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

2015-2016

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Guide to the report

This year's report is the 24th consecutive annual report published in Wales since the Education (Schools) Act 1992 required its production.

The report consists of four parts:

- **The Chief Inspector's foreword**
- **Section 1: a thematic section focusing on professional learning**
- **Section 2: Individual sector reports about inspection findings in 2015-2016**
- **Section 3: a commentary on performance data**

Annex 1 provides an overview of the inspection framework and notes about the words, phrases and data used in the report.

Watch the short film, A word from the Chief Inspector, which outlines questions that education leaders can use as a starting point for reflection on professional learning and staff development.

You can also find out more about inspection findings by visiting our interactive data website.

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Chief Inspector's foreword

This Annual Report draws on the inspections, follow-up visits and thematic reviews carried out by Estyn during 2015-2016. On the basis of this evidence, I report on the educational outcomes and on the quality of provision and leadership for each sector of education and training that Estyn inspects. In this foreword, I identify some key messages from all the evidence available to me during this busy year for education in Wales.

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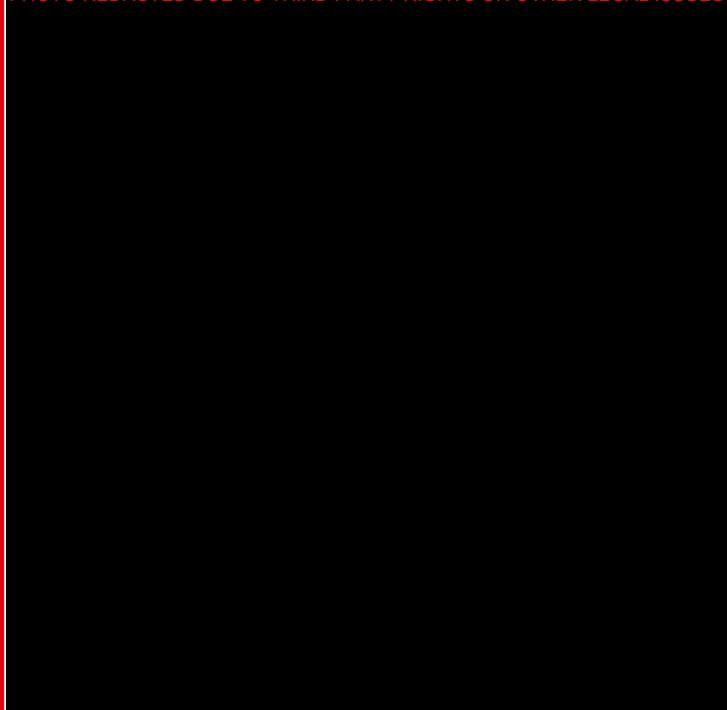
Meilyr Rowlands, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

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Foreword

Variability and the quality of teaching

The underlying picture gained from this year's inspections is similar to last year. Progress with fundamentals such as basic literacy and numeracy, and behaviour and attendance, that learners need to be 'ready to learn' generally continues, but variability within and between providers remains a prominent feature of our education system. In all sectors, there are good and excellent providers, including in relatively deprived areas, but the gap between providers that are doing well and those that are not is still too wide.

The most important factor in how well learners develop and learn is the quality of teaching. However, teaching is one of the weakest aspects of provision in most sectors. In the best providers, leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in their organisation and arrange professional learning opportunities to improve teaching. In providers where teaching has shortcomings, leaders do not have a clear idea of what needs to be improved and self-evaluation reports are often thin on detail regarding teaching.

Having high expectations of what learners can do is a key characteristic of effective teaching. Successful teachers guide individual learners to improve through skilful questioning that stimulates thinking and promotes independence. These teachers vary their approaches, and engage learners' curiosity and interest. They have a clear understanding of what the learners in their class are able to achieve when stretched. The most successful teachers are curious about what works best for their learners. They think critically about pedagogy, read broadly about teaching and learning, and discuss their work with other teachers.

Set methods for lesson planning and delivery are now common. Such checklists can be useful for inexperienced teachers or those who are struggling. However, there is a danger to the majority of teachers in adopting these 'tick-box' approaches uncritically as they may become too concerned with following procedures rather than thinking creatively about the best way to encourage learners to achieve.

Improving teaching requires several long-term changes to our education system. It is widely accepted that the recruitment and initial training of teachers need to be improved and, in addition to current reforms, we need to look at international models of best practice in these areas. In last year's **annual report**, I explored how curriculum reform provides an opportunity to refresh how, as well as what, we teach. In this year's report, I discuss a further structural requirement for improving teaching – better professional learning and staff development for current teachers. The section includes self-evaluation questions that staff and governors may find helpful in thinking about professional learning in their own institution.

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Providers inspected in 2015-2016 with excellent awarded for either one or both of the overall judgements, current performance and prospects for improvement

Non-maintained settings	Aberporth Playgroup Toy Box Rossett House Nursery
Primary	Ysgol Morfa Nefyn Cyfarthfa Park Primary Cwmfelinfach Primary School Llangewydd Junior School St Helen's Primary School Penllergaer Primary School Gilfach Fargoed Primary School Maindee C.P. School Kitchener Primary School Ysgol Gynradd Cae Top Ysgol Gymraeg Teilo Sant Dinas Powys Primary School Ysgol Gymraeg Ifor Hael Birchgrove Primary School, Cardiff Severn Primary School Albert C.P. School Brynteg Nursery School
Secondary	Ysgol Bryn Elian Pontarddulais Comprehensive School Cefn Hengoed Community School
Independent	Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls
Post-16 providers	Coleg Cambria Bridgend College Vocational Skills Partnership Construction Skills – CiTB

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Primary and secondary education

This year's inspection outcomes again show that there are substantial differences between sectors. Seven out of ten primary schools inspected this year are good or better, a little better than last year, while only four out of ten of the secondary schools inspected are good or better, the same as last year. The proportion of excellence in primary schools continues to increase, to 22% this year from 18% last year. The proportion of secondary schools identified as having some excellence has decreased to around a quarter this year from 38% last year. We inspected two all-age schools this year and both had strengths in their primary provision, but shortcomings in their secondary work. We also inspected the four regional consortia this year and found that they were not doing enough to tackle the variability in performance across schools, particularly in secondary schools.

There is more excellent and unsatisfactory practice in the secondary sector than in primary schools. This increasing variation as children become older is not only apparent in inspection outcomes. For example, the gap between girls' and boys' performance and the gap between the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers also become wider as pupils progress from primary to secondary schooling. Having one teacher for each class for the year may mean that it is easier for primary schools to establish a consistent approach to teaching and learning, and to address the needs of each child in the round. The larger size and compartmentalisation of secondary schools into departments make this harder to achieve.

External examinations also have a major effect on pupils' learning experiences in secondary schools. In particular, focusing overly on trying to achieve a narrow range of examination performance indicators can lead to unintended consequences. For example, there is a growing trend of entering pupils early for examinations. This strategy helps more able pupils who take GCSE mathematics early, get very high grades, and then progress to study further mathematics. However, entering whole cohorts of pupils early for GCSE mathematics or English or Welsh, although it may help pupils gain C grades in these important subjects and boost the school's 'level 2 inclusive'[1] indicator, has drawbacks. The time available for teaching and learning is reduced and pupils are sometimes partially removed from other subject lessons. Teachers rush to cover the syllabus or do not teach parts of it. Pupils sit examinations with an incomplete understanding of the subject and of examination requirements, and do not reach their full potential. Re-sitting examinations may improve grades for some but not all pupils.

[1] Five A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including in Welsh or English and in mathematics

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Thinking skills

The best indicator of good learning and of good teaching is the quality and depth of pupils' thinking. The recently published PISA results are an international measure of learners' thinking skills, their verbal and numerical reasoning, and their problem-solving skills. These skills are needed to do well in examinations, in further study and in employment, and developing them is an essential element of a broad education that aims at producing rounded individuals who can contribute to public life and its debates. For a commentary on the PISA results, see section three of this report.

