupils to achieve appropriate qualifications.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.16: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: independent special schools

The quality of leadership and management in the seven independent special schools inspected this year varies considerably.

In the five schools where leadership is good or better, leaders and managers have a very clear vision for the school and provide strong and effective strategic direction. In the one school where leadership is unsatisfactory, managers do not focus well enough on improving the quality of education and do not share their vision effectively with all staff.

In all of the schools inspected, governors or proprietors play an active part in the running of the school. In the two schools where leadership is excellent, they monitor the school's performance rigorously. In one school, they do not provide an appropriate level of challenge.

In five of the schools inspected, the process of self-evaluation is well embedded and effectively informs school improvement. Another school has made good progress in establishing a more robust approach to self-evaluation. Five of the seven schools have made good progress in addressing the recommendations from previous inspections and annual monitoring visits. One school does not have formal processes in place for self-evaluation. As a result, managers cannot identify the school's strengths or areas for improvement.

Partnership working is good or excellent in all of the schools inspected, and has a positive impact on pupil outcomes and wellbeing. This includes strong links with local businesses, such as charity shops or garages, which provide valuable opportunities for work experience, as well as close working with a wide range of specialists to support the social and personal needs of the pupils. In one school, where partnership working is excellent, collaboration with a local university provides staff with important opportunities to develop their expertise in relation to specific learning difficulties.

Figure 2.17: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?







The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of
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Section 2: **Sector report** Independent mainstream schools

In January 2013, there were 36 independent mainstream schools in Wales.

This year, we inspected nine independent mainstream schools. Five of these are all age schools catering for pupils across the primary and secondary phases. One is a secondary school, two are primary schools and one is an infant school.

Follow-up: independent mainstream schools

This year, we identified two schools as having excellent practice.

In inspections of independent schools, the inspection team makes a judgement on the extent to which the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. Three of the schools inspected this year met all of the regulations. Where schools failed to meet a very few regulations, this was usually because they did not comply with regulations relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Examples of non-compliance include not having a suitable fire safety risk assessment or up-to-date records of electrical tests.

We shall revisit those schools that did not meet all of these regulations to make sure that they have made the necessary improvements to maintain registration.

This year, we did not carry out any follow-up monitoring inspections as all of the schools inspected in 2011-2012 met all regulations.

Figure 2.18: Numbers of schools in categories of follow-up

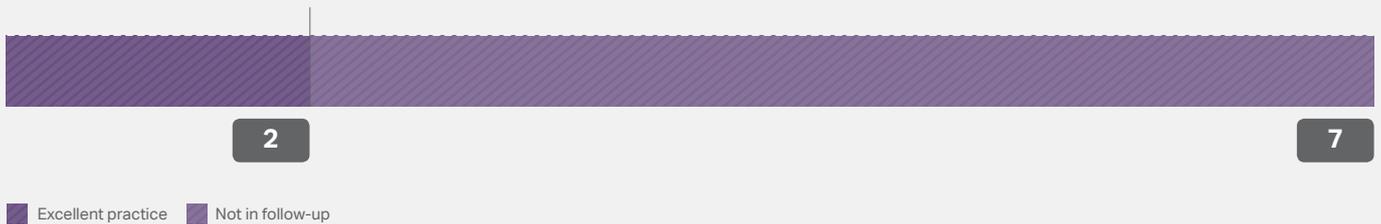
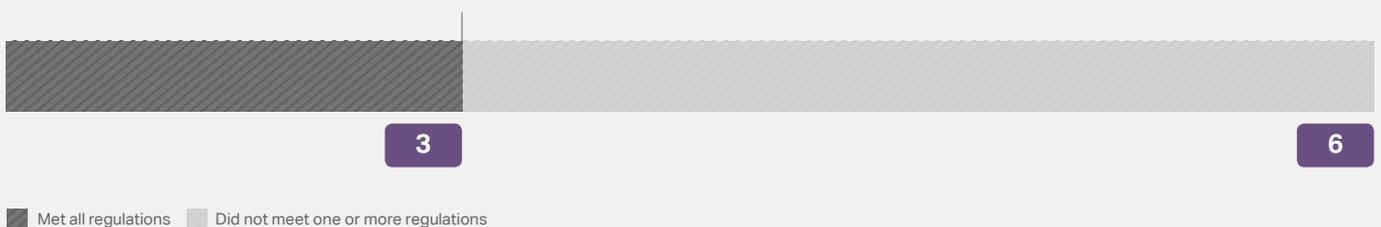


Figure 2.19: Numbers of schools that met regulations / did not meet regulations



Outcomes: independent mainstream schools

Standards

Standards are good in seven of the nine schools inspected and adequate in two schools.

In the seven schools where standards are good, pupils make progress in extending their knowledge and understanding, and developing their subject-related skills. Many pupils apply their earlier learning to new concepts, topics and problems. In a minority of schools, more able pupils do not make enough progress.

In schools where pupils enter external examinations at key stage 4 and post-16, pupils generally gain good results.

In almost all schools, many pupils speak with confidence using a wide range of vocabulary for their age. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read fluently and with understanding. They retrieve information effectively and discuss the meaning of texts thoughtfully. Many pupils in key stages 3 and 4 analyse information from a range of sources well, for example to produce suitably evaluative written accounts and to draw reasoned and balanced conclusions.

In most schools, pupils develop their writing skills well. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils use appropriate sentence structures to communicate their ideas clearly and accurately. However, in the majority of schools inspected, many pupils do not develop their extended writing skills well enough, for example to write at length in a range of genres including creative and persuasive pieces. We referred to similar shortcomings in half of the schools we inspected in last year's annual report.

Wellbeing

In all schools, attendance is good. Most pupils are well motivated and have positive attitudes towards their learning. In a few schools, pupils do not have enough opportunities to be involved in decision-making or to influence the school's work.

Figure 2.20: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: independent mainstream schools

Provision overall is good in four schools inspected and adequate in five schools.

In all schools, the curriculum meets requirements and, in many cases, promotes the school's aims and ethos well. In around half of schools, pupils benefit from a wide range of well-planned learning experiences. In a few schools, the curriculum does not have a suitable balance and does not provide pupils with enough opportunities, for example, to engage in physical and creative activities.

In the majority of schools, there are good arrangements to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy. However, in many schools, opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication skills across the curriculum are not planned well enough. The majority of schools provide a broad range of extra-curricular activities that contributes well to pupils' educational, social and personal development.

Teaching is good overall in four schools and adequate in the others. The common features of consistently good teaching are:

- high expectations and well-planned activities that build on pupils' previous learning, and motivate and challenge pupils of all abilities; and
- clear explanations and effective questioning that encourage pupils to think carefully to solve problems and extend pupils' understanding of particular concepts and topics.

Where teaching has shortcomings, this is because teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils, or plan learning activities that provide suitable challenge, particularly for more able pupils.

Generally, staff give pupils helpful verbal feedback and mark work regularly. In the majority of schools, the quality of marking varies too much and too often pupils do not receive clear advice about how to improve their work.

Most schools promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Many have effective care and support arrangements.

Figure 2.21: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: independent mainstream schools

Leadership and management overall are good in four schools, but no better than adequate in the other five schools.

In four schools where leadership is good, leaders:

- communicate a clear strategic vision and expectations to staff, pupils and parents;
- provide purposeful leadership and direction to all aspects of the school's work;
- ensure that all leaders and managers have clearly-defined roles and responsibilities; and
- support staff in their work and challenge under-performance robustly.

Where leadership is only adequate, leaders do not provide clear direction. They do not ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all staff are clearly defined or ensure appropriate levels of accountability.

In most schools, proprietors have a secure understanding of the school's key priorities and are well informed about performance. In a few cases, proprietors do not hold the school to account well enough regarding the standards and quality it achieves.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements are good in three of the schools inspected and adequate in three others. However, quality improvement is unsatisfactory in three schools.

Where quality improvement is good, this is because leaders analyse performance data rigorously and draw on a wide range of first-hand evidence. These schools identify improvement priorities based on the outcomes of self-evaluation and have improved outcomes and enhanced provision.

Where quality improvement lacks rigour, leaders do not use data robustly or establish systematic arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, there is no shared understanding of what the school needs to do better. Improvement plans do not focus explicitly on standards. They do not set out clearly actions to be taken or indicate how success will be measured.

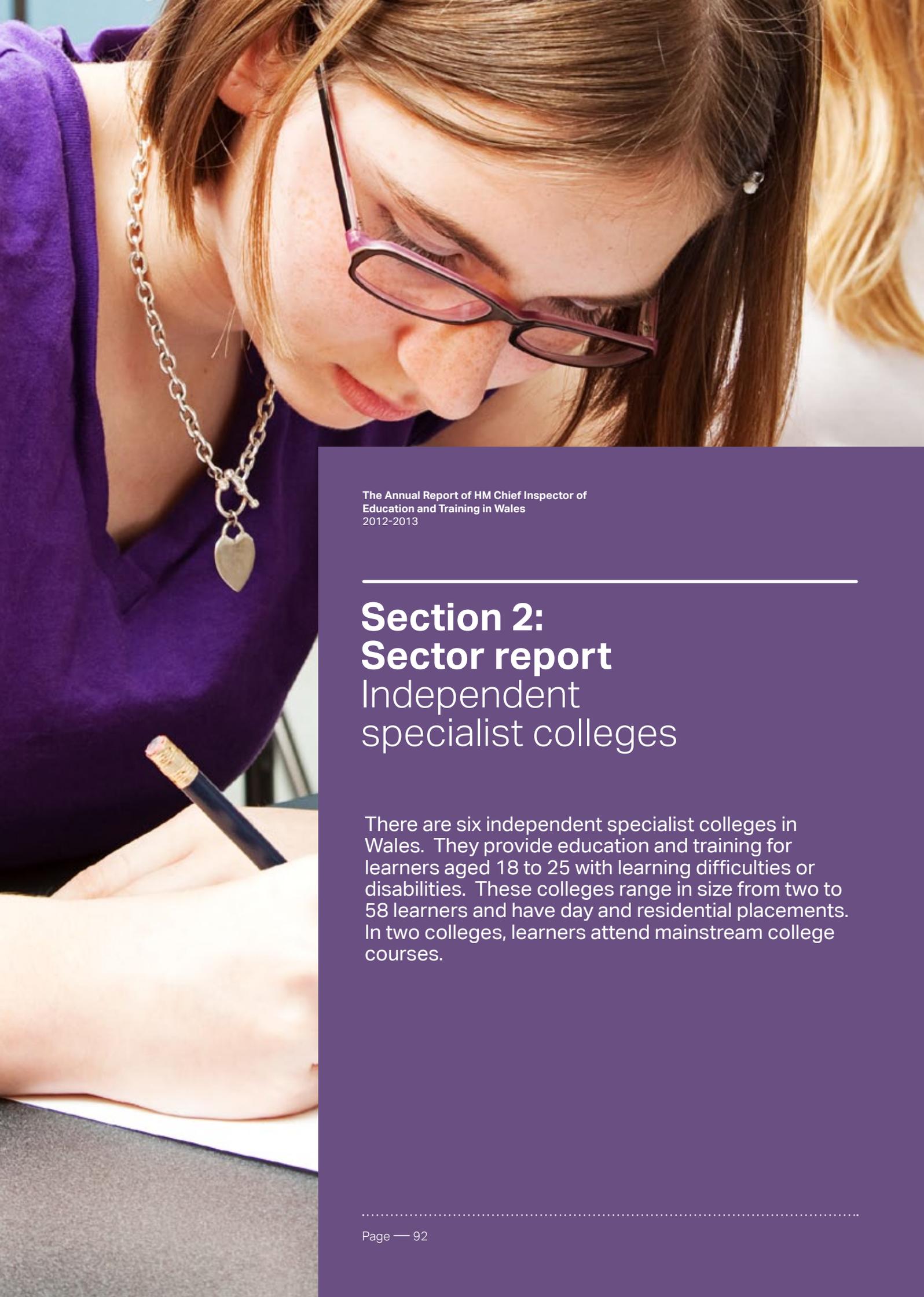
All schools have suitable partnerships, for example with parents and local business, community, sporting and cultural organisations. These links enhance learning experiences, support pupils' personal and social development, and impact positively on pupils' wellbeing.

All schools make effective use of resources and monitor finances carefully. The majority ensure that financial planning relates closely to identified areas for improvement.

Figure 2.22: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?







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Section 2: **Sector report** Independent specialist colleges

There are six independent specialist colleges in Wales. They provide education and training for learners aged 18 to 25 with learning difficulties or disabilities. These colleges range in size from two to 58 learners and have day and residential placements. In two colleges, learners attend mainstream college courses.

Estyn visited and monitored all six colleges this year. There were no full inspections. Inspections will start in 2014. As a result, no colleges were identified as needing follow-up. However, two of the colleges visited were also monitored in 2011-2012. These colleges had made progress against the recommendations from the previous annual monitoring visit.

Particular areas for development identified this year are that independent specialist colleges do not all:

- ensure that literacy, numeracy and communication skills are consistently developed across lessons;
- plan structured programmes of personal and social education, including sex education; or
- focus enough in their improvement planning on outcomes for learners.

Outcomes: independent specialist colleges

Standards

Across the colleges, most learners recognise the progress that they make and grow in confidence. Most improve their literacy and numeracy appropriately. However, learners do not always make enough use of these skills in lessons. Although colleges have recently improved their focus on communication, learners with more complex needs do not always use signs and symbols across all activities. As a result, they do not make as much progress as they should. Most learners gain a range of entry level qualifications and learn about the world of work.

Wellbeing

Learners learn to express their feelings and improve how they manage their behaviour and anxiety. They enjoy a wide range of activities that help them understand how to keep fit and take care of themselves, where this is appropriate to their needs and abilities. Snacks provided by colleges do not always support curriculum work on healthy eating.

A few learners do not attend all sessions during the college day. Most learners have good opportunities to make decisions about college life. However, this is not always the case with learners with more complex needs.

Provision: independent specialist colleges

Colleges provide a broad and balanced curriculum which mostly suits learners' needs. This includes the use of ICT for research or to present work, and in students' vocational work. Learners receive good induction and quickly settle into college life. However, only half of the colleges provide all learners with a planned programme of personal and social education that includes sex education. Instead, teachers deal with issues as and when they arise. As a result, learners do not all learn about important issues that would help them to keep themselves and others safe.

Most teaching is good. Most teachers plan lessons carefully to meet learners' needs. They make sure that the work set is matched to most learners' abilities and holds their interest. However, a few teachers do not make sure that they cover literacy and numeracy in all aspects of learners' work. In particular, they do not all provide small enough steps for learners with more complex needs to make progress, for example by setting short specific targets for eye-movement communication.

Initial and ongoing assessment is thorough. However, teachers do not always make enough use of their rigorous initial assessment of literacy and numeracy to plan work. As a result, it is difficult to measure how much learners improve.

Learners receive good quality support and guidance and a range of therapies, including speech therapy. They work in well-resourced buildings in a climate of mutual respect.

Leadership: independent specialist colleges

Leaders and managers have a clear vision for their college's direction. They work closely with parents and other partners in their local communities to widen and improve provision for learners. One college does valuable work in raising the profile of autistic spectrum disorder at a national level.

Self-evaluation reports are variable in quality. The best reports set clear targets for improvement. However, most reports do not make enough use of data and do not focus clearly enough on improving outcomes for individual and groups of learners. Colleges do not do enough to track learners' destinations over time. This makes it difficult to work out how well the colleges' curricula meet the needs of learners and prepare them for future placements or employment.

Safeguarding procedures are not always rigorous enough. Teachers do not record learners' whereabouts in enough detail. For example, staff records do not always capture when teachers allow learners to choose to work away from other learners in order to remain calm. As a result, these colleges are unable to say exactly where learners are or who is supervising them. One college does not always have a designated child protection officer on site and steps to take following a disclosure are not clear.

One college makes good use of an intranet to track, record and report learners' progress and achievements. However, most colleges do not record learners' progress carefully enough. Although leaders and managers are aware of the importance of the development of literacy and numeracy and communication, they do not ensure that teachers take a systematic approach to developing these skills across the curriculum. Partnership working is improving, and colleges are making much more use of external agencies to widen learners' experiences.



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Section 2: Sector report Pupil referral units

In January 2013, there were 41 pupil referral units (PRUs) in Wales. These PRUs educate approximately 600 pupils in total. They cater for a range of pupils' needs, including mental health issues, young mothers and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many pupils attend these PRUs because they have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. Just under half of the PRUs provide full-time placements for pupils. In the other PRUs, joint work with partners, such as colleges of further education, work experience placements and the youth service, increase opportunities for pupils to carry on their learning.

This year we inspected nine PRUs.