Thinking skills are best developed when learners are engaged in their learning and have time to think deeply about their studies. The Foundation Phase, and the curriculum reform programme derived from the 'Successful Futures' report are intended to encourage a richer diet of learning experiences and more opportunities for thinking independently. The new GCSEs and Welsh Baccalaureate are also intended to encourage and examine learners' thinking abilities. We will review best practice in the Foundation Phase, the preparedness of schools for the new curriculum, and the progress made with the new examinations in thematic reports next year.

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Meeting the needs of all learners

Inspection outcomes for maintained special schools are not as good this year compared with previous years and outcomes for pupil referral units (PRUs) remain poor. We need to continue to make sure that our most vulnerable learners are well educated and cared for. This year, we published three thematic reports that looked at the education provided to particularly vulnerable learners, including **learners educated other than at school (EOTAS)**, **children who are looked after**, and **learners in independent specialist colleges**. Overall, despite recent improvements and the good practice highlighted in these reports, outcomes for these learners remain too variable.

In particular, we found common areas for improvement in evaluation and information management. For example, only a minority of local authorities evaluate the progress of pupils receiving EOTAS well enough, or take enough responsibility for raising the achievement of children who are looked after. Many independent specialist colleges do not assess learners' progress in the crucial areas of independence and life skills and are unable to evaluate these aspects of their work. We also found that schools, EOTAS providers and independent specialist colleges often do not have the information they need about learners to ensure that they make a successful start to their new placement. In all settings, there are gaps in the specialist knowledge that staff require to support learners' complex needs that indicate a need for more staff development and training.

Another common theme in inspection reports this year and highlighted in the sector sections of this annual report is the underachievement of more able learners, including those from deprived backgrounds. In around a third of primary schools, more able pupils do not make enough progress because the work they are set is not challenging enough. In secondary schools, GCSE and A level results should be better at higher grades. Regional consortia do not analyse the progress of groups of pupils, including the more able, in enough detail. Some providers that meet the needs of more able pupils well use ICT to provide suitable challenge for these pupils to learn by doing and by receiving immediate feedback. Tackling the underachievement of more able learners helps to ensure that expectations are high enough for the whole cohort of learners.

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Post-compulsory education

This year, we inspected two further education colleges using new inspection arrangements that include inspecting a sample of learning areas. These colleges have adapted their curricula to meet learners' needs and to be responsive to the local community. They make good use of labour market information to identify the skills needs of employers. Two of the three work-based learning providers inspected also deliver a range of training programmes that meet learners' and employers' needs well.

This year, we also carried out thematic surveys in further education on **effective teaching and learning observation** and on **learner support services**, on **breaking down barriers to apprenticeships** for learners from black and minority ethnic communities and those with disabilities, and on the quality of education and training in **adult health and social care**.

We found that most further education colleges use mentors well to support their teachers. Close partnership working between schools, further education colleges and Careers Wales ensures that nearly all learners with additional learning needs receive well-planned support as they progress from school to further education. Partnership working between providers, supported employment agencies, employers and third sector organisations is improving diversity in apprenticeships. Most providers in adult health and social care work well with employers to meet learners' needs.

However, only a few colleges plan time for peer observations and too few teaching staff participate in professional learning communities within or outside their colleges. Additional professional development is needed to improve teaching and assessment in adult health and social care, particularly at level 5. There is also a need to improve the collection of learners' destination data and data about the number of learners who train in Welsh. While post-16 providers offer aspects of training and assessment through the medium of Welsh, few learners undertake written assessments or qualifications in the language.

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Leadership

All providers can improve and leadership is the most significant factor affecting that improvement. It is therefore good that a National Academy of Educational Leadership is being established in Wales. We recently published a report on **Leadership and primary school improvement**, following a similar publication on **Twelve secondary school improvement journeys**. We found that strong leadership and management establish the following elements:

- a common vision, culture and sense of direction
- a focus on improving teaching and learning
- investment in staff development and professional learning
- honest self-evaluation and systematic improvement planning

At all stages of development, leaders need to establish a common understanding of the purpose of the school, its ambitions and expectations for learners, and ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Leaders must demonstrate a commitment and capacity to develop the professional skills of their staff, particularly in relation to teaching. They are responsible for improving the quality of teaching and learning, for leading learning, rather than undertaking management and administrative duties only. Staff in leadership roles must establish a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning by listening to learners, by systematic classroom observation and by scrutinising pupils' work. Once areas for improvement have been identified, leaders then need to:

- implement strategies to secure improvement
- identify and provide the required professional learning opportunities, support and training for staff
- monitor and evaluate progress
- hold themselves and others to account to ensure that the required improvements happen

In the most successful schools, leaders establish a learning culture and the professional development of staff at all levels is a high priority, including the development of leaders, often from early stages in their careers.

A self-improving system

There is a growing understanding of our long-term goals as an education system. The **Successful Futures** report established four purposes for learner outcomes. New professional standards are being developed to clarify the expectations of school teachers and of leaders.

There is also an emerging culture of collaboration and support around professional learning, although regional consortia have adopted differing approaches to school-to-school work and have not evaluated the effectiveness of these various models. Typically, regional consortia use their challenge advisers' knowledge of where good practice exists in the region to broker school-to-school support. The challenge for our most successful schools is to ensure that their succession planning processes are robust enough to develop their leadership capacity, so that senior leaders can contribute to school-to-school support while not compromising their own provision and development.

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Inspection developments

In October 2016, I published all inspection judgements for the 2015-2016 academic year as **official statistics**. I released this data at the earliest opportunity in the interests of openness. The **interactive data website** launched last year allows readers to explore all of Estyn's inspection judgements since 2010. Next year's annual report will be the last using the current common inspection framework, and will provide an overview of the progress made over the previous seven years.

We are currently piloting inspections using a new streamlined common inspection framework that will be used from September 2017 onwards. The framework focuses on the key areas of standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance, and leadership and management. You can register for updates on all our work on **our website**. In addition to finding out more about our new inspection arrangements, you can sign up to alerts for forthcoming **thematic reports** and our **myth-busting** campaign.