Follow-up: pupil referral units

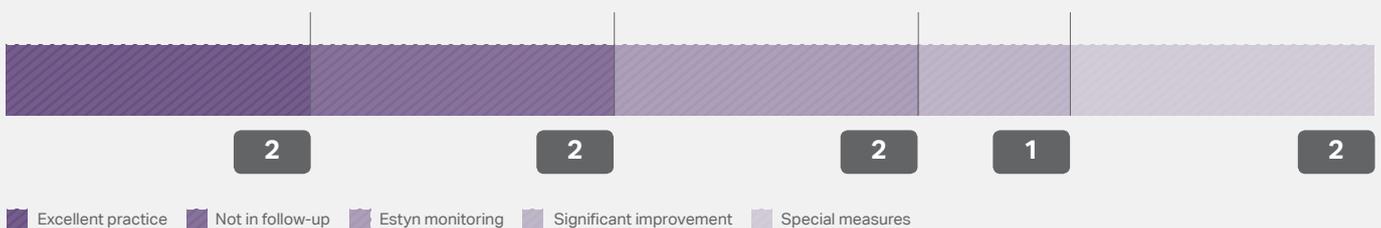
This year, two of the nine PRUs inspected provided excellent practice case studies. These PRUs have a wide range of strategies for care, guidance and support, and excellent partnerships with schools and other agencies, which help to support pupils back to mainstream schools and have a very positive impact on their wellbeing.

Two PRUs require special measures, one is in need of significant improvement, and two require monitoring by Estyn. The poor standard of pupils' achievement is a common theme contributing to these PRUs being placed in categories.

One local authority does not support and challenge its five PRUs to improve. There are significant differences in outcomes, provision and leadership and management between these PRUs.

We monitored six PRUs this year. Of these, four PRUs had made good progress and were removed from follow-up. One PRU had not made enough progress and is in need of significant improvement. One PRU remains in special measures.

Figure 2.23: Numbers of pupil referral units in categories of follow-up



Outcomes: pupil referral units

Standards

Standards, including pupils' wellbeing, are good in four of the nine PRUs, and excellent in one. In these PRUs, pupils make good or better progress against their previous achievements. They take responsibility for their learning, know their personal targets and learn to work more independently. These pupils gain a range of qualifications, including GCSEs. Nearly all of these pupils move back to mainstream schools or go on to further education, training or employment.

In the PRUs with unsatisfactory standards, most pupils do not develop their literacy and numeracy well enough or apply these skills across the curriculum. Pupils do not pay enough attention to their spelling, punctuation and grammar. They do not develop their thinking or problem-solving skills well enough and this limits their progress across all areas of learning.

Wellbeing

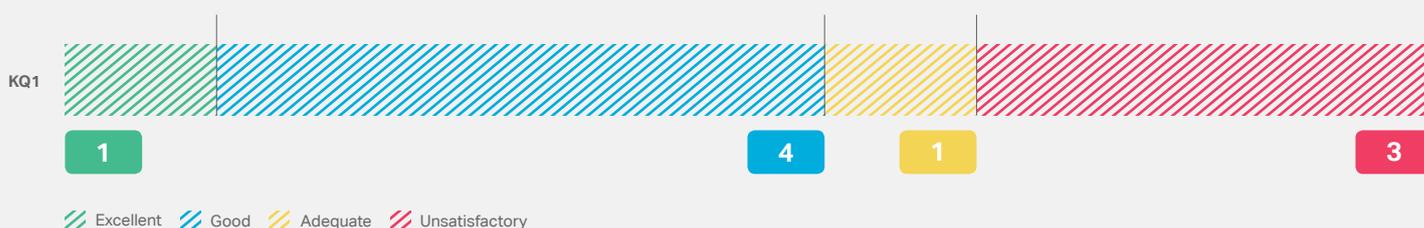
Many pupils learn to express their feelings appropriately and manage their behaviours during their time at a PRU. They learn to listen to others and develop the communication skills they need to relate to, and work well with, others.

In a minority of PRUs, pupils do not always engage in lessons and their poor behaviour, which includes bad language, disturbs other learners. In these PRUs, high rates of exclusions and low attendance rates have a negative impact on pupils' learning. In one PRU, due to the inconsistent management of behaviour, there has been a significant number of serious incidents since September. As a result, a minority of pupils do not feel safe in the PRU.

At one PRU last year, attendance was only around 60%. In a few PRUs, pupils' attendance is lower than it was at their previous placements.

Most pupils benefit from work experience, community activities and further education placements. These help them develop mature attitudes and learn to take more responsibility in preparation for the next stage in their learning. In the PRU where there are not enough work experience placements, pupils do not gain these skills, and a significant number of school leavers did not start or maintain their further training or work placements last year.

Figure 2.24: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: pupil referral units

Provision is good in six out of the nine PRUs. These PRUs provide a broad and balanced curriculum, adapted to meet pupils' individual needs and motivate them to re-engage with education. They also have good links with mainstream schools and other providers and provide effective support to enable a minority of pupils to return to school, particularly as pupils near the end of their placement.

In all PRUs, pupils gain a range of GCSEs or other vocational and life skills qualifications. However, a few PRUs do not enable pupils to take sufficiently challenging qualifications to ensure that they achieve to the best of their ability.

Where provision is no better than adequate, the curriculum does not meet pupils' needs. Expectations are too low, and staff do not always encourage pupils to reflect on their learning or behaviour and understand how they can improve. Teachers do not use individual educational plans well enough to plan and monitor pupils' progress.

In one PRU, a few pupils with special educational needs are taught in isolation from their peers. These pupils are not always expected to act independently or complete their own work. This does not prepare them well enough for moving on to further education or employment.

Most of the effective PRUs provide good support in literacy and numeracy. However, planning does not focus enough on the development of these skills across the curriculum.

Where teaching is good, teachers use a range of resources and teaching methods and carefully match work to pupils' individual needs, abilities and interests. Because of this, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and make good progress. However, in too many lessons, teachers do not set high enough expectations or challenge pupils to achieve to their best. In a few PRUs, assessment information and tracking are poor and it is unclear whether pupils achieve their potential.

Nearly all PRUs provide a caring environment to support pupils' wellbeing. They all offer effective support from a wide range of multi disciplinary agencies. In the most effective PRUs, the nurturing atmosphere and good support from staff help pupils to improve their communication and this has a significant impact on their behaviour and wellbeing.

In only a minority of PRUs do staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively and support them to manage their emotions and behaviours well. In the four PRUs where care, support and guidance are no better than adequate, staff do not consistently follow behaviour policies to support pupils to manage their behaviour effectively. Just over half of the PRUs provide part-time placements for pupils who are extremely vulnerable and challenging. These PRUs have yet to develop strategies to manage the very few pupils with complex needs and the most challenging behaviour.

Helping young people to manage emotions and relationships

North Wales Adolescent Service (NWAS) has developed a skills group for young people with severe and complex mental health issues as a part of the PSE curriculum. This helps young people how to manage their emotions and relationships with others, and to cope with difficult situations without resorting to unhelpful or destructive behaviours. Working in partnership with psychologists and social workers, teachers gain an understanding of the considerations needed for the learners' transition back to mainstream education.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.25: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: pupil referral units

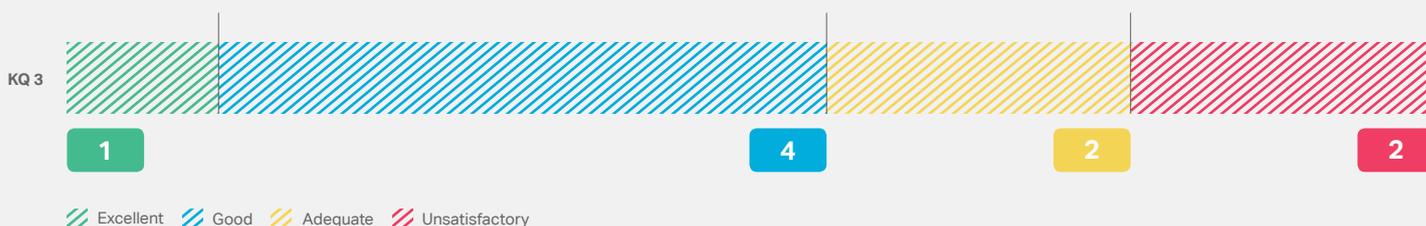
In the five PRUs where leadership and management are good or better, managers have a clear vision and give effective direction to staff. They use data well to understand performance and know what they need to do to improve teaching and pupils' standards and attendance. They have high expectations and communicate them well to staff. However, in these PRUs, management committees have appropriate information and membership to understand the strengths and weaknesses of these PRUs and are beginning to make better use of data to challenge performance. Overall, management committees in all PRUs continue to provide more support than challenge.

In two PRUs, leadership and management are judged as adequate, and in two they are unsatisfactory. In these PRUs, newly appointed leaders and managers have so far failed to improve pupils' performance or rectify poor behaviour. Their self-evaluation processes are not yet regular or analytical enough. Although these PRUs have a range of data on aspects of their performance, they do not yet use this strategically or systematically to measure success and plan for improvement. As a result, management committees do not identify the strengths and weakness of teaching and learning, and do not challenge these PRUs to improve.

Partnerships are good or better in eight PRUs and adequate in one. Where partnerships are excellent, they have a positive effect on pupils' outcomes, especially in terms of emotional wellbeing. Nearly all PRUs work effectively with partners to widen pupils' learning pathways, particularly in vocational areas. However, the success of PRUs in re-integrating pupils into mainstream schools varies too much and too many pupils, especially in key stage 4, do not get opportunities to return to mainstream provision.

Mainstream schools do not always provide PRUs with good quality or timely information about pupils' learning needs. As a result, PRUs waste valuable time after admission in establishing a clear picture of pupils' abilities, needs and prior progress.

Figure 2.26: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



tree

bright

car

word will describe a

scribe

loud

fast

happy

furry

tired

hungry





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Section 2: **Sector report** Settings for children under five

All local authorities in Wales, except Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, fund some education provision for three-year-olds, and very occasionally four-year-olds, in settings as well as in schools. Settings that provide education include day care providers and playgroups. Local authorities do not maintain these settings although they are responsible for ensuring that settings provide good quality early education.

There are approximately 680 settings and the number of providers continues to fall. There are several reasons why settings close or no longer provide education. For example, a leader may retire and no-one else wishes to run the setting, the setting's circumstances change and it requires a new registration with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) or the local authority feels that the setting is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education. Overall, local authorities do not take enough account of non-maintained settings when they are planning places for early years provision

This year, we inspected 110 settings. Around half were small settings with fewer than six three-year-olds attending. In small settings, inspectors report on provision and leadership only, to avoid identifying individual children.

Follow-up: settings for children under five

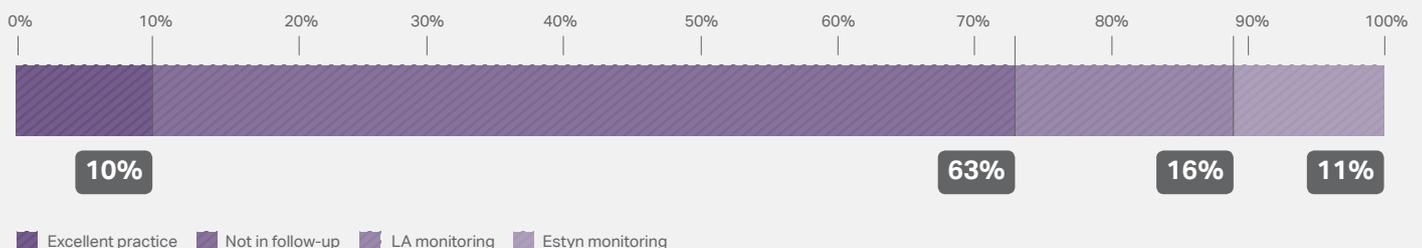
This year, we identified 11 settings as having excellent practice, which is half as many as last year.

The number of settings requiring a follow-up visit from Estyn or monitoring by the local authority is lower than it was last year. Overall, settings placed in follow-up make good progress in addressing the recommendations from inspection and are removed from follow-up 12 to 18 months after their inspection. This year, one setting failed to make enough progress while being monitored and supported by the local authority. Estyn will now monitor the progress made by this setting.

Four settings required focused improvement this year. Inspectors identified these settings as requiring an Estyn follow-up visit from their inspections in 2010-2011. During the follow-up visit, inspectors found that the settings had not made enough progress in addressing concerns from the original inspections. One of these settings no longer provides education.

Last year, we reported that small settings have difficulties in meeting the demands of providing good quality education for young children. This year, around half of small settings⁹ required an Estyn monitoring visit or local authority monitoring. In these settings, there are shortcomings in leadership that affect the quality of curriculum provision and the standard of teaching. Too often, leaders in these settings focus too much on providing care and not enough on their duty to provide a good education.

Figure 2.27: Percentages of settings in categories of follow-up



⁹ Small settings are settings with fewer than six three or four-year-olds attending. We do not report on standards in these settings to avoid identifying individual children in the report.

Outcomes: settings for children under five

Overall, standards and wellbeing are good or better in nearly all settings where we reported on standards.

Excellent standards

In the very few settings where standards are excellent, children concentrate and persevere with activities. They share their ideas and discuss their play confidently with adults, including visitors. In problem-solving activities, they can work independently and can also respond to instructions with understanding, for example when preparing and planting a garden.

Good standards

Where standards are good, most children listen attentively and speak clearly and enthusiastically about the activities they are involved in, particularly in role-play situations. They show an interest in books and their content and listen well at story time. Many children are beginning to recognise their names and initial letter sounds. They use this knowledge to identify where to hang their coats and to show that they are present for the session. Many children can use correct mathematical language, particularly in relation to size and shape, and count to ten reasonably accurately.

Adequate standards

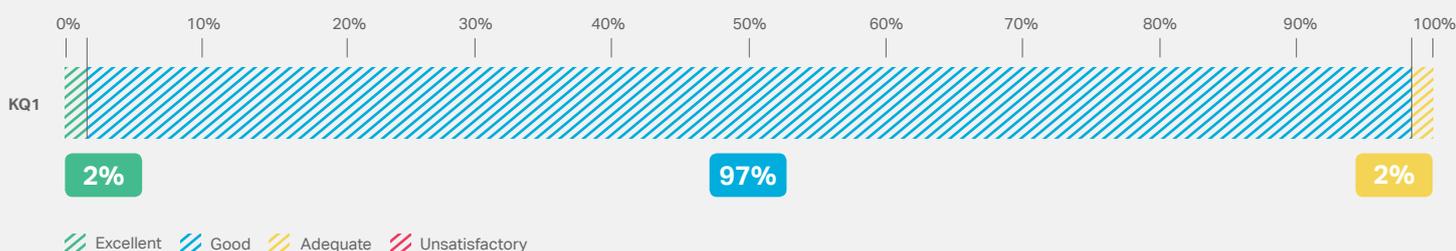
In the very few settings where standards are only adequate, not all children make the expected progress, particularly in their numeracy skills.

Overall, children in English-medium settings make appropriate progress in Welsh. In a few settings, where progress is good, children are beginning to use Welsh outside whole-group sessions without prompts from adults.

Wellbeing

In nearly all settings, children have good attitudes to learning. They follow routines well, are interested in the activities provided and generally behave well. Most children are confident in using and sharing resources and take turns appropriately. In a few settings, children are encouraged to take additional responsibilities, such as checking whether the playground is litter free and if lights are switched off when spaces are not in use. This further develops their independence and confidence.

Figure 2.28: Percentages of judgements awarded to Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: settings for children under five

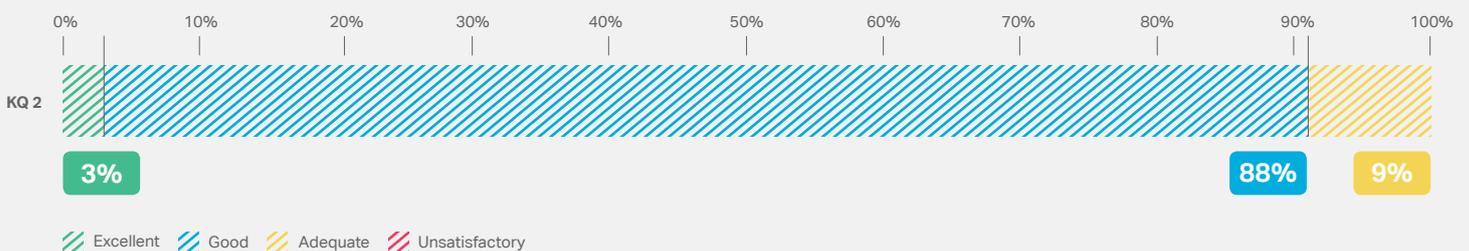
Provision is good or better in around nine-in-ten settings. Many settings plan a broad range of stimulating first-hand experiences. Planning is regularly adapted to follow the interests of the children and there is a stronger emphasis on developing children's skills across all areas of learning. Many settings are making improved use of the outdoor environment to develop children's physical skills, such as balancing and using a range of bicycles and scooters to develop co-ordination. In a few settings, planning does not build on what children can already do and as a result planned activities do not provide an appropriate level of challenge for different groups of children. Many settings use visits and visitors well to add to the experiences provided, such as trips to a local zoo.

Inspectors raised some concerns about children's standards in Welsh language development in several English-medium settings. Where local authorities are responding to our concerns and targeting support for settings, standards are improving.