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Section: 1

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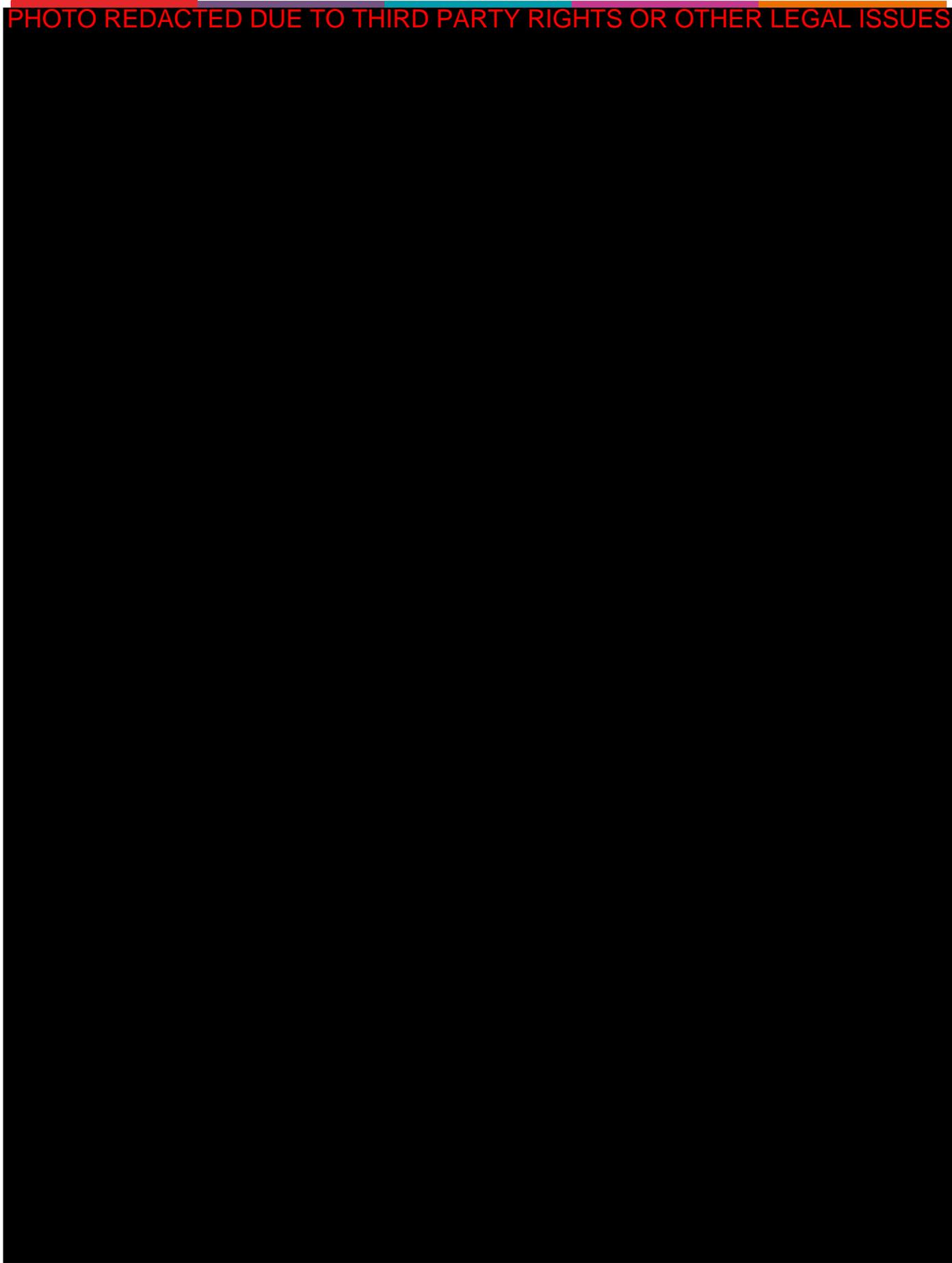
Section 1:
Thematic: Professional learning

Professional Learning

This section draws on Estyn's inspection and thematic review evidence, including the school improvement journey surveys (Estyn, 2013 and Estyn, 2016c), to identify what works well in professional learning. Case studies exemplify how effective professional learning builds capacity for leadership and improvement and leads to better teaching and learning. Difficulties providers encounter with professional learning are explored. The section focuses mainly on schools, although many of the main messages apply to other providers.

The biggest influence on learner outcomes is the quality of teaching and learning. Various strategies have been introduced in Wales with the intention of improving the quality of teaching and learning, and of helping practitioners to develop their practice throughout their careers. The aim is to build capacity and to drive out variations within and between schools. Current education reforms are based on a model of a self-improving system and of school-to-school working. This means that schools and providers, leaders and practitioners, including teachers and support staff, take responsibility for their own development and that of their peers. This self-improvement approach is school-led, and balanced by support from local authorities, regional consortia and the Welsh Government[1].

A key strength of most special schools, many primary schools, and about half of secondary schools, is the wide range of professional learning activities that they undertake. The range of activities, together with high levels of practitioner engagement and enthusiasm, makes a positive contribution to improving the quality of leadership and of teaching in these schools. In the very few schools where leadership and teaching are excellent, there is a strong culture of professional learning, with systematic planning for and evaluation of professional learning activities. There is also a clear focus on improving classroom practice and pupil outcomes. Yet overall, too few schools help staff to make the best of professional learning opportunities, and they do not evaluate whether these activities result in improvements for pupils or staff.

If schools are to improve their professional learning, and work towards becoming successful learning organisations (OECD, 2016), it is important to consider what works well. Our inspection and thematic survey findings show the key areas that contribute to successful professional learning are:

- creating the right culture and conditions for professional learning
- building collaborative and supportive professional relationships within and between schools
- engaging with research evidence and carrying out research
- using data and new technologies as catalysts for improvement and innovation
- learning how to lead professional learning and staff development

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[1] See for example, Workforce development (Welsh Government, 2016a)

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Creating the right culture and conditions for professional learning

Good schools place a high premium on learning, for staff as well as for pupils. In high-performing schools, confident senior leaders promote a clear vision for staff development and establish a strong and collaborative culture of professional learning. They place a high value on this culture, which centres on developing the potential of all staff and the belief that every initiative should focus on the learner and on improving pupils' experiences, learning and outcomes. Purposeful performance management is part of this process, where staff understand the high expectations required of them and share the commitment to improving their own practice. Leaders at all levels provide strong support to help staff to do things in new and better ways.

In schools where professional learning is most effective, staff development is planned and led to ensure that it has the greatest impact in the classroom and on pupil outcomes. Figure 1.1 shows some common elements and key factors that occur in these better schools to create the right conditions for professional learning.

Figure 1.1:
Creating the right conditions for leading professional learning

Elements	Key factors
Clarity of purpose and role	• Leaders at all levels promote a culture of high aspirations and there is a collective belief that both pupils and staff should aim to improve and achieve their best. • There is systematic and purposeful planning of professional learning, tailored to individual needs. • Staff work effectively as a team and there is a culture of collaboration and clear communication between leaders and staff. • There is a common understanding and an agreed language used about key concepts, and open and direct dialogue about professional learning and its impact.

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Elements	Key factors
Committed leadership and collective responsibility 	• Senior leaders give professional learning a high profile and priority, and set strategic priorities for it, which link closely to the school's improvement priorities. • Senior leaders ensure that staff development is led effectively, resourced appropriately and championed within the school, and that 'lessons learnt' are shared. • Although senior and middle leaders may facilitate professional learning, the contribution of all staff is valued and seen as central to success. There is recognition of the collective responsibility for improvement and a sense that 'together we can'. • The monitoring and evaluation of professional learning activities form part of robust arrangements for whole-school and departmental self-evaluation and improvement planning.
Supportive climate 	• Leaders promote and support the engagement of all staff in open and honest discussion about professional learning. They identify expertise to support professional learning, from within or beyond the school, and work flexibly to provide enough time for activities to be undertaken. • Curiosity and innovation are encouraged, with professional learning arrangements providing opportunities for sharing what works and what does not. • Staff examine aspects of their own practice and, thinking more deeply, consider the connection between their practice and its impact on pupil learning and outcomes. • There is a genuine open-door culture in classrooms that contributes towards building a culture of trust, transparency and honesty.

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Building collaborative and supportive professional relationships within schools

Across Wales, there is increasing use of formal and informal peer learning within schools as part of mutually supportive staff development. In schools where there is a strong culture of professional learning and collaboration, practitioners work as a team to ensure that all pupils achieve well. In these schools, leaders have created a strong team ethos and ensured that continuously improving the quality of teaching is central to securing better provision and better outcomes for pupils.

In the best schools, practitioners work together to develop agreed whole-school approaches and expectations regarding classroom practice. They agree on what effective teaching looks like and begin to innovate. For example, teachers may reflect on their professional practice by filming lessons and evaluating pupils' progress. An important part of this process is clear communication between leaders and practitioners to ensure that there is a shared understanding and an agreed vocabulary about teaching and learning. This growing clarity of understanding contributes positively to a culture of reflection and underpins a cycle of improvement. In these schools, self-evaluation processes routinely focus on the quality of teaching and learning and how professional learning contributes to improving quality.

Coaching and mentoring are also important means of building supportive professional relationships. They enable staff to develop and they strengthen the culture of professional learning within a school. In best practice, schools match individual practitioners' learning needs skilfully to the most appropriate coach or mentor who can help them. They use experienced practitioners from within the school to work alongside less experienced colleagues in pairs or threes, or facilitate several strong practitioners to work together on innovative projects. These schools make the most of opportunities for teachers to observe each other, to team teach, and to undertake joint scrutiny activities. They use video-based technologies and engage in professional dialogue about aspects of teaching and learning, in a way that strengthens the climate of openness, mutual trust and respect.