Most practitioners have a sound understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Phase, which they put into practice by providing opportunities for children to make choices about their learning. They have positive relationships with children and many act as good language role-models. In many settings, the use of key workers to focus on a particular group of children has improved the quality of assessments. However, particularly in smaller settings, practitioners do not always use this information well enough to plan for the next steps in children's learning.

Nearly all settings provide good care, support and guidance. In addition to encouraging children to eat healthily and clean their teeth regularly after snacks, many settings provide parents with useful advice about healthy snacks and lunchboxes. Most settings provide a stimulating learning environment and children feel safe and secure in nearly all settings. A minority of settings continue to struggle to fund ICT resources and this hampers children's progress.

Figure 2.29: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: settings for children under five

Leadership is good or better in almost nine-in-ten settings inspected this year. In the very few instances where leadership is excellent, it is often the commitment and vision of an individual that drive improvement rather than systems and procedures that other settings can easily copy.

In the few settings where leadership is only adequate, leaders are slow in accepting or acting on advice and take up few opportunities to improve practice through training. As a result, learning experiences and teaching are not as good as they should be and leaders give scant regard to improving the quality of education.

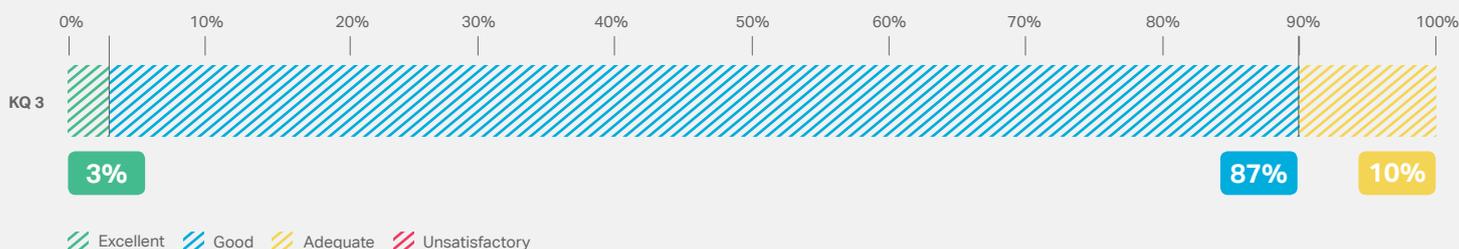
In one-in-five settings, establishing quality assurance procedures continues to challenge leaders. In these settings, leaders do not use first-hand evidence well enough to identify what they need to improve. In a few settings where leadership is good but improving quality

is only adequate, leaders know what they need to do to improve, know how to do it and can demonstrate how changes have benefitted children. However, these leaders are not always confident in recording what they do and as a result planning for improvement is relatively weak. Where local authorities have improved practitioners' skills in using self-evaluation, it has become a key tool for gaining real improvements.

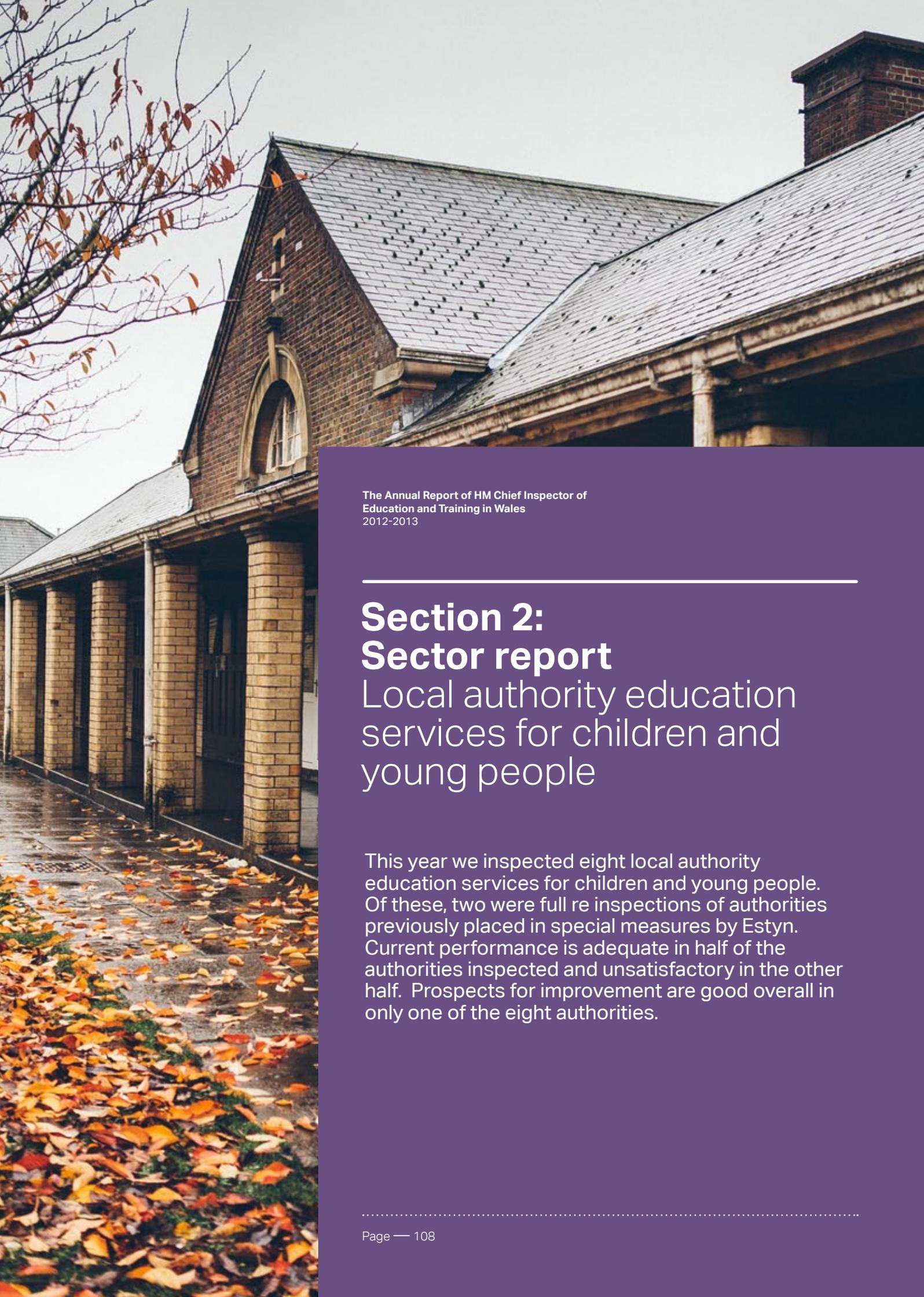
Almost all settings work hard to develop a suitable range of partnerships to improve children's learning and to facilitate transition to the child's next stage of education.

Most settings inspected provide good value for money. With the exception of ICT equipment, they are generally well resourced and use their staff and resources appropriately to support children's learning. In a few settings, space for children to learn outdoors is sometimes limited.

Figure 2.30: Percentages for judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?







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Section 2: Sector report

Local authority education services for children and young people

This year we inspected eight local authority education services for children and young people. Of these, two were full re inspections of authorities previously placed in special measures by Estyn. Current performance is adequate in half of the authorities inspected and unsatisfactory in the other half. Prospects for improvement are good overall in only one of the eight authorities.

Follow-up: local authority education services for children and young people

Seven of the eight local authorities we inspected require follow-up. In these authorities, arrangements for supporting and challenging schools are not robust enough and they have not had enough impact on improving outcomes.

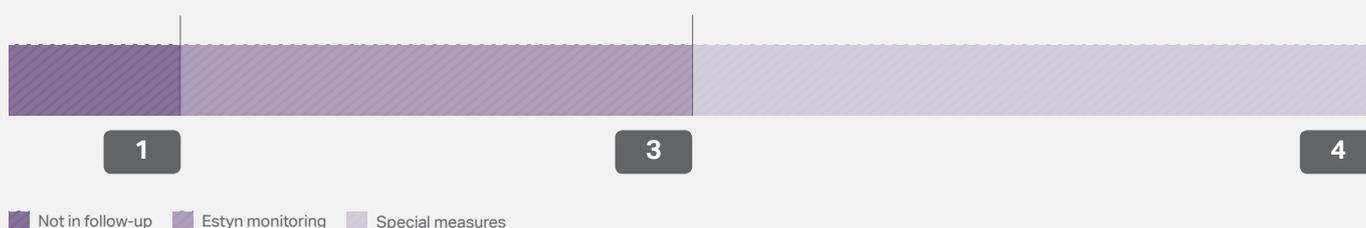
Four authorities require special measures to help them to improve. These authorities have leadership and management that are unsatisfactory. Performance management arrangements are not implemented effectively enough to drive improvement. Elected members do not receive the information they need to hold services and officers to account. In three of these authorities, standards are also unsatisfactory.

Estyn will also monitor and report on progress in three other authorities in which standards, provision and leadership are no better than adequate. The main characteristic of these authorities is that the performance of schools does not compare well enough to that of similar schools across Wales. In addition, the plans of these authorities do not set robust targets that should lead to measurable improvement.

During this year we monitored the progress made in four other authorities as a result of their inspection earlier in the inspection cycle. Two of these authorities have improved enough to be taken out of follow-up. In particular, they have addressed the recommendations in their inspection reports. Elected members and senior officers have taken effective action together to address issues. There is a sharper focus on standards, improved arrangements to support and challenge schools and better service provision overall.

The other two authorities had not made enough progress in addressing shortcomings. As a result, one authority was moved from Estyn monitoring into the category that requires it to make significant improvement and the other authority moved from significant improvement down into special measures. In both authorities, performance in secondary schools has not improved sufficiently and too many schools are identified as causes for concern when they are inspected. The authorities have not made effective use of their full powers to improve these schools quickly enough. Arrangements for self-evaluation are not rigorous or honest enough. Local authority officers are too reliant on Estyn inspections to judge the quality of teaching and learning in their schools rather than having robust arrangements for themselves. Performance management systems and scrutiny arrangements do not hold officers and schools to account effectively enough to bring about the necessary improvement in standards.

Figure 2.31: Numbers of local authorities in categories of follow-up



Outcomes: local authority education services for children and young people

Standards

Standards are good in only one of the authorities we inspected this year. They are adequate in four and unsatisfactory in the remaining three. None of the authorities inspected this year has excellent standards.

In the authority with good standards, schools perform well when compared with similar schools across Wales taking account of deprivation factors. In the last two years, this authority has exceeded all of the Welsh Government benchmarks for performance based on entitlement to free school meals. Also, the gap in performance between boys and girls, and that between pupils entitled to free school meals and other pupils is smaller than the average across Wales. Particular groups of learners, including vulnerable learners and those with additional learning needs; make good progress against their individual targets. Pupils' reading scores have improved steadily in recent years. Fewer pupils leave school without a recognised qualification.

In those authorities where standards are only adequate or unsatisfactory, too many schools are in the bottom 25% for performance when compared to similar schools in Wales. In general, these authorities do not perform well against the Welsh Government benchmarks. Progress between primary and secondary schools is generally below average. In those authorities where performance is unsatisfactory, the authority does not know whether vulnerable groups of pupils perform well enough.

In about half of the authorities inspected this year, too few eligible learners are entered for a full GCSE in Welsh second language at the end of key stage 4 and some are not entered for either full or short course GCSE assessment.

In all of the authorities inspected, learners gain a suitable range of non-formal qualifications in schools and youth service settings.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is adequate in seven of the eight authorities inspected and unsatisfactory in the remaining authority. In many of these authorities learners participate well in a range of activities that contribute towards improving their wellbeing. However, in all of the eight authorities inspected this year, pupils miss too many days from school. In six of the authorities inspected, attendance in either primary or secondary schools does not compare well enough with that of similar schools across Wales. In most authorities, the number of days of learning lost when pupils are excluded from school is too high, even in those authorities where the number of exclusions is decreasing.

The percentage of pupils leaving Year 11 who are not engaged in education, employment or training has reduced in all the authorities inspected last year. However half of the authorities are not reducing the numbers quickly enough.

Figure 2.32: Numbers of local authorities and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision – support for school improvement

School improvement services cover the authority's statutory responsibility for support, monitoring, challenge and intervention in its schools as well as raising standards in priority areas and improving leadership and management.

Of the eight local authorities inspected this year, support for school improvement is adequate in four authorities and unsatisfactory in the other four.

Since September 2012, the Welsh Government has required local authorities to collaborate in four regional consortia to deliver their school improvement services. In three of the authorities inspected this year, the regional consortia have begun to have an impact in improving the consistency of the challenge brought to schools, in improving the use of performance data to identify underperforming schools and in more rigorously categorising schools according to risk. However, in the other authorities inspected, the regional consortia are not yet having an impact on provision for school improvement. One authority has not collaborated well enough with the consortium to improve the delivery of school improvement effectively. In another authority, the consortium had not begun its work at the time of the inspection.

Officers in many of the authorities inspected this year have improved the rigour and consistency of their challenge to schools through the use of a regional consortium framework to classify schools according to risk and plan appropriate interventions. In the majority of authorities, officers use a good range of data analysis to contribute to this categorisation and accurately identify schools needing support. Generally, headteachers understand the category their school is in, although they are less clear about the level and nature of support they will receive as a result. In a minority of schools, however, the categorisation is over-generous and does not challenge the school to improve.

A few local authorities do not make the best use of the regional school improvement service because they retained or commissioned additional officers or consultants whose work is not planned in partnership with the regional service.

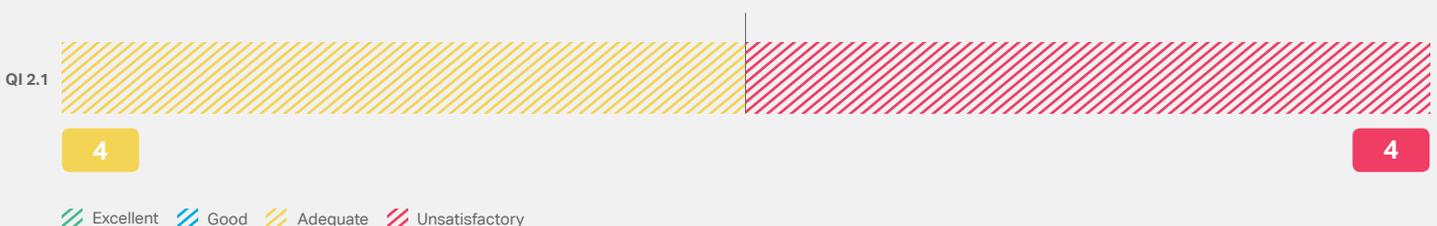
Most authorities have a programme of reviews of their schools, some of which were commissioned from those regional consortia in place at the time of our inspection. However, in a few authorities, the timing of these reviews relies too heavily on preparing schools for Estyn's inspection cycle rather than focusing on those schools that need to improve the most. In many of the authorities inspected this year, too many schools have gone into significant improvement or special measures following an Estyn inspection. In a few of these schools, officers were not aware of the issues that led to the school being placed in follow-up.

In most authorities the work of officers is not managed well enough to ensure that they provide a consistent and robust challenge to schools. The quality of their written reports on schools varies too much. Too many merely describe provision rather than evaluating standards and areas for improvement. Only a very few authorities provide clear evaluations of the quality of leadership and management in schools. As a result, schools are not clear about what it is they need to improve, and a minority do not improve quickly enough. A few local authorities do not make the best use of the regional school improvement service because they retain or commission additional officers or consultants whose work is not planned in partnership with the regional service.

All of the authorities have established initiatives to improve literacy. However, in half of the authorities, support for numeracy is less well developed. Most authorities support intervention programmes for those who need to improve their basic skills, although in half of authorities officers do not track pupils' progress well enough to know whether they continue to improve after they complete these programmes.

The majority of authorities provide good support for new school leaders, although there are fewer training opportunities for middle leaders. Governors have access to an appropriate range of training in all authorities. However, generally, officers do not provide enough specific training for governing bodies of underperforming schools.

Figure 2.33: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is support for school improvement (quality indicator 2.1)?



Provision – support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion

This service area includes meeting statutory obligations for learners with a range of additional learning needs and co-ordinating provision for these learners.

Four authorities have additional learning needs services that are good, two authorities are adequate and two are unsatisfactory.

Where support for additional learning needs is good, authorities produce clear plans to improve provision further. Plans are based on a detailed analysis of strengths and areas for development.

Systems and approaches to track and monitor the progress of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) vary too much between local authorities. Even where the provision for ALN is good, except in one authority the use of data to inform strategic planning is under-developed. As a result, there is a lack of timely support and provision for some groups of pupils with ALN. In the best example, there is good analysis of pupils' progress over time and this is used well in planning for improvement.

In many of the local authorities, the link between ALN services and school improvement varies in effectiveness. School improvement services do not always focus on or challenge schools in relation to outcomes or provision for pupils with additional learning needs. In a few authorities, this has led to confusion as to whether additional learning needs or school improvement services are responsible for the analysis of ALN data. As a result, officers cannot determine clearly enough the impact of services on outcomes for pupils.

In those authorities judged adequate or unsatisfactory, there was no clear evidence of joint working between school improvement and ALN services. The former is currently being delivered at consortia-level while the latter is delivered by local authorities directly.

In many of the local authorities, partnerships with parents are good. They receive effective support and guidance on statutory procedures from officers. The information provided is useful. The majority of local authorities provide training for parents on a range of ALN related issues and a few have established drop-in sessions. Parents report to inspectors that they value these services. In a few authorities, parents are involved in the strategic development of ALN. However, in a few cases, information for parents is difficult to obtain and they are unclear what services they are entitled to have.

Figure 2.34: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is support for additional learning needs (quality indicator 2.2)?



Provision – promoting social inclusion and wellbeing

Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing includes services that promote good attendance, prevent pupils from being excluded from school, support vulnerable groups of learners and provide all young people with access to appropriate guidance and advice. This provision also includes arrangements to keep all learners safe. Of the eight authorities inspected, four are adequate and four unsatisfactory.

Only a minority of local authorities have strategies that impact positively on pupils' attendance in primary and secondary schools. These authorities monitor attendance data regularly and use it well to target interventions appropriately. Officers work well with schools and other partners such as youth workers, health workers, social workers, the police and magistrates to tackle the underlying causes of poor attendance.

The majority of local authorities have appropriate services in place to promote good behaviour and prevent pupils from being excluded from school. However, these arrangements have not been fully effective in reducing the number of days that some pupils miss from school because of exclusion. A few authorities are too slow to introduce strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and to evaluate whether these are working effectively enough.

Youth services in most local authorities contribute well to promoting social inclusion and wellbeing. A broad range of wider youth support services is provided in every authority. However, the overall impact of these services is not evaluated well enough and the authority cannot be sure that provision meets young people's needs. For example, counselling services are known to be good or excellent in most authorities because they are evaluated well. However, work to tackle bullying and inequalities is often poorly evaluated.

In a minority of authorities, strategies to reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEETs) post-16 are not good enough. Only a few local authorities are working well with partners to assess, from an early age, the risk of pupils becoming NEET when they leave school. They provide preventive and intervention services in response to this risk analysis and continue to track young people closely once they finish compulsory schooling.

Safeguarding arrangements do not meet the statutory requirements in half of the local authorities inspected this year and are a cause for concern. Although most local authorities have appropriate policies and procedures, senior managers do not quality assure their implementation well. For example, systems to ensure that all relevant staff, including those in commissioned services, have up-to-date checks are not always effective enough.

Figure 2.35: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is the promotion of social inclusion and wellbeing (quality indicator 2.3)?



Provision – Access and school places

This service area includes admissions to schools, planning school places and access to education for early years and youth support services. Of the eight authorities inspected, three are good and five are adequate.

All local authorities have agreed plans to reduce surplus places in schools. However, in about half of authorities surplus places remain too high, particularly in secondary schools. In a minority of authorities, officers have not analysed well enough the demand for Welsh-medium education, and so have not planned well enough to meet that demand.

In almost all local authorities, the arrangements for assessing the capacity, suitability and sufficiency of school buildings are good, and enable officers to plan for maintenance and new builds well.

Every local authority has an appropriate range of early years, provision although too few authorities take account of non-maintained settings when planning places for three-year-olds. The majority of authorities monitor standards and the quality of provision in early years settings well.

There is a comprehensive range of youth support services in most local authorities to ensure that young people have good access to their entitlements to appropriate education, training, and work experiences, to counselling and advice services, to sports, cultural and social activities and to opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them. However, in a very few authorities officers do not have up-to-date knowledge of these services and cannot be sure that what they provide meets learners' needs.

Figure 2.36: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is provision for access and school places (quality indicator 2.4)?



Leadership and management: local authority education services for children and young people

Four authorities have adequate leadership and management, in which leaders and key elected members have a vision and commitment to education, which means that they understand the challenges they face to improve outcomes for learners. In a minority of authorities, they have been willing to take difficult decisions to address school re-organisation, staffing and financial issues. In these authorities, the impact of scrutiny is improving and elected members have increased the level of challenge to officers and schools in order to raise standards.

In the four authorities where leadership is unsatisfactory, leaders have been too slow to recognise the need for improvement. Arrangements for performance management are not implemented consistently enough and officers and school leaders are not held to account well enough. In a few authorities, lack of capacity in education directorates has made it difficult to address underperformance in schools and local authority services quickly enough.

In a minority of authorities, corporate planning arrangements do not identify opportunities for improvement clearly enough, for example to secure effective safeguarding arrangements, to plan Welsh-medium education and to improve provision for those with additional learning needs. In a half of the authorities inspected, robust improvements in the quality of corporate planning are not reflected in planning at education directorate level. Service plans do not contain sufficient detail and education targets are not sufficiently challenging. As a result, officers do not understand the full impact of their work or set appropriate priorities.

In many authorities, reports to elected members do not contain enough detail and members do not see data on the performance of individual named schools. Consequently, as part of scrutiny, officers and schools are not held to account fully or challenged to aim higher.

The majority of authorities inspected have clear corporate processes for self-evaluation and established mechanisms to monitor performance. However, in many

authorities this process focuses more on recording whether processes and actions have been completed rather than measuring their impact. In only a few authorities do officers evaluate the impact of specific initiatives well enough. Other authorities do not have robust self-evaluation processes in place and a few are too reliant upon external evaluation and challenge from inspectors, regulators and consultants. Many of the self-evaluation reports completed by these authorities before inspection are largely descriptive. The reports have too little evaluation of first-hand evidence and do not identify areas for improvement accurately enough.

In many authorities, performance data for vulnerable groups is not collected frequently enough. As a result officers do not know where best to target interventions and whether the provision is meeting learners' needs appropriately.

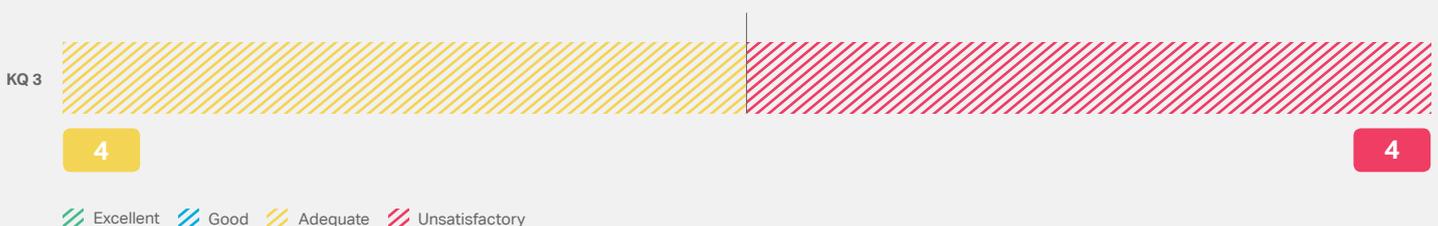
In many authorities, progress in addressing important recommendations from previous inspections has been too slow. These include issues relating to improving outcomes for learners as well as safeguarding.

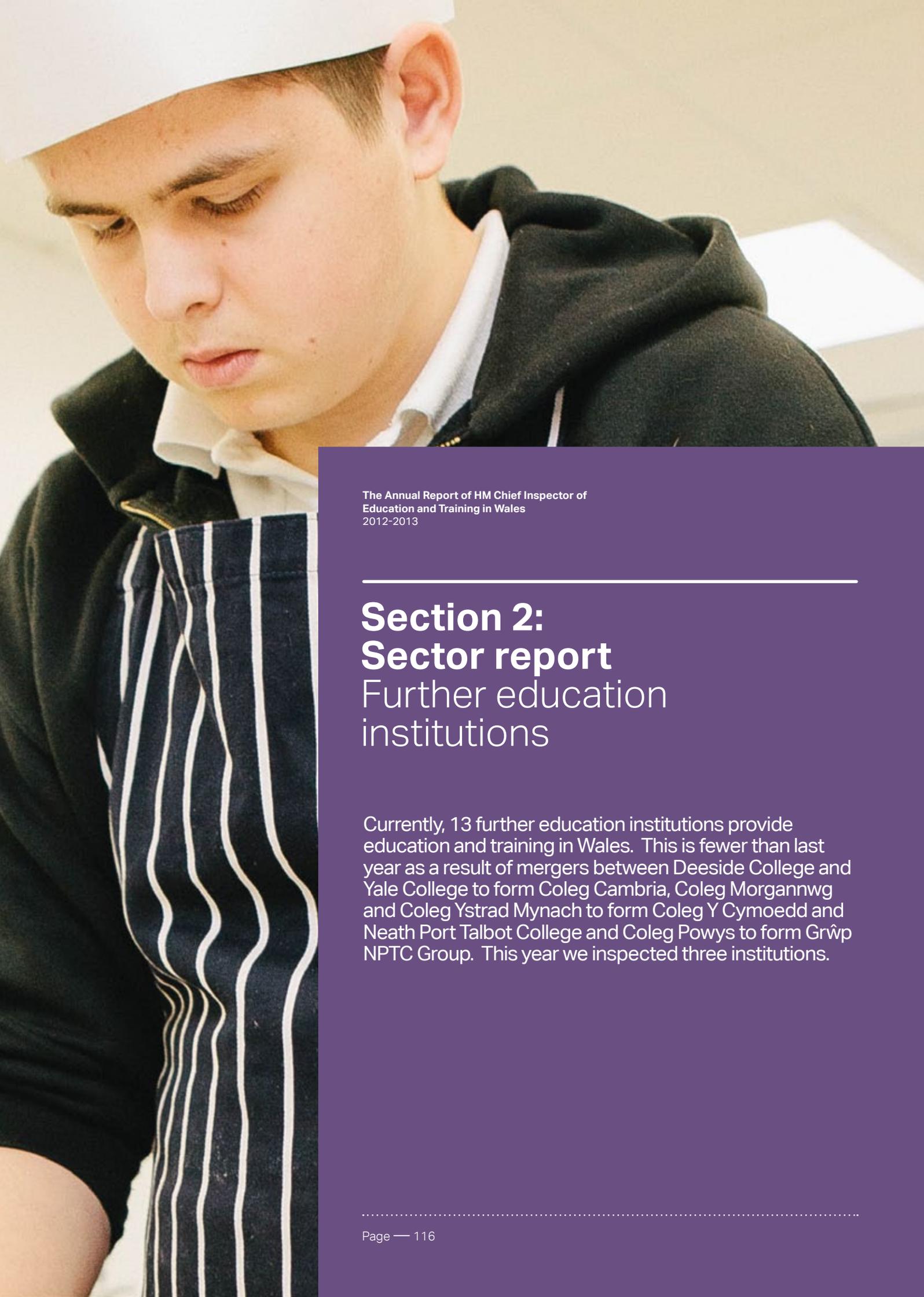
Partnership working is good in two of the authorities inspected this year and adequate in the remaining six. Where it is good, a wide range of appropriate partners work together well to improve standards and opportunities for learners and their families, particularly for vulnerable families. Officers use management information systems well to evaluate the effectiveness of this support.

Where provision is only adequate, the authority does not use key strategic partnerships well enough to achieve corporate priorities. Partner agencies do not know how they can best contribute to improving standards. Standards in education are not reported routinely to the local service board or to the children and young people's partnership.

Many authorities have good systems for financial planning. Most authorities have improved their budget monitoring and challenge schools appropriately to reduce deficits and surpluses. However, a minority of authorities cannot demonstrate how effectively and efficiently funding is used to meet the needs of all learners.

Figure 2.37: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?





The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of
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Section 2: Sector report Further education institutions

Currently, 13 further education institutions provide education and training in Wales. This is fewer than last year as a result of mergers between Deeside College and Yale College to form Coleg Cambria, Coleg Morgannwg and Coleg Ystrad Mynach to form Coleg Y Cymoedd and Neath Port Talbot College and Coleg Powys to form Grŵp NPTC Group. This year we inspected three institutions.

In 2012-2013, 47,435 full-time learners were undertaking education or training at institutions. This compares with 45,470 in 2011-2012. In the same period, 109,110 part-time learners attended programmes, a decrease of 7.3% when compared with 117,755 in the previous year. This proportion is very similar to that in the previous year. Similar numbers of males and females enrol on full-time courses but 18% more females enrol on part-time courses than males.¹⁰

Follow-up: further education institutions

Two providers were identified as having excellent practice. Outstanding partnership arrangements that improve outcomes for learners are a common feature in these providers.

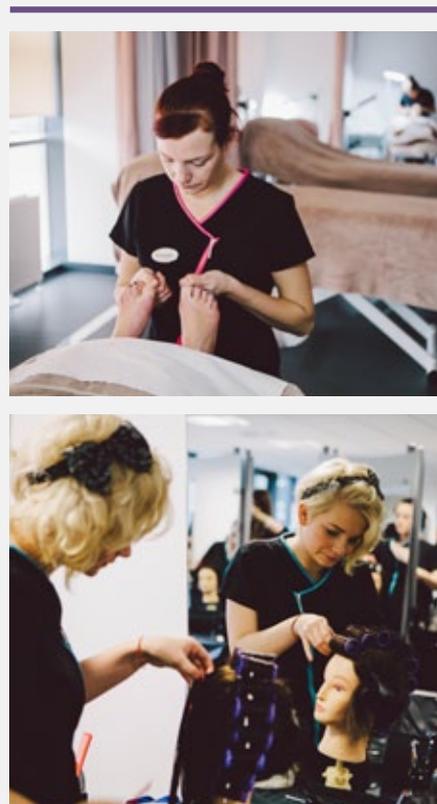
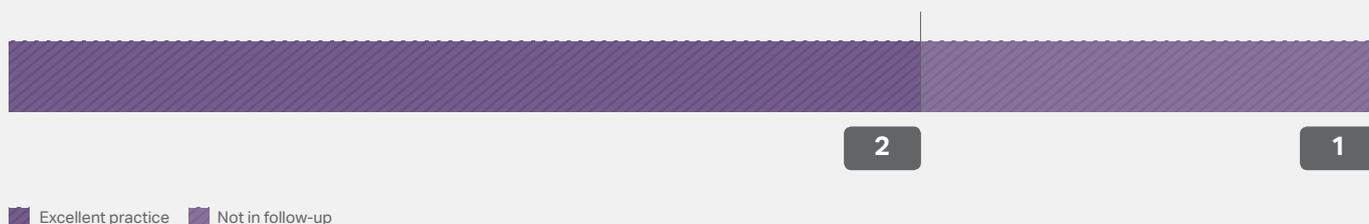


Figure 2.38: Numbers of providers in categories of follow-up



¹⁰ SDR 207/2013 - Further education, work-based learning and community learning in Wales, 2012/13 (provisional figures), Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/further-education-work-based-learning-community-learning/?lang=en>

Outcomes: further education institutions

Standards

The majority of learners enrol on courses at levels 1 or 2. The highest numbers of enrolments are in information and communication technology and health, public services and care. The rates at which learners remain on programme and achieve their qualifications have increased over the past few years. In all institutions the rates at which learners attain the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification are good. The learning areas in which learners achieve best include hospitality and catering and retail and customer service.

Standards are good in two of the institutions inspected and adequate in one. In institutions where standards are good, the rates at which learners complete and attain their qualifications are above those of other institutions. These institutions have demonstrated a trend of improvement in standards in many learning areas over the last three years. Even in the third institution, judged as having adequate standards, success rates show a trend of recent improvement. In all of the institutions inspected, many learners make good progress towards completing their programmes.

Overall, the rate at which learners achieve Essential Skills Wales (ESW) qualifications is good. In two institutions, learners develop their literacy skills well during their programme. However, in the institution judged to be adequate too few learners develop spelling, punctuation and grammar skills throughout their course to the expected standard.

Wellbeing

In all institutions, learners make good or adequate progress in developing their knowledge and practical competence in learning areas. Many learners participate and contribute well in class and workshops.

Standards of wellbeing are good in all three institutions. Learners feel safe and well supported by teachers and other staff. They speak positively about the progress they are making. Most are enthusiastic and motivated to complete their programme and progress to the next level. The majority of full-time learners participate well in a wide range of additional activities, including clubs, charity events and sport. In all three institutions, behaviour in classes, workshops and around the campus is very good.

Figure 2.39: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: further education institutions

Provision is good in two and adequate in one institution. All of the institutions inspected deliver a comprehensive range of academic and vocational programmes that, to varying degrees, meet the needs of learners, employers and the wider community, including the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and a wide range of A level subjects. However, labour market information (LMI) is not always used effectively to match programmes to employment opportunities and industry needs. All three institutions deliver programmes that provide good opportunities for learners to progress to the next level. There have been some improvements in promoting the use of the Welsh language, and an increase in bilingual provision. Each institution provides good opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge and understanding of education for sustainable development and global citizenship. In most programmes education for sustainable development and global citizenship is delivered together with the main subject, often using learning area specific case studies. At all three institutions, teachers generally integrate essential skills well into programmes.