In the most effective practice, schools ensure that those involved in leading peer support arrangements have the opportunity to develop their own leadership skills to undertake their leadership role. Leaders make sure that the allocation of time for these developments is 'protected' and enable improvements to be sustained.

Teamwork leads to high quality teaching

At **Severn Primary School** senior leaders have developed excellent teamwork within the school, through strong lines of communication, a common vision and sharing good practice. Staff feel empowered and motivated to be innovative, to challenge current practice and to reflect on how best to improve teaching within the school. This has led to high-quality teaching throughout the school.

For more information about this, please read our **case study**.

Teaching coaching programme underpins excellence

All teachers at **Cardiff High School** are part of a coaching programme giving them support, guidance and professional development. The school focuses on improvement and encourages all teachers to become lifelong learners. This has had a positive impact on improving classroom practice and standards.

For more information about this, please read our **case study**.

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Building collaborative and supportive professional relationships between schools

An outstanding school will have different staff development needs to one that is struggling to meet the higher expectations made of schools today. Yet our improvement journey reports (Estyn 2013, Estyn 2016c) show that a key condition for practitioners' successful professional learning in all schools is the development of relationships that extend beyond the school. Building a culture of school-to-school collaboration involves a genuine commitment to being open to learning from others and is most effective when practitioners have the opportunity to work together to achieve a specific goal.

Almost all schools that are placed in a statutory category (in need of significant improvement or requiring special measures) do not have these collaborative relationships. These schools and their staff are isolated, and it is difficult for them to gain a realistic assessment of the school's outcomes and the quality of their teaching and learning. Often their leaders use pupils' backgrounds as an excuse for poor performance because they have not worked with schools in similar situations that perform much better.

In contrast, high-performing schools always work closely with networks, clusters and family groups of other schools, and are eager to learn. This networking helps them to understand the different factors that contribute to effective practice and to gauge the quality of their teaching and learning accurately and guard against over- or under-inflated assessments. They benefit directly from working with other schools on activities such as joint scrutiny of pupils' work or joint lesson observations with advisers from the local authority or regional consortium. These joint projects help staff to reflect on their practice and build their confidence.

In most schools, staff participate in working groups that focus on national priorities. The rigour and impact of the work of these groups vary considerably. The most effective groups have a clear aim and sense of purpose. They work towards achieving priorities for improvement that have been scoped and planned realistically, with appropriate resourcing and enough time to undertake the work. Members of these groups take a flexible approach, work together well as a team, build trusting relationships, and plan for the mid to long-term.

Increasingly, schools are developing their internal capacity by developing staff as facilitators of school-to-school working. For example, some schools have become hubs for 'Pioneer Schools' or other families of schools. This experience has provided the facilitators with rich opportunities to develop their wider leadership skills.

Developing new strategies to improve the quality of teaching

In working towards consistently good or better teaching, **Cefn Hengoed School** introduced new systems for sharing best practice, and for challenging and supporting staff. New practice included an 'executive teaching and learning group', with staff benefiting from the external validation and internal moderation of their work and from increased opportunities to support other schools to improve.

For more information about this, please read our **case study**.

Maintaining high standards and supporting improvement in other schools

In order to sustain high levels of performance, senior leaders at **Ysgol Glan Gele** focus on developing staff at all levels. Collaborative approaches to professional learning include joint teaching observations with other schools that contribute to the school's high-quality teaching and learning and excellent outcomes. It has also helped to support improvement in partner schools.

For more information about this, please read the **Leadership and primary school improvement** report (pp.90-94).

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Engaging with research evidence

Generating new opportunities to explore and reflect on teaching and learning is an important component of creating a self-improving school or provider. Reflection and innovation are stimulated by actively engaging with existing research evidence and findings.

In schools that use existing research evidence regularly, teachers are able to evaluate theories about teaching and learning, and apply them to their own practice. Engagement with theory and research enables teachers to make more objective and informed decisions about which teaching strategies best suit their pupils, and to reject unsuitable or faddish ideas. This engagement helps teachers to be more confident, discerning and creative, because their practice is rooted in understanding what works well.

Senior managers often lead this work. They scan and scrutinise relevant research publications and filter information so that staff are not overloaded. They make sure that nearly all practitioners actively engage with research. They plan and manage staff engagement with research projects. In the most effective schools, leaders take a critical and informed view of the research evidence available to decide which strategies are the best for their school. In particular, many schools make good use of educational research to influence their work in supporting pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, they use the evidence from charitable foundations such as the NFER, The Sutton Trust, The Education Endowment Foundation, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and emulate aspects of published case studies.

Increasingly, schools are taking advantage of the professional learning opportunities that regional consortia provide for using evidence-based practice, especially for literacy, numeracy, and raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. One example concerns facilitating training, based on educational psychology research, on meeting the emotional literacy needs of pupils. The training helps staff to gain a greater understanding of topics such as building pupils' self-esteem through positive social interaction. Staff apply this knowledge to direct and personalise interventions to meet the needs of their pupils, particularly those with the most complex needs.

Consortia also promote particular teaching frameworks or models, based on educational research, to help schools to improve their quality of teaching and to establish a common language about teaching. In schools that use these frameworks as a first step on their improvement journey, teaching may become formulaic. The most successful schools adapt the proposed framework to suit their teachers' and pupils' needs.

Get your thinking hat on!

Pupils in **Rhydypenau Primary School**, Cardiff, enjoy learning in an environment where thinking skills are encouraged through the use of a range of strategies such as thinking 'maps' and thinking 'hats' that are transforming teaching and learning.

For more information about this, please read our **case study**.

Several higher education institutions in Wales have developed professional learning programmes and have formed useful links with schools, authorities and consortia. These links provide valuable opportunities for schools to access current research and training in research methods, and for the university to access schools to conduct its research. This exchange of knowledge and research evidence is a positive step towards building the capacity for professional learning in schools. The school becomes more engaged in research and individual practitioners more confident about using evidence.

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Carrying out research

The best schools use evidence-based research methods to evaluate whether particular teaching and learning approaches have a positive impact on pupils' learning, and so help practitioners to choose the most effective ways of working. They work with a selected group of pupils to assess the impact of particular approaches. Teachers gather baseline data and evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative at regular intervals using a range of evidence to gauge pupils' progress. They search the most relevant literature relating to their research aims. In cases where they are following a master's course of study, they produce a formal literature review of the current thinking on their research topic and use this to shape their own inquiry.

Schools that support research provide training for teachers on analysing data, on how to counter bias and subjectivity, and on ensuring that their work is carried out ethically. They provide opportunities for teachers to share their findings with colleagues and to raise awareness among practitioners of issues, such as the achievement of particular groups of pupils. They also provide the opportunity to discuss difficulties and what has worked less well. Staff strengthen, adjust or abandon a particular approach if the research shows that it does not have tangible benefits.

Many new teachers entering the profession are already 'research literate' and have the skills they need to pursue research, yet few do so. As teachers progress through their careers, carrying out research is largely down to the interest and enthusiasm of individuals. In the most effective schools, leaders support the development of a culture of inquiry, and help teachers to develop and apply their research skills. These leaders understand the importance of maintaining teachers' interest in new developments and theories of pedagogy by providing an ongoing programme of events where teachers can reflect on and discuss evidence-based findings. They use these events to encourage staff to lead projects across the school, and in this way develop the leadership capacity of the school. Even in schools that do this, leaders do not always give staff enough time to engage in reflection and research. Universities report that a common cause for teachers not completing a master's course is being promoted and no longer having time for research.

Building on the effective federation of two schools to develop innovation

Craig Yr Hesg Primary School is innovative in how it extends the school's existing good practice. Leaders provide highly effective workshops with a strong focus on pedagogy. Activities include action research projects conducted with peers in other schools that explore and research particular aspects of pedagogy such as co-operative learning. Staff think critically about their practice and justify their pedagogy in terms of the impact on pupils' outcomes.