Relationships between teachers and learners are good. Teachers know their learner well and generally give them good levels of personal support. Teachers have good up-to-date subject knowledge and vocational experience. They use this experience to help learners to develop their knowledge and vocational skills. However, they do not always challenge learners to develop higher-level practical skills and knowledge. Learners generally progress to higher-level qualifications where appropriate.

Institutions carry out initial assessments of most learners at the start of their programme, to identify their levels of literacy and numeracy and to identify individual support needs. In many cases, learners get appropriate support that enables them to improve their literacy and numeracy and achieve their qualifications.

Teaching is good in two institutions and adequate in the other. Where teaching is judged to be good, this is because teachers plan sessions well and use a comprehensive range of strategies to engage learners. Teachers deliver these sessions at a good pace and engage and challenge learners using a wide range of activities. Literacy improvement strategies are used well to help learners improve their skills. However, teachers do not apply these strategies consistently and there is too little excellence in the quality of teaching in the three institutions.

Where teaching has shortcomings, this is because the pace of sessions is often too slow, learners sit passively for too long and the techniques for questioning and interacting with learners are limited.

All institutions have good arrangements for the care, support and guidance of learners. They promote the benefits of health and wellbeing to learners well. Nearly all learners demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of what support services are available to them. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are appropriate.

Accommodation for learners to use for work and to socialise is good and sometimes excellent. Most classrooms and practical workshops are well resourced and have appropriate ICT equipment. In the three institutions, teachers and learners work within a welcoming environment with a supportive and inclusive ethos.

Figure 2.40: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: further education institutions

Leadership and management are good in all three institutions. Senior managers work well together to set and establish clear strategic priorities and targets. Their roles and responsibilities are clear and understood by managers at all levels. Senior managers have set clear priorities to improve teaching and learning, which are reflected in the improving trend at which learners achieve their qualifications. Communication between managers and staff at all levels is generally good. However, managers do not do enough to help teachers achieve excellence in their teaching skills.

Arrangements for quality improvement are good in two institutions and adequate in the other. The better institutions make good use of national comparator data to benchmark their performance against that of other institutions. They have comprehensive arrangements for self-assessing their performance which are on-going and well developed, and feed into strategic planning. Managers make effective use of a range of data to analyse learner outcomes. They use this information well to inform planning to set targets for improvement. Staff undertake a wide range of

continual professional development (CPD) activities, including maintaining relevant and recent experience of the workplace. These activities give priority to improving teaching and learning. Yet, in spite of its high priority, the quality of teaching and learning across learning areas has not improved significantly.

Governors in all three institutions have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They bring a wide range of diverse skills and experience and support the principals and senior management teams well. However, in one institution, governors do not provide enough challenge at course level, particularly where courses are underperforming.

Partnership working is excellent in two institutions and good in the third. Partnerships have been developed with local authorities, schools, employers and the wider community, particularly in relation to 14-19 learning networks, so that learners can access the widest and most appropriate range of courses.

Resource management is good in all three institutions, with finance, staff, and accommodation and learning resources used well to make sure that learners access the resources they need to improve and complete their courses.

Figure 2.41: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

KQ 3



3

Excellent Good Adequate Unsatisfactory





Section 2: Sector report Work-based learning

In 2012-2013, there were 24 lead contractors in work-based learning (WBL). There were 61,120 learners undertaking work-based learning programmes, an increase of 14% over the previous year. Of these learners, 18,705 were undertaking apprenticeships, 23,355 foundation apprenticeships, 2,470 higher apprenticeships, 8,180 traineeships, and 5,030 steps to employment. There were 3,380 learners undertaking other programmes.¹¹

This year, we inspected five work-based learning providers.

Follow-up: work-based learning

Two providers require follow-up activity. One provider will be re-inspected and one provider will have its progress reviewed by Estyn approximately 18 months after the date of its inspection.

The shortcomings contributing to the need for follow-up include poor outcomes, inconsistent quality of teaching and assessment, inconsistent quality systems and poor monitoring of consortia members and sub-contractors.

This year, we asked one provider to provide an excellent practice case study on how they have achieved consistently high success rates, a strong focus on continuous quality improvement and clear and effective leadership supported by excellent communications across all of its own provision, partners and stakeholders.

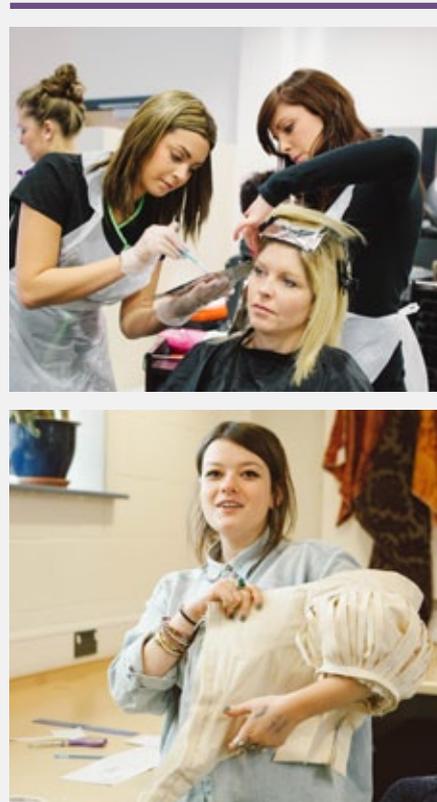


Figure 2.42: Numbers of providers in categories of follow-up



¹¹ SDR 207/2013 - Further education, work-based learning and community learning in Wales, 2012/13 (provisional figures), Welsh Government. <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/further-education-work-based-learning-community-learning/?lang=en>

Outcomes: work-based learning

Standards

Overall, performance was judged to be excellent in one provider, good in one provider, adequate in two and unsatisfactory in one provider.

Overall, the greatest shortcomings remain in the management of sub-contractors and in the implementation of systems to assure quality.

Latest published statistics on learner outcomes at WBL providers include data for Wales for the period 2011-2012. WBL framework success rates were 86% and 84% in apprenticeship and foundation apprenticeship programmes respectively.

At a sector level, the success rate for apprenticeships was higher than for foundation apprenticeships. All subject areas exceeded the Welsh Government contractual requirement of 70% framework success.

Overall, the best performing areas were education and training; business, administration and law; engineering and manufacturing technologies; and retailing and customer service.

An analysis of learner destination, during the three month period following the end of a traineeship or steps to employment programme, shows that 63% of leavers from traineeship programmes had a positive progression to employment, including self-employment or voluntary work, or learning at a higher level, and 50% of leavers from steps to employment programmes had a positive progression.

Standards are adequate in two providers, good in one and unsatisfactory in one. One specialist provider has excellent standards due to a full-framework success rate for learners of 100%.

In the two providers judged to be excellent or good, learners achieve high completion rates of qualification frameworks within their designated number of training weeks, and achieve high levels of key and basic skills. More able learners develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills at appropriately high levels.

Where standards are only adequate or unsatisfactory, learners do not complete their qualification frameworks within agreed timescales. Too many learners do not develop or improve their literacy or numeracy skills well enough during their training, or develop their writing skills effectively.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is excellent in two providers and good in three. Attendance levels of learners are good and they participate well in training sessions and in the workplace. Learners have positive attitudes to healthy living, enjoy their training and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.

In providers where wellbeing is only adequate or unsatisfactory, attendance is often poor. In these cases, many learners have a negative attitude to their training and do not participate fully in their training sessions.

Working together to improve wellbeing for work-based learning

Vocational Skills Partnership has created a simple website with discussion and guidance so that learners can now gain the knowledge and understanding they need to manage their own wellbeing.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.43: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: work-based learning

Inspectors judged provision to be excellent in two providers, good in one provider and adequate in two providers.

Excellent or good providers deliver an appropriate range of training programmes at levels that provide good opportunities for learners to progress to higher levels of training. These providers have a strong emphasis on developing learners' skills and promote the development of the Welsh language and education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

In the providers that are good or better, teachers and trainers have high expectations. They challenge and motivate learners, offer a variety of stimulating activities and use questioning effectively to probe and extend learners' knowledge and skills. Learners are encouraged to develop independent learning skills through voluntary work, community projects and additional desk-based research. Appropriate assessment procedures capture achievement and test the level of understanding of learners. Learners receive regular formal and informal feedback on their performance and assessment activities that helps them to improve their work successfully.

Providers that are only adequate or unsatisfactory do not provide enough breadth in their programmes to meet learners' needs fully and do not develop their literacy and numeracy skills well enough. Providers do not develop the theoretical and practical skills of learners well enough and do not provide systematic help to improve learners' basic and essential skills. More able learners are not provided with opportunities to develop higher-level skills. Too often, the quality and consistency of assessment and feedback are poor.

Many providers do not analyse learners' Welsh language needs well enough and not all providers encourage Welsh-speaking learners to undertake training and assessment in Welsh. Many providers do not provide enough opportunities for apprentices to develop their knowledge of the culture and historical characteristics of Wales.

The world is their Oyster

In ISA Training, the Oyster Strategy has created a programme for skills development to bridge the gap for learners between the skills required for level 2 and level 3 programmes. This has enabled learners to acquire the necessary maturity to complete an advanced apprenticeship successfully.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.44: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: work-based learning

The quality of leadership and management varies widely. Two providers are excellent, one provider is good, one provider is adequate and one is unsatisfactory.

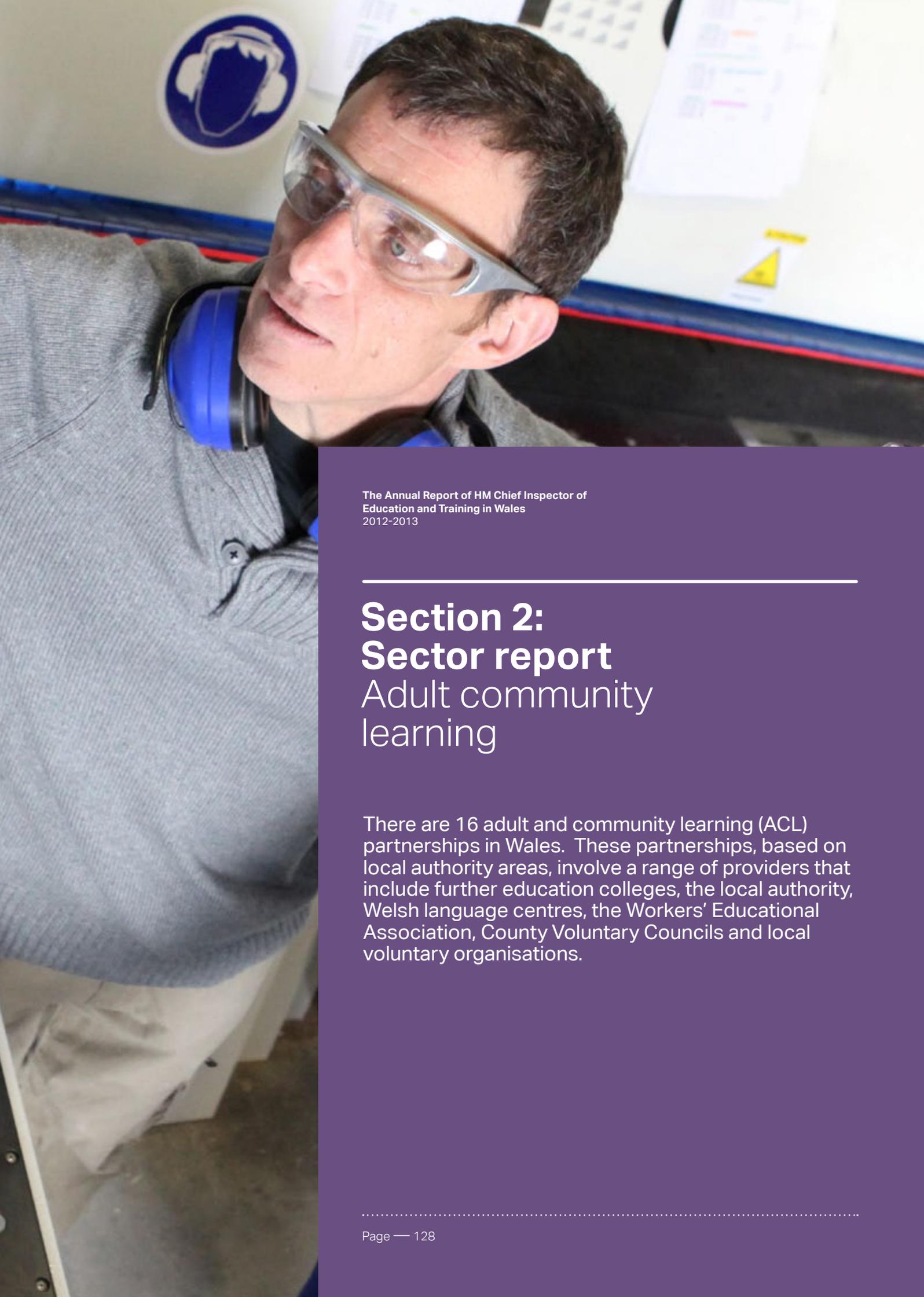
In the two providers where leadership is excellent, there is clear and strategic leadership that sets challenging objectives and targets for the organisation. Leaders use a comprehensive range of quality assurance procedures and management information systems to monitor all aspects of their own, their partners' and sub-contractors' performance, as currently there is no national collection and reporting of data on sub-contractor performance. Self-assessment forms an integral part of the providers' strategic planning, including the Quality Development Plan. This planning includes all partners and stakeholders and clearly identifies strengths and shortcomings and the remedial actions required to secure improvement. Providers have productive partnership working at both strategic and operational levels, which impacts positively on learners' standards. The roles and responsibilities of managers and staff are clear and well understood. Managers use data robustly as part of performance management to monitor and challenge staff. The underperformance of staff is addressed well, using staff development programmes as appropriate.

Providers where leadership and management are only adequate or unsatisfactory have not drawn up clear strategies for the organisation, and do not communicate aims and objectives clearly. Self-assessment does not accurately identify shortcomings and actions to address them nor does it include all partners and stakeholders. Systems to assure the quality of training and assessment are often underdeveloped, with lead providers and their sub-contractors not always working well enough together to improve standards for learners. Providers judged as adequate or unsatisfactory do not have robust systems for evaluating and monitoring all aspects of their sub-contractors' performance. Performance management systems are also not rigorous enough and staff development opportunities are limited.

Figure 2.45: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?







The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of
Education and Training in Wales
2012-2013

Section 2: **Sector report** Adult community learning

There are 16 adult and community learning (ACL) partnerships in Wales. These partnerships, based on local authority areas, involve a range of providers that include further education colleges, the local authority, Welsh language centres, the Workers' Educational Association, County Voluntary Councils and local voluntary organisations.

Three further education institutions also provide adult community learning. These are the Workers' Educational Association South Wales, Coleg Harlech Workers' Educational Association North Wales and the YMCA Community College Cymru.

There are three main types of delivery of adult community learning. Further education institutions are the main providers and directly deliver over half of all ACL provision in Wales. They deliver a further 23% via franchise arrangements with 11 local authorities. In addition, 14 local authorities directly deliver a further 22% of provision.

We inspected three adult community learning partnerships this year, in Neath Port Talbot, Cardiff and in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Follow-up: adult community learning

All of the adult community learning partnerships inspected this year require monitoring as current performance is adequate or unsatisfactory.

During the year, we also carried out monitoring visits to three ACL partnerships where performance was judged to be either adequate or unsatisfactory. Overall, all these partnerships have shown a good capacity to improve and have made good progress in addressing the recommendations from inspection. They have improved the standards achieved by learners, the quality of provision and their leadership and management. In one partnership, senior strategic managers have worked well to revise arrangements for resourcing the partnership to sustain provision and quality. In another, the partnership has devised a set of standards for quality and safeguarding and a commissioning framework to improve provision for adults. The commissioning framework sets

out eligibility criteria for providers to bid for funding from the partnership. This helps the partnership to identify the most appropriate providers to deliver specific aspects of provision, based on the needs of adult learners. This work is amongst the best in the sector. The third partnership is working well to promote and improve the use of Welsh as a medium for teaching and learning.

Senior managers in all three partnerships we monitored this year have shown good leadership to help their respective partnerships implement recommendations from previous inspections. In all cases, they have worked well to provide clear direction and improve their focus on priority areas of work. They have worked together well to use resources more effectively and have improved the management of their partnership's work.

Figure 2.46: Numbers of providers in categories of follow-up



Outcomes: adult community learning

Standards

Welsh Government statistics show that ACL providers have improved success rates for learners from 2009 to 2012. Local authorities have improved success rates by nine percentage points to 74%. Overall, further education institutions have improved success rates on their franchised programmes by five percentage points. However, the success rate has remained at 76% in the last two years. The overall success rate for further education institution directly delivered provision is the highest in the sector at 86%. However, this decreased by one percentage point in the two years for which comparable data has been available.