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Using data

In most schools, practitioners have access to an extensive range of data. Tracking systems usually capture wellbeing data such as attendance rates, alongside pupils' performance and progress data. Yet there are only a few schools that make highly effective use of data from multiple sources.

In high-performing schools, leaders ensure that practitioners have the skills to make intelligent use of data. Systematic sharing and use of data are an integral part of focusing on teaching quality and inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leaders invest in the development of staff's professional skills to ensure that they have the understanding and the confidence to make the best use of data. There are effective processes to share good practice among staff, such as providing one-to-one or small group support sessions to develop finer data-analysis skills and deeper understanding of how to use data to evaluate performance.

In the best schools, leaders use data analysis to underpin and evaluate school development priorities. Leaders place a high value on using data and aim to be data-literate so that they can analyse and reflect on the impact of their own policies. They ensure that all leaders and governors receive regular training and support to help them understand how to analyse and interpret data. In the very few schools where professional learning activities for leaders and governors to become data-literate are particularly strong, both groups are confident to challenge and question school performance data. In these cases, leaders and governors use their findings from data, as well as other forms of evidence, to revise curriculum and improvement plans and set the strategic direction for the school.

The journey to becoming a more outward looking school

At **Tonnau Community School**, the school's improvement journey includes a strong focus on data with staff developing a greater understanding of the link between the use of data and provision and outcomes. Professional learning activities include, for example, joint analysis of data to map provision, which helps to clarify expectations for pupils and the level of challenge and support they would need in the classroom.

For more information about this, please read the **Leadership and primary school improvement** report (pp.42-45).

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Using new technologies

The introduction of the Welsh Government's Digital Competence Framework (Welsh Government, 2015b) presents a new challenge for practitioners' professional learning. A top priority is to equip non-specialist practitioners with the digital skills and understanding they need to keep pace with developments and to enable them to make informed judgements about the pedagogy of using new technologies.

In the very few schools where the potential of digital learning is being fully realised, leaders have a clear vision of the new teaching and learning approaches made possible by new technologies. These schools have taken valuable lessons about professional learning from the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework and have completed audits of practitioners' information and communication technology (ICT) skills to identify individual training needs. In these schools, teachers are recognised as being key to delivering the digital literacy skills that pupils need. They are encouraged to adapt their planning and teaching and to introduce new ideas that complement and add to their current practice.   These teachers evaluate the new approaches they take to ensure that they contribute to improving pupils' learning.

They also enable pupils to become 'digital leaders', helping them to contribute to planning and to leading learning. These pupil digital leaders often support practitioners' professional learning and inspire their peers. In these schools, a climate of openness and mutual trust, coupled with support for interdependent learning, permeates the school.

Special schools are often at the cutting edge of using new technologies to enhance provision because of the communication challenges facing some of their pupils. In the best special schools, key practitioners immerse themselves in professional learning programmes to extend their knowledge of how particular software and hardware can be used to provide pupils with greater independence and wider opportunities to access the curriculum, and to help them overcome communication difficulties. They also share this expertise with mainstream schools in their area.

Digital technology in primary school life

Cornist Park Community Primary School has enhanced the digital competency of pupils, staff, parents, governors and the wider community by embedding digital technology into school life. A staff audit and opportunities for teachers to spend time out of class working closely with the Staff Digital Lead and Pupil Digital Leaders help teachers to adapt their medium-term plans to include the Digital Competency Framework in meaningful and creative ways.

For more information about this, please read our **case study**.

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Learning how to lead professional learning

Leaders in the most successful schools know that they must build the leadership capacity of the school as a whole to sustain their momentum for improvement. As well as focusing on teaching and learning, they ensure that staff development also focuses on learning to lead. They do this by creating opportunities for practitioners throughout the school to take on leadership roles. They identify, support and nurture the leadership potential of their staff, particularly early in their careers, helping staff to develop the skills they need to become future leaders.

These leaders use a range of strategies to provide practitioners with progressive professional learning opportunities. This includes activities such as leading a whole-school task-and-finish working group, shadowing roles to learn from more experienced colleagues, and creating fixed-term leadership opportunities within and beyond the school. Many members of staff welcome these opportunities and feel more valued because leaders trust them to lead particular projects and initiatives. Leaders developing staff in this way also help to manage the transfer of specialist skills and knowledge in anticipation of staffing changes. This is a useful strategy for succession planning.

More effective schools have performance management procedures in place where senior leaders have objectives that relate specifically to developing staff as potential leaders. In these schools, governors challenge leaders and hold them to account on leadership development. Building leadership capacity at all levels in this way is an important component of developing a self-improving system. It provides the opportunity for leaders to reflect on their own practice and challenge themselves about how effective they are in leading change. It also enables them to plan for their own professional learning through engaging in activities organised by the regional consortia to help other schools.

Developing leadership at all levels

Staff at **Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd** create and maintain a whole-school structure that differentiates clearly between leadership and management responsibilities. This distinction provides opportunities for staff to take on new roles, often with decision-making responsibilities, and nurtures leadership at all levels across the school.

For more information about this, please read our **case study**.

Identifying and developing potential leaders

Bryngwyn Comprehensive School is federated with another school on two independent sites. The school has introduced helpful arrangements for mentoring and coaching leaders on skills such as data analysis and classroom observation techniques. As a result, many staff are fully prepared to move to the next stage of leadership in the school or in other schools when opportunities arise.

For more information about this, please read the **Best practice in leadership development in schools** report (pp.13-15).

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Professional learning in contexts other than maintained schools

The chart below shows key areas that contribute to the success of professional learning. In each area, practice is identified for those sectors where there are significant strengths.

Figure 1.2:
Sectors, other than maintained schools, where there are significant strengths that contribute to the success of professional learning

Key area	Significant sector strengths
Creating the right culture and conditions for professional learning	• Many **further education colleges** make valuable use of ColegauCymru for professional learning that includes participation in conferences and study visits to share good practice across the sector, as well as college managers' participation in teaching and learning networks, and leadership development programmes. • Nearly all **work-based learning providers** have a strong focus on professional learning. They identify priorities for training activities and often share these activities with consortium members and sub-contractors.
Building supportive professional relationships	• Nearly all **large independent mainstream** schools have highly effective links with their 'family' or association of independent schools. These structures provide strong support for professional learning, particularly in deepening subject knowledge. • Nearly all **independent special schools** with linked children's homes have effective collaborative professional learning arrangements between education and care staff. This provides greater consistency in approaches to learning and behaviour management across both settings. • Many **work-based learning** providers have significantly improved the identification and sharing of best practice in training and assessment.

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Key area	Significant sector strengths
Engaging with research evidence and carrying out research	• The majority of teachers in **further education colleges** are involved in the use of supported experimental teaching or evidence-based practice. This has led to an increase in support and mentoring for these teachers.
Using data and new technologies as catalysts for improvement and innovation	• The use of data to inform planning and quality management is highly developed at senior and middle manager levels in all **further education colleges**. Many colleges use electronic dashboards to provide easy access to live completion, attainment and success data. In a minority of colleges, access to these dashboards is available at all levels. A few colleges are beginning to introduce performance management dashboards for teachers, which cross reference teaching and learning and self evaluation with outcomes, learner feedback and classroom observations. • Many large **all-age independent mainstream schools** focus on developing middle and senior leaders' data handling skills to make highly effective use of data. They are adept at analysing data to identify and plan for particular pupil learning needs, set challenging targets, monitor progress and inform self-evaluation.

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Barriers to successful professional learning

Across Wales, there are groups of staff who do not have enough suitable professional learning opportunities. This includes practitioners involved in education other than at school (EOTAS), and aspiring headteachers and experienced senior leaders in mainstream schools. There is a particular shortage of training provision for leaders through the medium of Welsh.

More generally, professional learning in many schools involves considerable investment of time, energy and resources, with practitioners participating in a wide range of activities, but schools do not evaluate the return, in terms of improving teaching or outcomes, on this investment. Professional learning needs are not always identified clearly as part of performance management arrangements. There is also a lack of focus on planning professional learning systematically. For example, leaders do not use the outcomes of self-evaluation to identify priorities for improving teaching at whole-school or individual teacher level.

In many schools, evidence-based approaches to selecting new initiatives have led to improvements in important areas such as the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. Although many schools are drawing more on research to identify strategies for improvement, the implementation of these strategies is superficial when leaders do not ensure that practitioners fully understand the thinking behind them. In a minority of schools, leaders introduce initiatives because they have been successful in other schools, rather than because they meet the needs of their own school. There is not enough questioning of the sustainability of 'quick fixes', such as making temporary staffing appointments to provide catch-up classes, rather than longer-term planning of professional learning to improve the quality of teaching.

In general, most schools are using data more effectively for school improvement than was the case only a few years ago. However, the professional learning and support required to develop more effective use of data in self-evaluation are not strong enough in a majority of schools. Many schools are increasingly using digital learning platforms such as the Welsh Government's Hwb and Hwb+ for a wide range of useful professional learning purposes. However, too few schools have identified practitioners' professional learning needs to plan for their ICT skills, particularly those required to deliver the new Digital Competence Framework.

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Next steps - 10 sets of important questions

As a starting point for reflection, schools and other education providers can use the following 10 sets of questions as part of their self-evaluation:

Figure 1.3:
Self-evaluation questions

Focus	Question
Creating the right culture and conditions for professional learning	**1** Do we as leaders communicate a **compelling vision** about how professional learning improves pupils' outcomes? Does our school create the right culture and conditions for professional learning? Do we prioritise professional learning enough and protect time for staff to engage in these activities? **2** Do we have a strong **learning culture**, for practitioners and pupils, which centres on openness and nurturing fresh ideas? Do we provide enough support for trying out new ideas?
Building supportive professional relationships	**3** How well do we **work in teams** and make the best use of the skills, knowledge and experience of all staff? Do we have a shared language and understanding about what effective team working is? Do we communicate honestly, building trust and respect? **4** Do we have a culture within our school that supports **collaborative working with other schools** and organisations?
Engaging with research evidence and carrying out research	**5** Are messages from **research** and new evidence thought about routinely by staff? Do we provide opportunities for our teachers to debate research findings? **6** Do we as leaders encourage staff to **engage in research**? Do we have systems in place to pilot or test new ideas before we put them into practice?
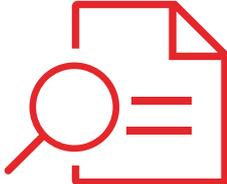
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Focus	Question
Using data and new technologies as catalysts for improvement and innovation 	**7** Do we have a clear rationale for the **data** that we collect and how it will be used to improve provision and outcomes? How do we ensure that staff and governors have the skills and confidence to derive educational insights from the analysis of multiple sources of data? **8** How confident are our teachers in using **digital** skills creatively in the classroom? Is there a need to strengthen training to enable staff to use their digital skills to enrich classroom teaching and learning?
Learning to lead professional learning 	**9** How well do we as senior leaders identify and nurture the **leadership potential** of all our staff and provide them with appropriate support? **10** Do we have effective systems for systematic feedback and **evaluation** of our professional learning activities? If so, how well is it communicated and used to plan future activities?
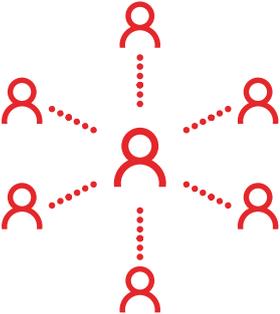
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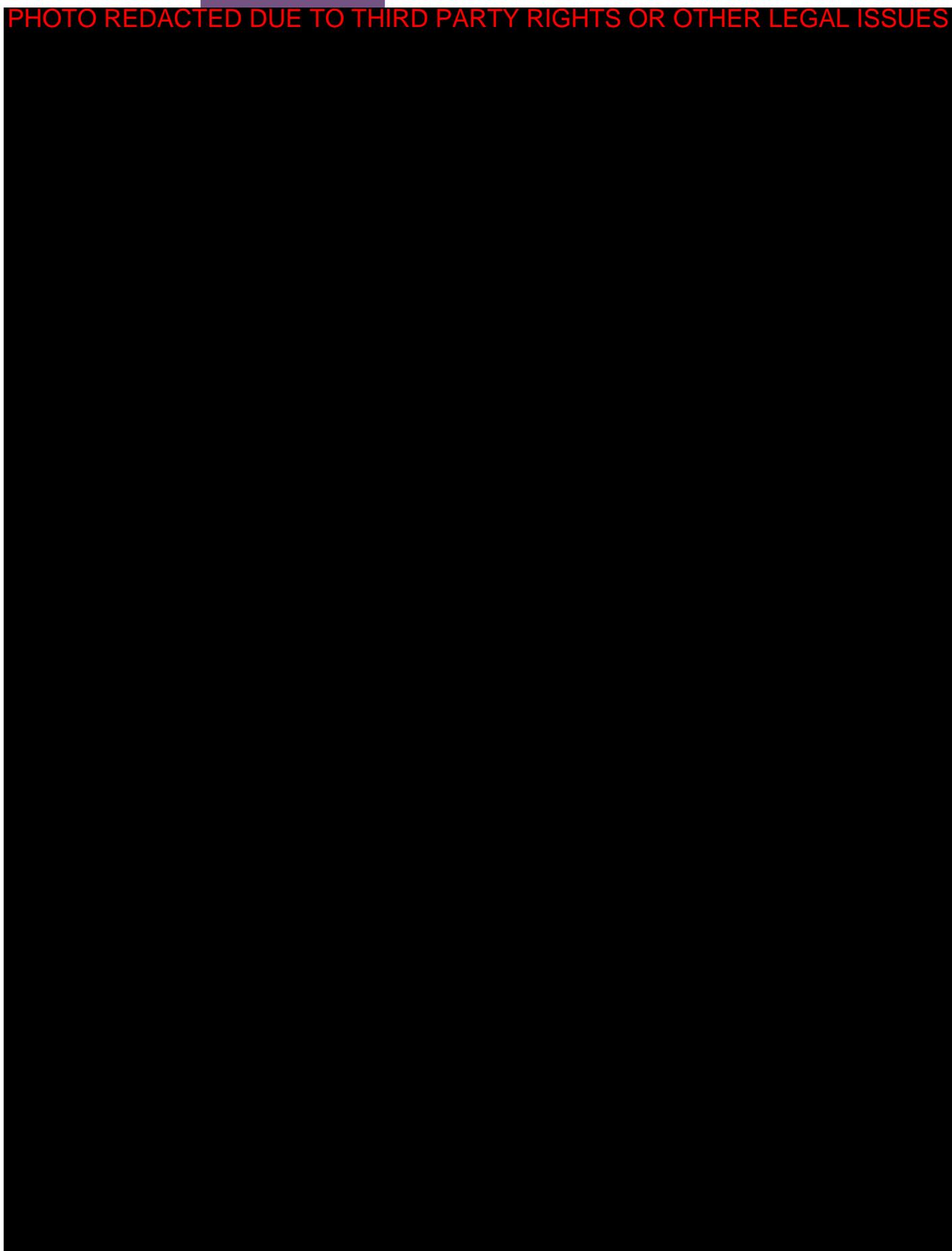
Sector report
Non-school settings for
children under five[2]

Nearly all local authorities in Wales fund some part-time education for three-year-olds, and very occasionally for four-year-olds, in settings as well as in schools. Local authorities do not maintain these settings, but they are responsible for ensuring that they provide funded early education of good quality, including offering advice and support from a qualified teacher. Settings that provide funded early education include day care providers and playgroups. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) also inspects the quality of care for children at these settings. Since September 2015, Estyn and CSSIW have piloted joint inspections in 11 non-school settings. The findings from these pilot inspections have informed the report below.