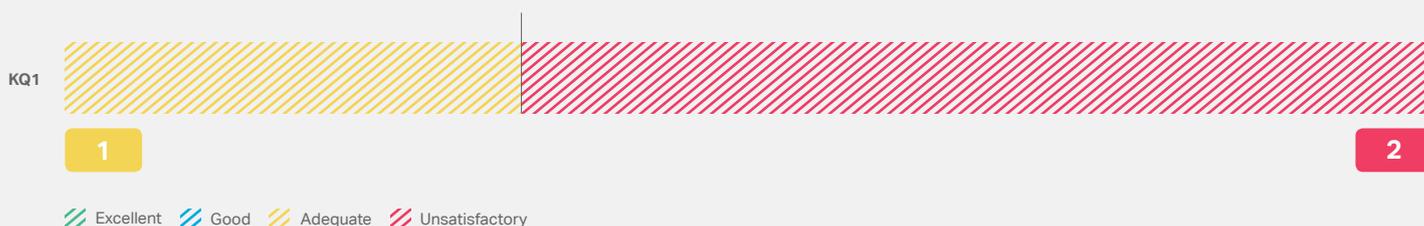
Standards are adequate in one partnership we inspected this year but were unsatisfactory in the other two.

In all three areas, too many learners do not successfully complete their courses and many learners make slow progress. Too many learners stay on the same course at the same level for too long. These learners do not develop the skills to carry on their learning without the support of their teacher well enough. In all three areas, learners do not make good use of individual learning plans to set themselves learning objectives or record their progress. They do not understand the importance of planning their learning and of reviewing what they have learnt in order to measure their progress. In all three areas, learners do not develop their understanding of Welsh culture well enough.

Wellbeing

Learners' wellbeing is good in two partnerships and adequate in the third. Where wellbeing is good, many learners are well motivated and use their knowledge and skills to take part in community activities. For example, learners lead reading and sporting clubs for children or use their cookery skills to provide catering for community events. In most cases, learners have improved their understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. In a few cases, learners have successfully formed independent clubs to extend and improve their learning.

Figure 2.47: Numbers of providers and judgements for
Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision: adult community learning

Provision is adequate in one partnership and unsatisfactory in the other two.

Where the provision was adequate the partnership's curriculum meets the needs of most learners and the community well. The partnership focuses half of its provision to help learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, health and employment prospects.

However, in the other two partnerships, the curriculum is a poor match to the needs of the community and national priorities as these partnerships have not carried out a systematic analysis of learners' needs. Neither of these partnerships have enough provision to help adults improve their basic skills.

In all three areas inspected this year, partnerships do not set out in strategic plans as to how they intend to improve learners' standards of literacy and numeracy in all subjects.

The quality of teaching is adequate in all three partnerships. The majority of teachers apply their subject knowledge well to plan stimulating lessons. These teachers make sure that learning maintains learners' interest. They use a wide range of teaching methods and activities that challenge learners and they use pair and group work well to help learners to gain new insights and understanding. In a minority of cases, tutors do not plan lessons well enough and use a limited range of teaching methods. Overall, teachers do not help learners to make good use of individual learning plans to help them understand the progress they are making.

None of the partnerships identifies the additional learning needs of adults well enough. As a result, learners do not always get the support they need to make progress. Neither do partnerships monitor how well the support that they offer helps learners to make progress. This means that they do not know whether the support is effective or not.

Two partnerships do not provide equality of access to the curriculum for all learners: in particular they do not recruit enough learners from disadvantaged areas, ethnic minority communities, or those aged 19 to 60. These learners would benefit from courses that would help them progress in their education and employment, as well as contributing to their wellbeing.

Figure 2.48: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management: adult community learning

The quality of leadership and management is adequate in one partnership and unsatisfactory in the other two.

Overall, senior managers do not provide clear leadership to the partnerships. Where leadership and management is unsatisfactory, partnership managers do not plan strategically enough. They do not pay enough attention to tackling national priorities and community needs. They do not focus well enough on identifying and recruiting those groups of learners that constitute national policy priorities or those learners who most need adult learning because their initial education experience did not equip them well for further learning or employment. In none of the partnerships do managers pay enough attention to the standards achieved by learners.

Arrangements for improving performance are unsatisfactory in all three partnerships. Self-assessment is not robust enough to identify strengths or areas for improvement. As a result, managers do not have a good understanding of their partnership's current performance on which to plan improvements for the future. Improvement plans are poor, with too few measurable targets, uncertain timescales for improvement, and ineffective arrangements for measuring how well the partnerships are improving. Systems for improving teaching are not rigorous enough to help all teachers improve their work.

Partnership work in one partnership is good. Partners work well together to organise curriculum and provision. This partnership works well with a wide range of local organisations to arrange courses, recruit learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and help learners to overcome barriers to learning, such as poor health or low levels of skills and qualifications. However, partnership work is unsatisfactory in the other two. Strategic managers do not set a clear direction for these partnerships. As a result, partners do not work well enough together to plan courses, recruit learners and tackle priority areas of work.

One partnership works well to gain funding from a variety of sources to carry out its work and allocate finance to its priorities. In the other two, managers do not have a good understanding of the resources that are available to deliver adult learning and this means that they do always match resources to priorities well enough.

Figure 2.49: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?





Section 2: Sector report

Learning in the Justice sector

This year we inspected the learning and skills in all four prisons in Wales. The inspections were led by HMI Prisons (HMIP), using their standards for inspection, termed 'Expectations'. The inspection reports are published on the HMIP website <http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmi-prisons>.

Prison populations fluctuate throughout the year. Prisoners can attend education full time or part-time. At the time of the inspections, prisons in Wales had a population of 2,916 with around 678 full time education places. This figure represents 23% of the prison population. Prisons also provide work, training and other activities such as physical education that can be accredited. Although standards for those prisoners in full-time education are good or better, it is disappointing that so many prisoners do not engage with education provision.

Outcomes: learning in the Justice sector

Standards

In all of the prisons we inspected, the outcomes for learners are good or better.

On vocational courses, most learners successfully complete their learning and attain relevant qualifications. Learners develop good technical skills and produce work of a very high standard. In one prison, they develop specialist skills like wood-carving and decorative plastering.

Across all four prisons, success rates on essential skills courses are good and attainment is high even though not all prisoners are screened for basic skills on entry. Most of those learners who attend classes develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. A few are not challenged enough by the work in their classes and take qualifications that are too easy for them. For example, a few prisoners who already have GCSE in English take Level 1 Literacy qualifications.

Most learners develop their communication skills very well. They speak clearly and are confident to give and support their opinions. Prisoners who are peer mentors develop their wider and key skills very well.

Wellbeing

Many learners develop their social and personal skills through courses such as money management and child development. They improve their wellbeing through classes in art, pottery and creative writing. A minority of prisoners improve their job-search skills and interview techniques. These opportunities help them to build their confidence, and increase their employability skills.

Overall, learners' attendance in education classes is good. However, on too many occasions they are late to classes, and this has a negative impact on their learning and motivation.

Equipping learners with a vocational future

HMP Usk in Monmouthshire has a regime designed to reduce risk and harm caused by any incidence of re-offending. The prison equips learners with diverse vocational skills in order to improve their employability upon release.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

Provision: learning in the Justice sector

A broad range of learning experiences is on offer in Welsh prisons. Learning is flexible and offered in short accredited units that take good account of the length of the prisoner's sentence. There is good provision for those with basic skills needs. Managers use labour market information well to develop relevant courses, such as those in railway maintenance, agriculture or digital printing. Workshops create an authentic working environment and prepare the learners well for employment.

Overall, standards of teaching are good. Most tutors use a wide range of teaching methods to deliver interesting sessions. They assess learners' interests, abilities and learning needs. Where sessions are long, tutors plan well, with frequent changes in learning activities to maintain the interest of learners.

Many tutors improve learners' awareness of the culture, history and economy of Wales. However, none of the prisons has a clear strategy to promote the use of the Welsh language.

Prisoners with additional learning needs receive effective help, for example through the use of trained mentors to offer one-to-one support.

Independent careers advice helps many prisoners to make realistic plans, although a few receive the advice too late in their sentence to do so.

Leadership and management: learning in the Justice sector

The leadership and management of learning and skills in prisons are good. Senior managers develop clear plans that focus well on the role of education in reducing re-offending. Managers use data on individual learners well to improve success rates and to find out why they fail to complete their courses. However, managers do not collect or analyse data about the extent of prisoners' basic skills needs or the progress they make in developing these well enough to inform strategic planning.

Senior managers plan provision well and make sure that any new courses they introduce will help prisoners to find employment on release.

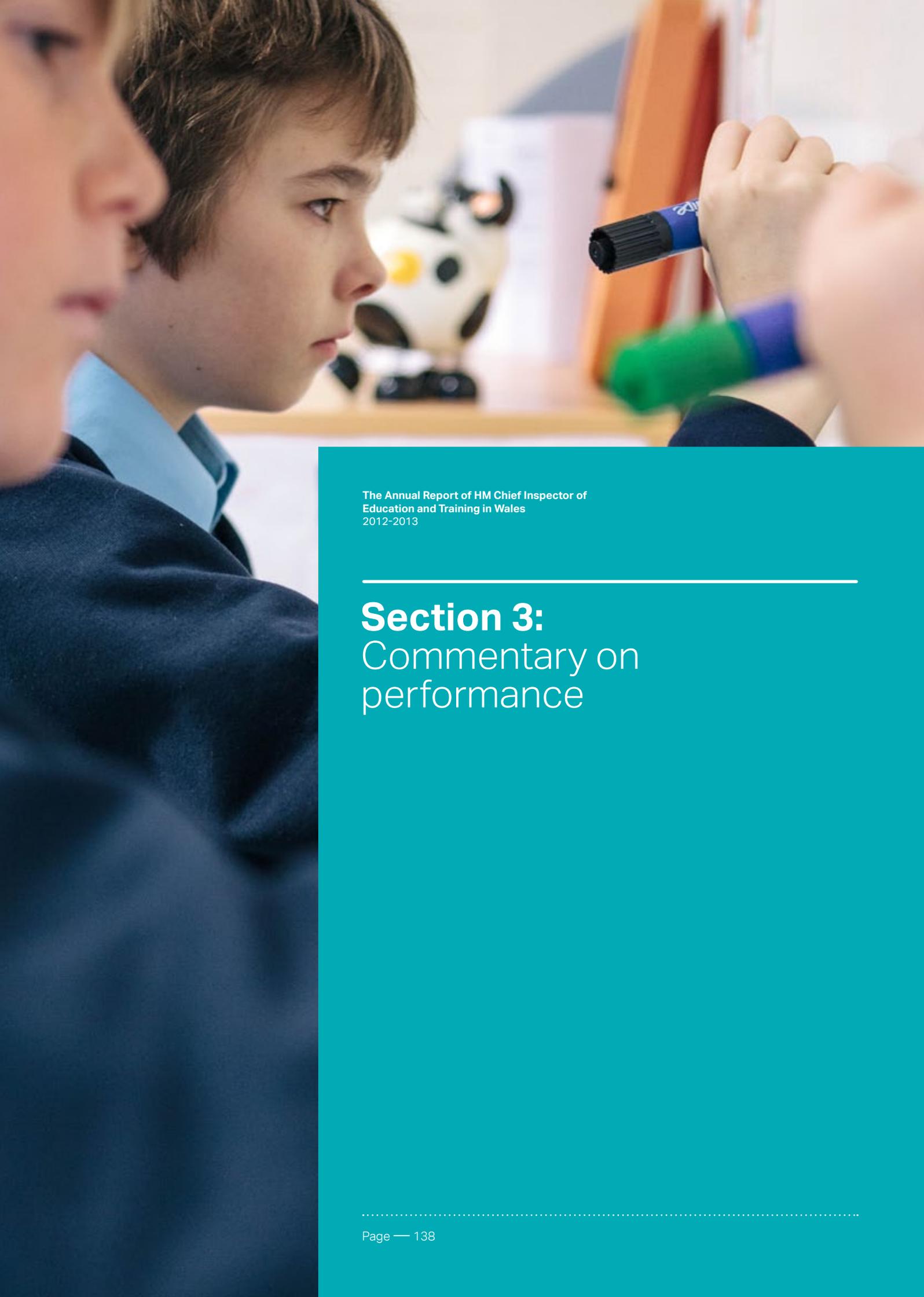
Arrangements to improve the quality of education are well established. Staff meet regularly to review the learning on offer. They listen carefully to the views of prisoners and involve them in quality improvement activities.

Most prisons show a good commitment to training and developing their teaching staff. Many tutors complete additional qualifications that help them to improve the quality of learning on offer.

All prisons develop strong partnerships with local and national employers and with social enterprises, which help to promote and encourage employment for prisoners returning to the community. They also extend the resources available in prisons for learning and skills. In one prison, very good partnerships with local health charities improve learners' wellbeing.

The main shortcoming in leadership and management is that prison senior managers do not always provide enough learning opportunities for the number of prisoners who need them.





The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of
Education and Training in Wales
2012-2013

Section 3: Commentary on performance

Key to terminology used

Key to terminology used	
Core subjects	English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science
Foundation Phase	This has replaced key stage 1 for five to seven-year-olds. Children are assessed at seven years and are expected to attain outcome 5.
Key stage 2	For seven to 11-year-olds. Pupils are assessed at 11 years and are expected to attain level 4.
Key stage 3	For 11 to 14-year-olds. Pupils are assessed at 14 years and are expected to attain level 5.
Key stage 4	For 14 to 16-year-olds
Level 2 threshold	This includes GCSE qualifications and a range of equivalent non-GCSE qualifications, including vocational qualifications, and represents a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to the volume of five GCSEs at grades A*-C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This includes GCSE qualifications and a range of equivalent non-GCSE qualifications, including vocational qualifications. It represents a volume of qualifications at level 2 equivalent to the volume of five GCSEs at grades A*-C, but also includes GCSEs in English or Welsh first language and mathematics at grades A*-C.
Core subject indicator	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science in combination.
Level 3 threshold	This includes A level outcomes and the full range of approved level 3 qualifications and represents a volume of qualifications at level 3 equivalent to the volume of two levels at grades A-E.
Wider points score	This score comprises all qualifications approved for use in Wales.
Success rates	These indicate the number of learners who achieve a qualification as a percentage of those who started the course.

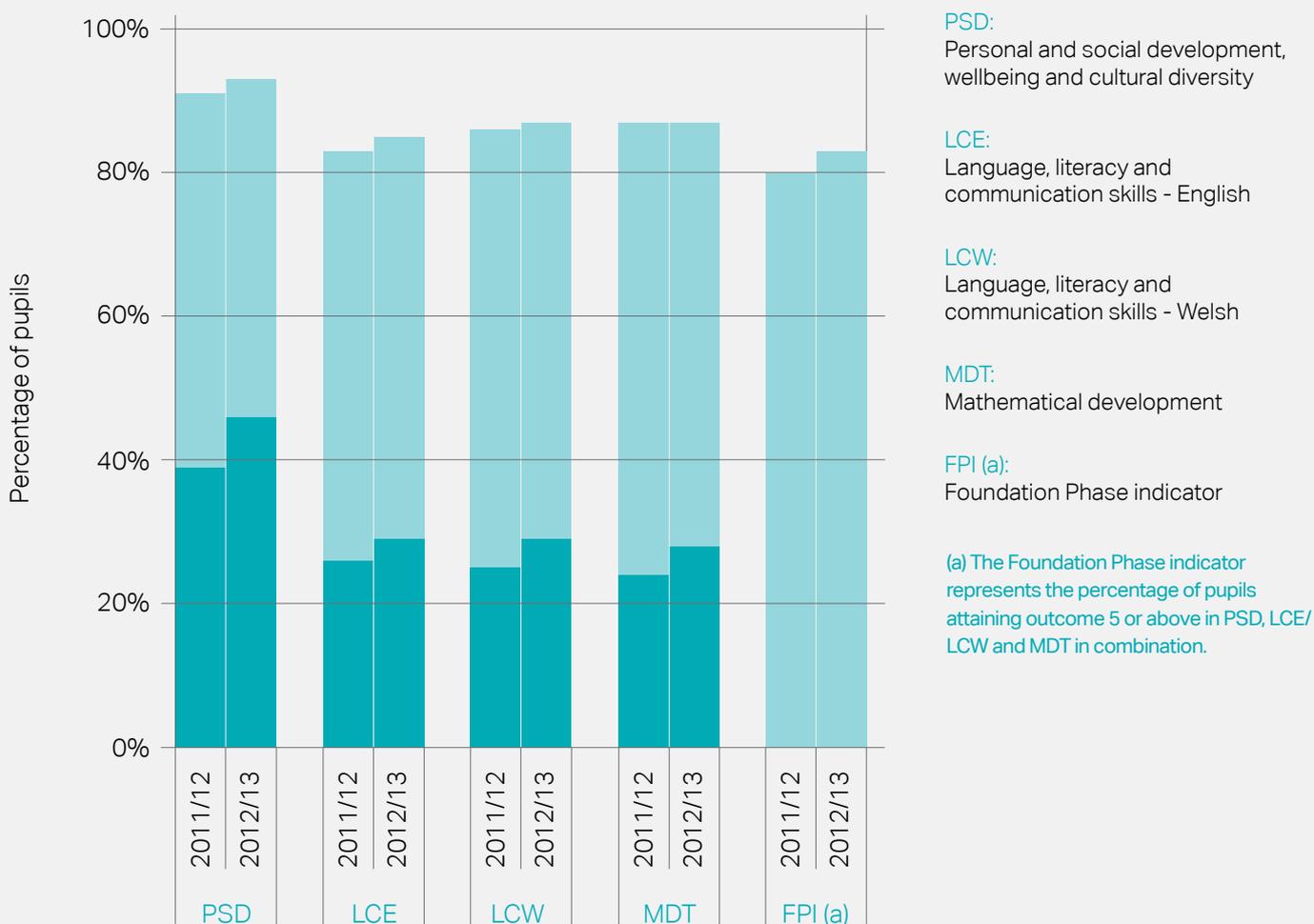
The performance of pupils in the Foundation Phase¹²

2013 is the second year for all seven-year-olds in Wales to be assessed by their teachers against the Foundation Phase outcomes instead of the National Curriculum levels. Pupils are expected to attain Foundation Phase outcome 5 by this age with the most able reaching outcome 6 or higher.