This year, there were approximately 620 providers of part-time education for three or four-year-olds, a fall from 645 last year. Estyn inspected 103 settings this year. Close to half of these are small settings with fewer than six children funded by local authorities for part-time education. In small settings, inspectors report on provision and leadership only to avoid identifying individual children.

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[2]These are also known as funded non-maintained settings.

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Summary:
Non-school settings for children under five

This year, we identified 12 settings as having excellent practice, three more than were identified last year. Settings with excellent practice have a thorough grasp of effective Foundation Phase practice. Their plans focus on developing children's skills systematically, particularly their literacy and numeracy skills. Practitioners have a detailed understanding of children's stages of development. They use this knowledge to provide an extensive range of stimulating learning experiences both indoors and outside that match children's needs and interests. For example, they make exceptional use of outdoor space to provide exciting learning environments.   In these settings, leaders understand self-evaluation processes and work effectively to improve provision and raise standards. This includes using direct evidence of teaching and learning to inform self-evaluation and to challenge even the best practitioners to improve further. They also listen carefully to the views of practitioners, parents and children to ensure that priorities for improvement are relevant.

Just under two-fifths of settings inspected this year require monitoring either from the local authority or from Estyn, which is slightly higher than the proportion last year. In general, there is an overall improvement in planning for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. Using assessments to ensure that children make systematic progress, and developing effective self-evaluation processes, continue to be important areas for development in the sector. Only one setting requires focused improvement this year.

Figure 2.1:
Percentages of settings in levels of follow-up

12% Excellent practice
(12 providers)

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

60% **25%** **14%** **1%**

● Not in follow-up   ● LA monitoring   ● Estyn monitoring   ● Focused improvement

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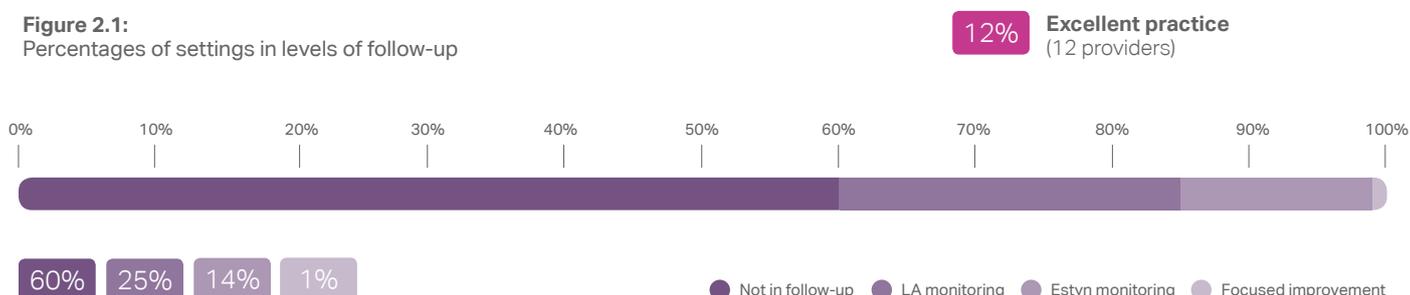
Outcomes:
Non-school settings for children under five

Standards

Standards are good or better in 92% of settings where we reported on standards. This is slightly higher than the percentage identified last year.

In these settings, many children develop their speaking skills well. They talk confidently and make themselves understood. They listen to and follow instructions carefully, such as when washing their hands thoroughly before eating. Most children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. A few see themselves as readers and use the pictures in a book to tell stories. Many children make secure progress in developing their early writing skills. For example, younger children show interest in writing and make marks confidently using a variety of tools with increasing control. They show that they understand the purpose of writing, such as when they 'write' lists of ingredients for baking and a price list for washing cars. Older and more able children begin to form letters and write their names correctly, including writing birthday cards for a teddy.

Most children develop their numeracy skills well. For example, they recite numbers to at least 10 in both Welsh and English and count objects with growing confidence, such as how many scoops of earth they need to fill different sized flowerpots. Many children use appropriate words to talk about size and weight, and to compare different objects. In a few settings, children learn to think and solve problems well, such as working out an organised system for washing and parking toy cars in the outdoor role-play area. In a few settings, children use information and communication technology (ICT) skilfully, but generally most pupils do not develop their ICT skills well enough.

In around one-in-thirteen settings, standards are adequate because too many children only make limited progress. They do not develop new vocabulary well enough. For example, they do not know the words they need to make comparisons when they fill and empty containers. Few children choose to look at books and they do not listen to or respond to stories well.

Standards of Welsh continue to be an area for development in a majority of English-medium settings and increasingly in Welsh-medium settings, where children do not develop their Welsh well enough to use it independently.

Figure 2.2:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?

0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100%

| 0% | 92% | 8% | 0% |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate   ● Unsatisfactory

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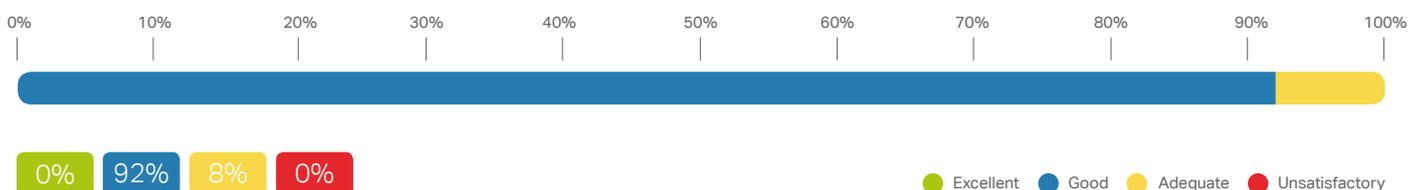
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Wellbeing

In most settings, children's wellbeing is good or better. Where standards are excellent, nearly all children behave exceptionally well. They are highly motivated and interested in their work. In most settings, nearly all children develop an appropriate understanding about the food they need to eat and how to stay healthy. Many children concentrate, persevere and try out new activities confidently, such as melting ice more quickly by using the heat from their hands. In a very few settings, children rely too heavily on adults to help them with simple tasks such as putting on their coats and aprons. A few children flit between different activities rather than concentrating on a particular task.

Developing positive attitudes to learning

Sticky Fingers is a caring community where practitioners value the importance of developing good quality relationships with and between the children. To help children develop respect for themselves, others and the environment, they are fully involved in rule-making processes. Children are keen to contribute and this helps them to follow the setting's routines and rules confidently and with understanding.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

Figure 2.3:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

4%   92%   4%   0%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate   ● Unsatisfactory

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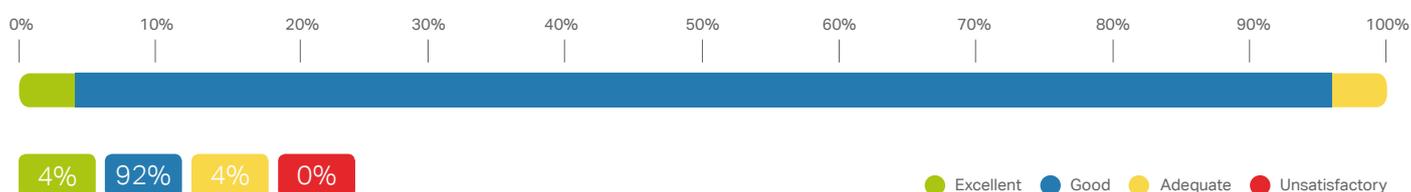
Provision:
Non-school settings for children under five

Provision is good or better in 86% of settings inspected this year. This is similar to the proportion identified last year, with inspectors identifying a very few more examples of excellent practice.

Many settings take good account of the revised Foundation Phase Framework when planning to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills. They work in close partnership with the local authority advisory teacher to plan more opportunities for children to practise these skills. Where provision is excellent, practitioners adapt plans quickly to respond to opportunities as they arise, such as using a honeybee flying into the room to spark an investigation into bees and honey.