The chart below compares the results for 2012 and 2013.

Figure 3.1: Foundation Phase – percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome (outcome 5) or the expected outcome plus one (outcome 6), 2012-2013

■ Achieving outcome 5+
■ Achieving outcome 6+



In 2013 the percentage of pupils gaining at least outcome 5 in each learning area improved.

The percentage of pupils reaching the higher outcomes in all the learning areas also improved. The percentage achieving outcome 6 or above in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity improved by over seven percentage points, nearly twice the improvement in other areas.

¹² SDR 128/2013 End of Foundation Phase Outcomes and National Curriculum Teacher Assessment of Core Subjects at Key Stages 2 and 3, 2013, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/end-foundation-phase-outcomes-national-curriculum-teacher-assessment-core-subjects-key-stages-2-3/?lang=en>

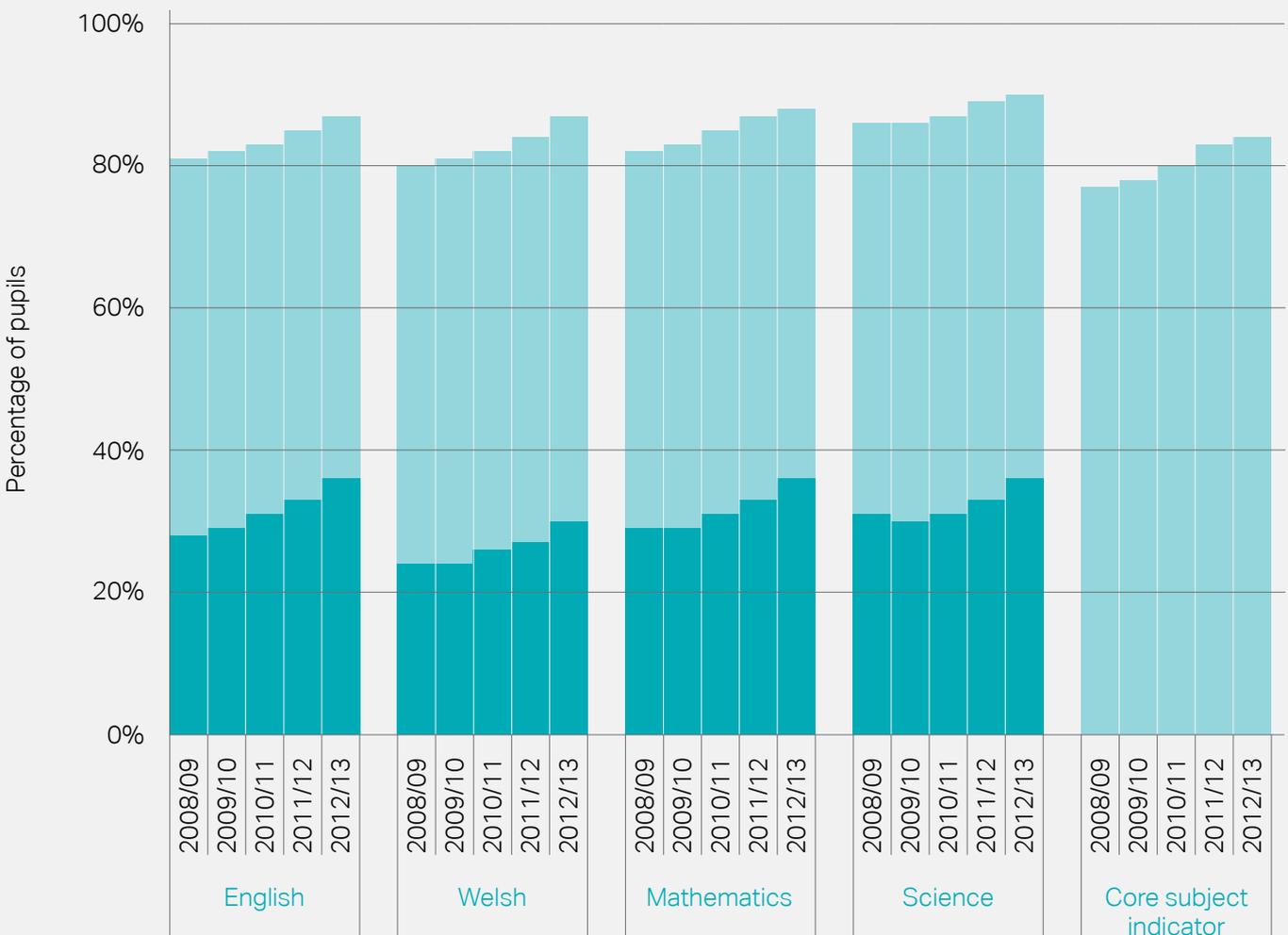
Performance of pupils at key stage 2 and key stage 3¹³

When assessed by their teachers in the National Curriculum subjects (English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science) pupils are expected to achieve level 4 by the end of key stage 2 when they are 11 years old and the most able are expected to reach level 5.

In key stage 2, in 2013, results improved in all subjects. The biggest improvement is in Welsh first language and the smallest is in mathematics, although it remains the second best performing subject after science. The percentage of pupils who gain at least the expected level in all three core subjects (known as the core subject indicator or CSI) has improved by more than seven percentage points in the last five years.

In 2013 the percentage of pupils gaining level 5 also improved in all subjects. Over a third of all pupils now reach this level in each of English, mathematics and science. Three out of ten reach this level in Welsh first language.

Figure 3.2: Key stage 2 – Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) and the expected level plus one (level 5), 2009-2013



¹³ SDR 128/2013 End of Foundation Phase Outcomes and National Curriculum Teacher Assessment of Core Subjects at Key Stages 2 and 3, 2013, Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/end-foundation-phase-outcomes-national-curriculum-teacher-assessment-core-subjects-key-stages-2-3/?lang=en>

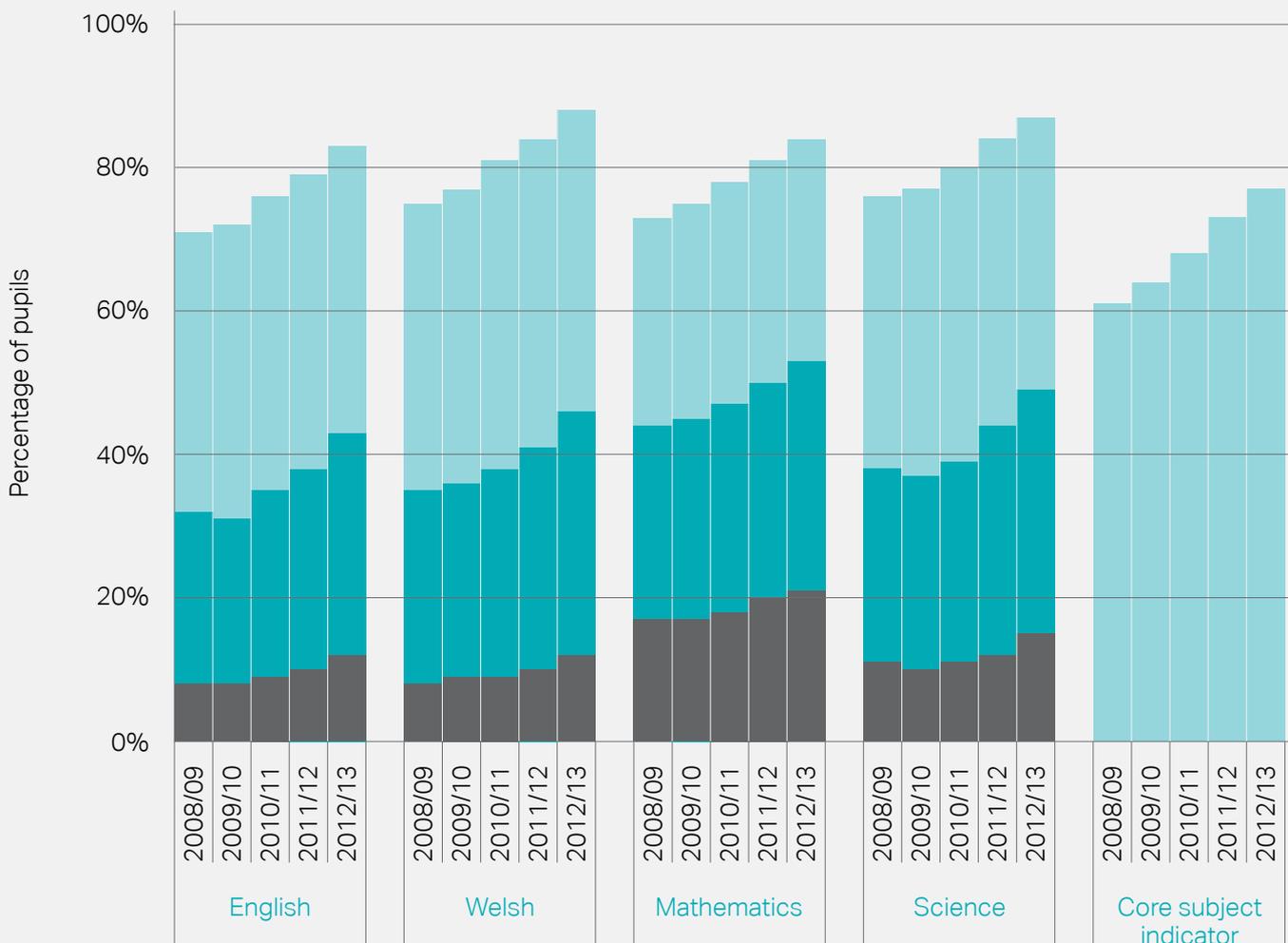
Pupils at the end of key stage 3, when they are 14 years old, are expected to reach at least level 5 with the most able reaching level 6 or 7.

In 2013 in key stage 3, results improved in each of the core subjects by around three percentage points or more for the second successive year. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in all three core subjects (the core subject indicator) improved by 4.5 percentage points, which is the same as in the previous year.

The percentage gaining the higher levels also improved in 2013. The highest percentages gaining these levels is once again in mathematics where more than half of all pupils reach at least level 6 and more than one in five gain level 7. About one in seven pupils reach level 7 in science and about one in every eight reach this for English and for Welsh first language.

Figure 3.3: Key stage 3 – percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 5), the expected level plus one (level 6) and expected level plus two (level 7), 2009-2013

- Achieving L5+
- Achieving L6+
- Achieving L7+



Examinations at key stage 4¹⁴

Figure 3.4: Examination results for 15-year-olds in schools in Wales

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold with English or Welsh first language and mathematics	47.2%	49.4%	50.1%	51.1%	52.7%
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold	60.7%	63.8%	67.3%	72.6%	77.8%
Percentage point difference between these two indicators	13.5	14.4	17.2	21.5	25.1

At the end of key stage 4, 15-year-old pupils take external examinations. In 2013 nearly eight out of ten of these pupils gained the level 2 threshold. However, the percentage gaining this threshold with a level 2 qualification in English or Welsh first language and in mathematics improved by less than two percentage points in 2013. The difference between the percentages of pupils achieving these two indicators continues to increase. In previous years we have expressed concern about the widening gap in these results. The gap has almost doubled in the last five years and is now 25 percentage points. Schools are not making enough progress in making sure that pupils gaining the level 2 threshold also gain qualifications in these key areas, which are national priorities for Wales.

¹⁴ SFR 205/2013 Examination Results in Wales, 2012/13, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en>

Differences in performance between boys and girls

**Figure 3.5: Performance of boys and girls
across the Foundation Phase and key stages**

	Girls 2013	Boys 2013	Percentage points' difference 2013	Percentage points' difference 2012
Percentage gaining Foundation Phase indicator	87.3%	78.9%	8.4	10.2
Percentage gaining key stage 2 core subject indicator	87.5%	81.4%	6.1	6.6
Percentage gaining key stage 3 core subject indicator	81.9%	72.4%	9.5	11
Percentage gaining key stage 4 core subject indicator	58.2%	45.5%	7.7	7.8

Girls continue to outperform boys at all key stages. The biggest differences continue to be in key stage 3.

However, in the Foundation Phase and in key stages 2 and 3, the gap between boys and girls gaining the core subject indicator reduced in 2013 and is the lowest in recent years. The biggest differences in performance continue to be in English and in Welsh first language, and in mathematics at the higher level in key stage 2 where boys continue to outperform girls.

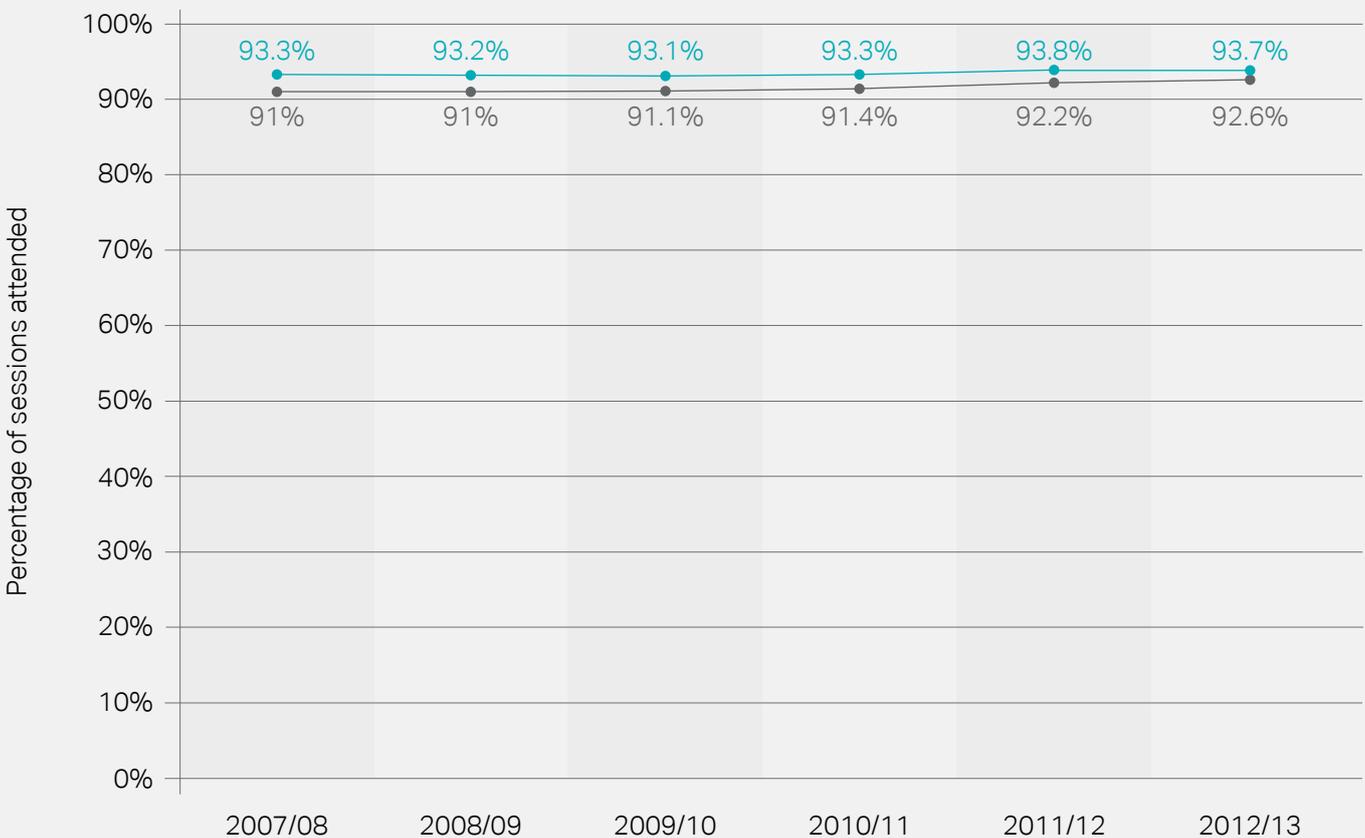
Attendance and exclusions

Attendance rates in primary schools¹⁵ have remained at around 93% since 2002-2003. In 2012-2013 there is a slight decrease in overall attendance in primary schools compared to the previous year. There is no difference between the attendance rates of boys and girls. The lowest attendance rates are in those schools with the highest proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

This year there has been an increase similar to that of the previous year in attendance in secondary schools¹⁶ at an all Wales level. This maintains the slightly faster rate in improvement of the last two years. Boys continue to have a slightly higher attendance rate than girls. In 2012-2013, more pupils than in the previous year had no absence from school and fewer were absent for more than 25 days.

Figure 3.6: Attendance in Wales by pupils of compulsory school age

● Primary (a)
● Secondary (b)



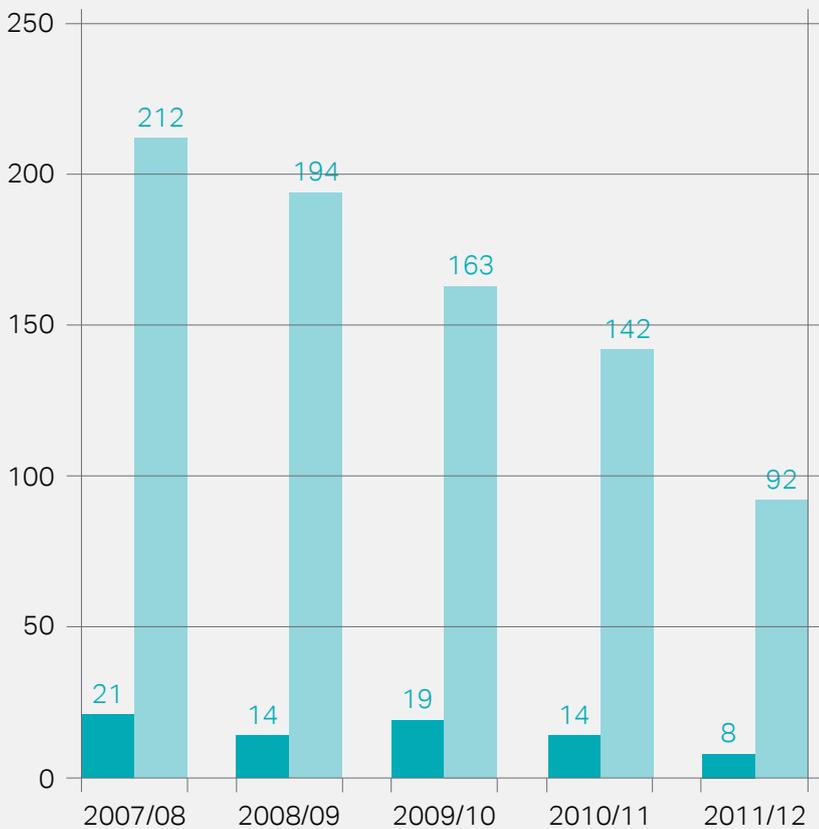
(a) Primary attendance also includes data for special and independent schools where provided.

(b) Secondary attendance also includes data for special and independent schools where provided.

¹⁵ SDR 221/2013 Absenteeism from primary schools 2012/13, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-primary-schools/?lang=en>

¹⁶ SDR 149/2013 Absenteeism from Secondary Schools, 2012/13, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/absenteeism-secondary-schools/?lang=en>

Figure 3.7: Number of permanent exclusions from maintained primary and secondary schools in Wales, 2007-2012



The number of permanent exclusions in Wales¹⁷ reduced further in 2011-2012. Boys accounted for almost three quarters of permanent exclusions. Assault or violence towards staff and defiance of rules are the two main reasons given for permanent exclusions. In 2011-2012, almost a quarter of excluded pupils continued their education in pupil referral units. Just over 20% of those excluded receive no provision.

In 2011-2012 the total number of fixed-term exclusions also reduced and is now the lowest it has been since 2004-2005. This includes shorter exclusions of five days or fewer and longer exclusions of six days or more. Defiance of rules is the most common reason for both shorter and longer exclusions.

Pupils with special educational needs accounted for just over half of all exclusions during 2011-2012. Around a quarter of all exclusions are of pupils in Year 10.

¹⁷ SDR 26/2013 Exclusions from Schools in Wales, 2011/12, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/exclusions-schools/?lang=en>

Post-16 learners in schools¹⁸

Figure 3.8:
Examination results for 17-year-olds
in schools in Wales

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Percentage achieving the level 3 threshold	94.9%	96.3%	96.9%	96.5%
Wider points score	747.9	798.9	772.9	806.6

The percentage of post-16 learners in school who achieved the level 3 threshold has been similar over the last three years.

Results for the average wider points score improved in 2013.

¹⁸ SFR 205/2013 Examination Results in Wales, 2012/13, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/examination-results/?lang=en>

Young people not in education, employment or training¹⁹

At the end of 2012, the percentage of 16 to 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training reduced by two percentage points, and is the lowest for six years.

However, the percentage of young people aged 19 to 24 who are not in education, employment or training increased slightly in 2012.

Figure 3.9: The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training, 2009-2012

Age	2009	2010	2011	2012
16-18	12.4%	11.5%	12.2%	10.2%
19-24	21.8%	23.0%	22.2%	23.0%

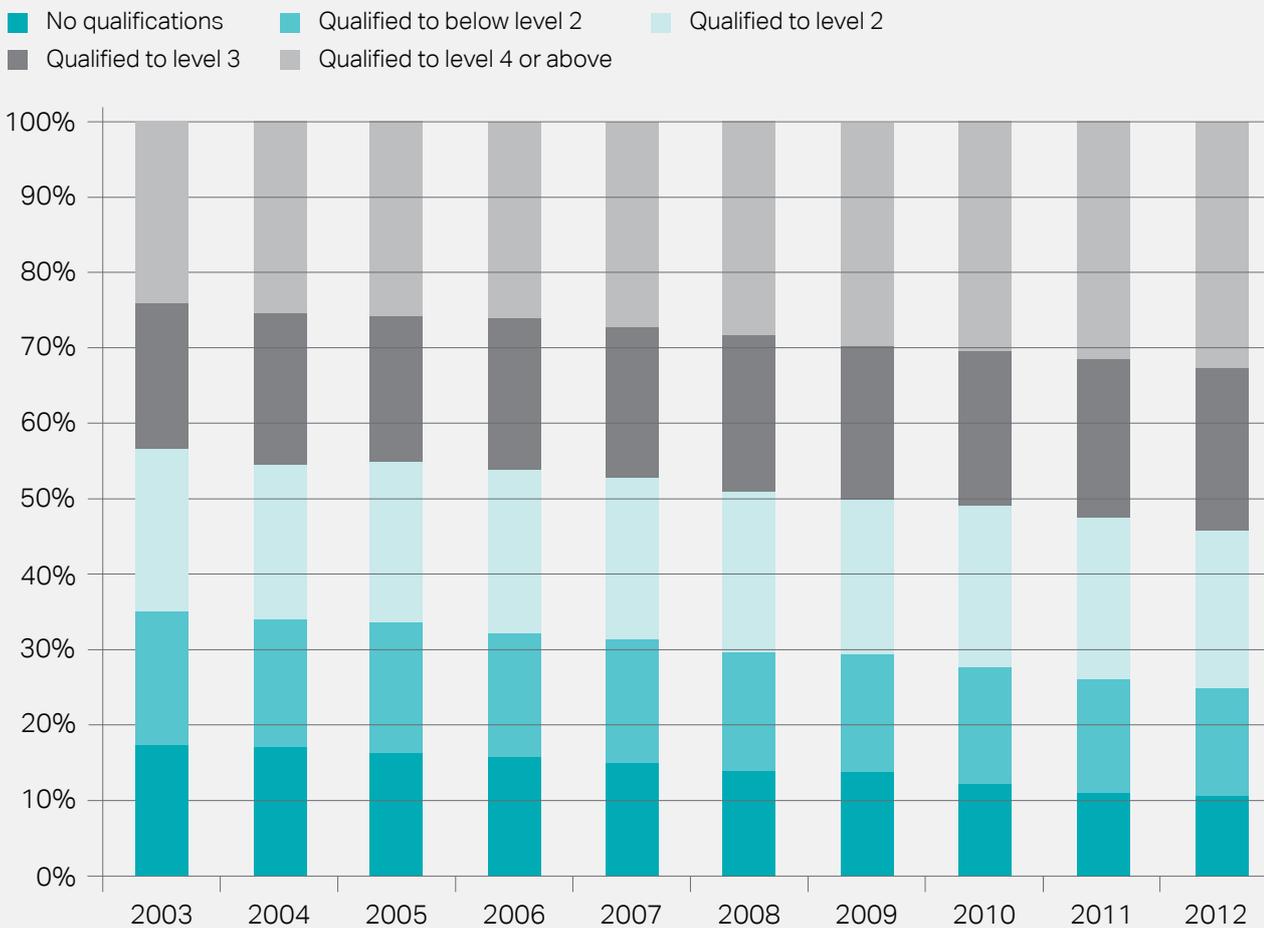
¹⁹ SB 99/2013 Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Year to 30 June 2013), Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/young-people-not-education-employment-training/?lang=en>

Skills, further education and lifelong learning²⁰

Overall, qualification levels in Wales increased in 2012, continuing the general increase seen in recent years. In 2012, three quarters of working age adults in Wales held at least level 2 qualifications and a third held degree-level qualifications (level 4 or above). In 2012, an estimated 11% of working age adults in Wales reported having no qualifications.

In general, qualification levels were highest in Monmouthshire, Ceredigion, The Vale of Glamorgan, Gwynedd and Cardiff, and lowest in the South Wales valleys authorities. In general, qualification levels in Wales were lower than in England, Scotland and the UK as a whole, but higher than in Northern Ireland

Figure 3.10: Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, 2003-2012

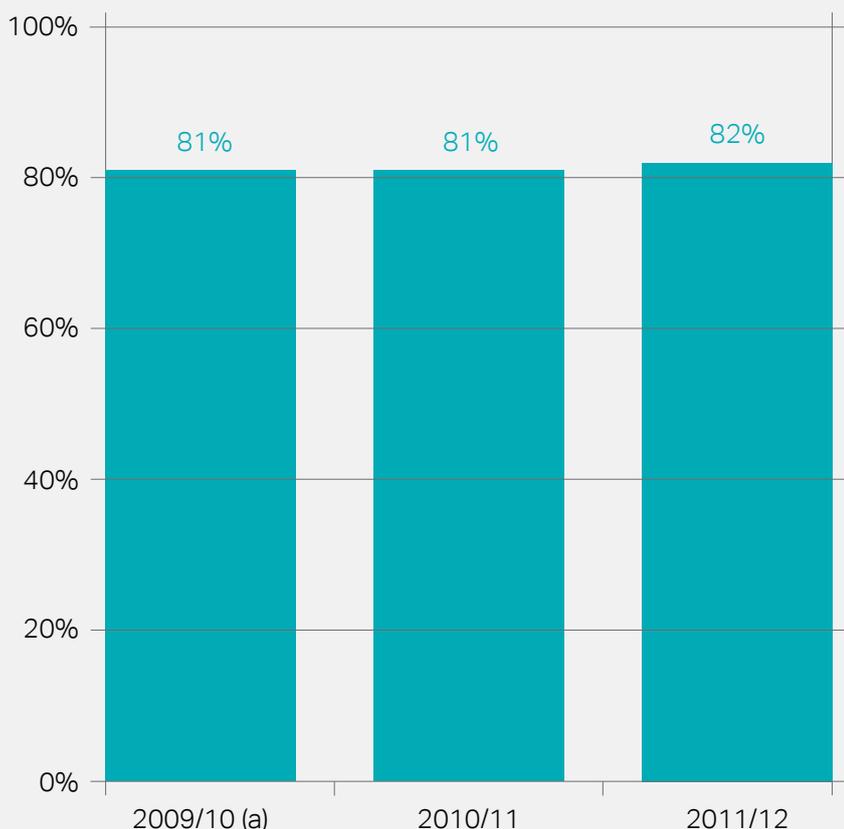


²⁰ SB 109/2013 Levels of highest qualification held by working age adults in Wales, 2012, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/levels-highest-qualification-held-working-age-adults/?lang=en>

Further education²¹

Attainment rates improved slightly in 2011-2012 at all levels, with an overall attainment rate for all learning aims of 91%, compared to 90% for the previous year. Attainment rates varied between different subject areas, ranging from 84% in History, Philosophy and Theology to 95% in Hospitality and Catering.

Figure 3.11: Overall learning activity success rates in further education colleges, 2009-2012



(a) The data for 2009/10 includes some adult community learning provision that is delivered by further education colleges. Therefore, a direct comparison with more recent data may not be possible.

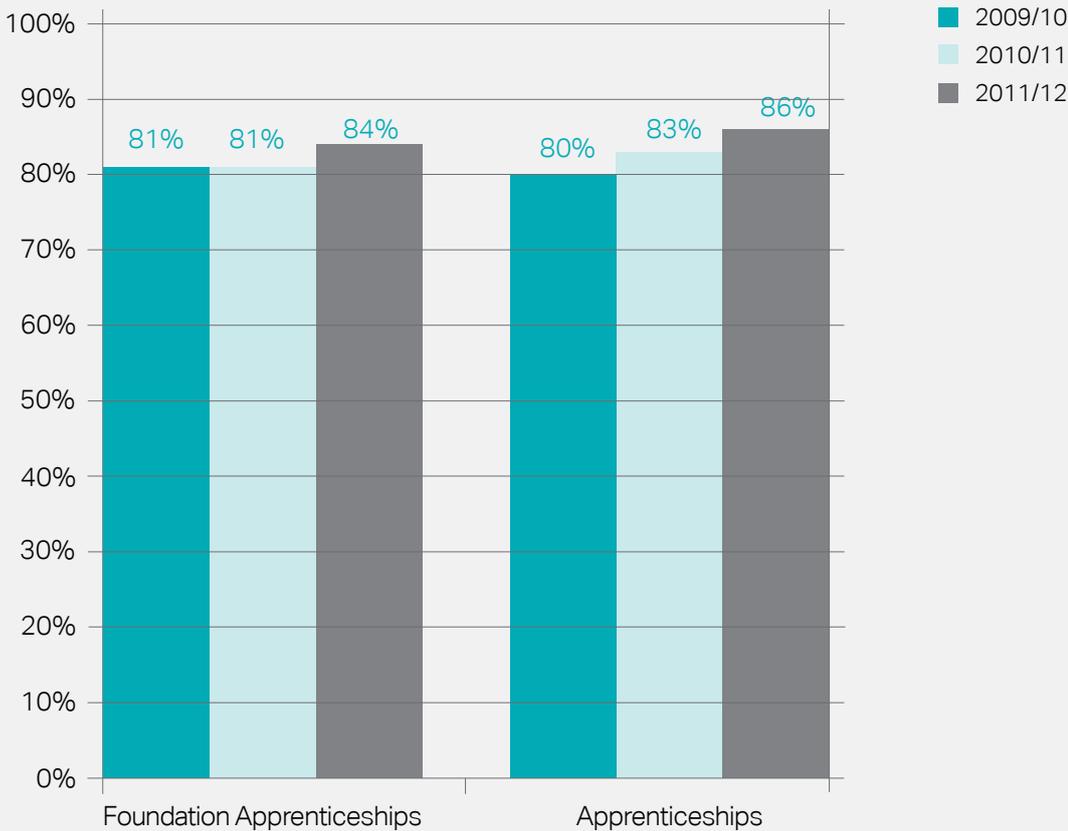
The overall success rate for all courses at further education colleges improved slightly in 2011-2012. Success rates were highest at levels 1 and 2 at 82%, and lowest at level 3 at 80%. This is a slight rise in overall success rates at all levels from the previous year, which were 81% for level 1, 78% for level 2 and 77% for level 3 respectively.

²¹ SDR 53/2013 Learner Outcome Measures for Further Education and Work-Based Learning: 2011/12, Welsh Government, <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/learner-outcome-measures-further-education-work-based-learning/?lang=en>. Note: There have been some changes to the coverage and methodology for this statistical release compared to previous years' relating to the introduction of new data management principles for learning providers.

Work-based learning²²

In 2011-2012, work-based learning framework success rates in Foundation Apprenticeships and in Apprenticeships were slightly higher than in the previous year.

Figure 3.12: Framework success rates in Foundation Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships, 2009-2012



In the first year of published data for Traineeship and Steps to Employment programmes, learning activity success rates were 74% and 68% for Traineeship (Engagement) and Traineeship (level 1) programmes respectively. In Steps to Employment programmes, learning activity success rates were 72% for Work Focused Learning programmes and 82% for Routeways to Work.

Within three months of completing their Traineeship programme, 43% of trainees had progressed onto further learning at a higher level, 13% had entered new employment or were changing employment and 24% were seeking work or unemployed. Five per cent of learners on Steps to Employment programmes progressed to further learning at a higher level, 33% entered new employment and 44% were unemployed or seeking work.

²² SDR 53/2013 Learner Outcome Measures for Further Education and Work-Based Learning: 2011/12, Welsh Government
<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/learner-outcome-measures-further-education-work-based-learning/?lang=en>