In general, settings are less successful at meeting the particular needs of individuals or of different groups of children. Activities are either too difficult for a few children or do not stretch the more able children enough. Although there is increasing use of ICT equipment, many settings do not plan purposefully enough to build on children's ICT skills. For example, children take photographs in the forest area, but do not refer to them when they talk later about what they saw. A few settings arrange highly effective visits that motivate children and enrich their learning experiences, such as a train journey linked to a transport theme.

This year, we found that a few Welsh-medium settings do not plan carefully enough to develop children's speaking skills. In a very few Welsh-medium settings, practitioners were not confident enough in their own Welsh language skills to use Welsh throughout the session.

Teaching is good or better in most settings. In these settings, practitioners ask questions that help children to think and to solve problems, and they have high expectations of what children can achieve. They manage children's behaviour skilfully and are good role models of spoken language. Overall, settings are getting better at assessing and tracking children's progress, and many have started using the Foundation Phase Profile to help them. In a minority of settings, there are still weaknesses in identifying and addressing what children need to learn next. In a few settings, there is too much emphasis on group teaching by adults, and children do not have enough opportunities to investigate and experiment freely on their own.

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Most settings have valuable arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing. This includes providing meaningful opportunities for children to learn to do things for themselves, such as putting on wellingtons and tidying the room. Almost all settings promote healthy eating well, including encouraging children to eat fruit at snack time. Although most settings are developing their outdoor areas and using them regularly, a few do not plan successfully to develop children's skills outside. A few settings restrict the use of the outdoors to when they feel the weather is good and do not provide enough opportunities for children to exert themselves physically.

Many settings teach children how to look after the environment through recycling paper and food waste. A few settings do this particularly well, such as making compost from food waste and using it to grow their own vegetables. Generally, settings promote cultural diversity suitably. Only a very few settings provide experiences for children to develop a respect for different cultural traditions. In a very few settings, there are concerns relating to practitioners not fully understanding the setting's safeguarding policy and procedures.

Creating a welcoming learning environment

Staff at **Cylch Meithrin Bodffordd** share and promote the vision of creating a stimulating learning environment that challenges children and extends them to achieve their full potential. They work together each day to set up a variety of exciting learning areas that enrich the children's learning.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

Figure 2.4:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

3%   83%   13%   1%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate   ● Unsatisfactory

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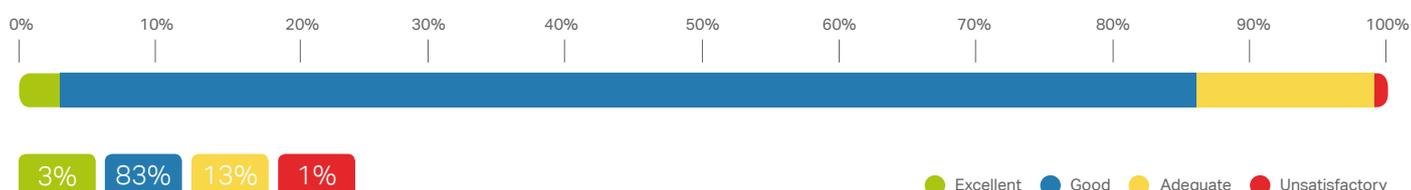
Leadership and management:
Non-school settings for children under five

Leadership is good or better in 88% of settings inspected this year.

In many settings, leaders have a clear sense of purpose and make sure that practitioners understand their roles and responsibilities. They communicate effectively, build strong teams and make the most of the individual expertise of staff. In a very few settings, where leadership is excellent, leaders involve staff, parents and children in self-evaluation, using clear and simple processes. They make sure that they focus their evaluation on the children and on improving outcomes. They act decisively to meet priorities for improvement and monitor progress rigorously. In a very few settings, leadership is less effective. Often, this is because management and improvement systems are not robust and do not focus well enough on outcomes for children. In these settings, leaders do not monitor staff performance well and there are few opportunities for staff to learn about new ways of working.

In most settings, partnerships with parents are strong. Where these are particularly effective, settings share useful information with parents about how to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills and how to support them in learning Welsh at home. This year, there are more settings that are working closely with local schools. More children benefit from worthwhile transition arrangements and opportunities to share resources, such as forest areas. Most settings value and act on the advice and support that they receive from their local authority link teacher.

Most settings provide good value for money. Practitioners in most local authorities benefit from access to suitable training. In a few settings, leaders do not monitor or evaluate the impact of this training on children's outcomes carefully enough. In a majority of settings inspected, the local authority retains the Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant to provide training and resources linked to improving children's wellbeing and their numeracy and language skills. A very few settings receive the grant directly and a very few are not aware of the grant or its purpose. Only a very few settings monitor or evaluate the impact of the grant.

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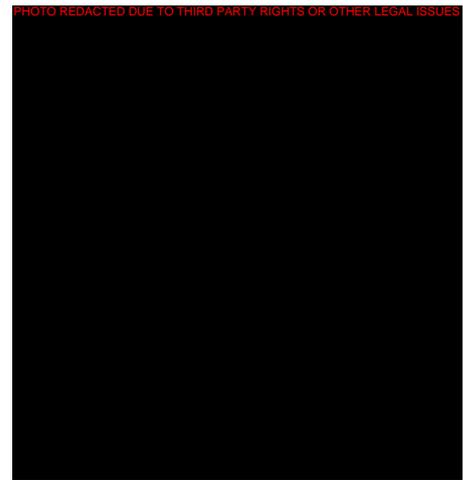
Figure 2.5:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

3% 85% 11% 1%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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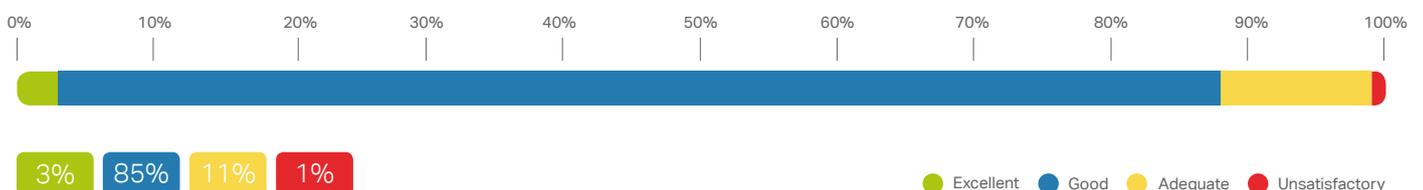
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Follow-up activity:
Non-school settings for children under five

This year, 30 out of 35 settings that required or remained in monitoring by the local authority or by Estyn in the previous year were removed from follow-up. These settings generally act purposefully to address the recommendations from their core inspections. Practitioners plan to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills to meet their individual needs. Many of these settings make good use of the revised Foundation Phase Framework and the new Foundation Phase Profile to help them with this. A very few settings did not make enough progress while being monitored by the local authority and now require monitoring by Estyn. A very few settings previously identified as requiring Estyn monitoring also made slow progress. They now require focused improvement, an increased level of monitoring by Estyn. In these settings, there have been many changes in staff, making it difficult to sustain improvements. Although leaders have made suitable plans, they have not acted on these in a timely fashion.
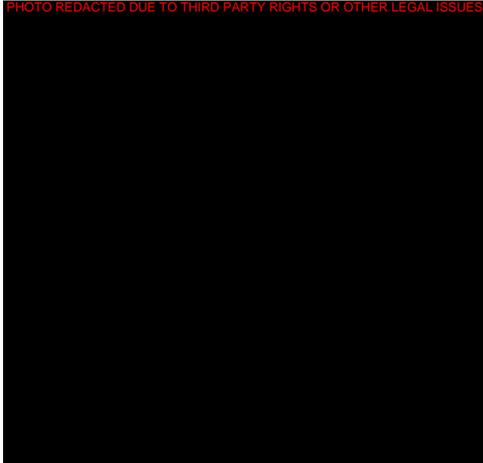
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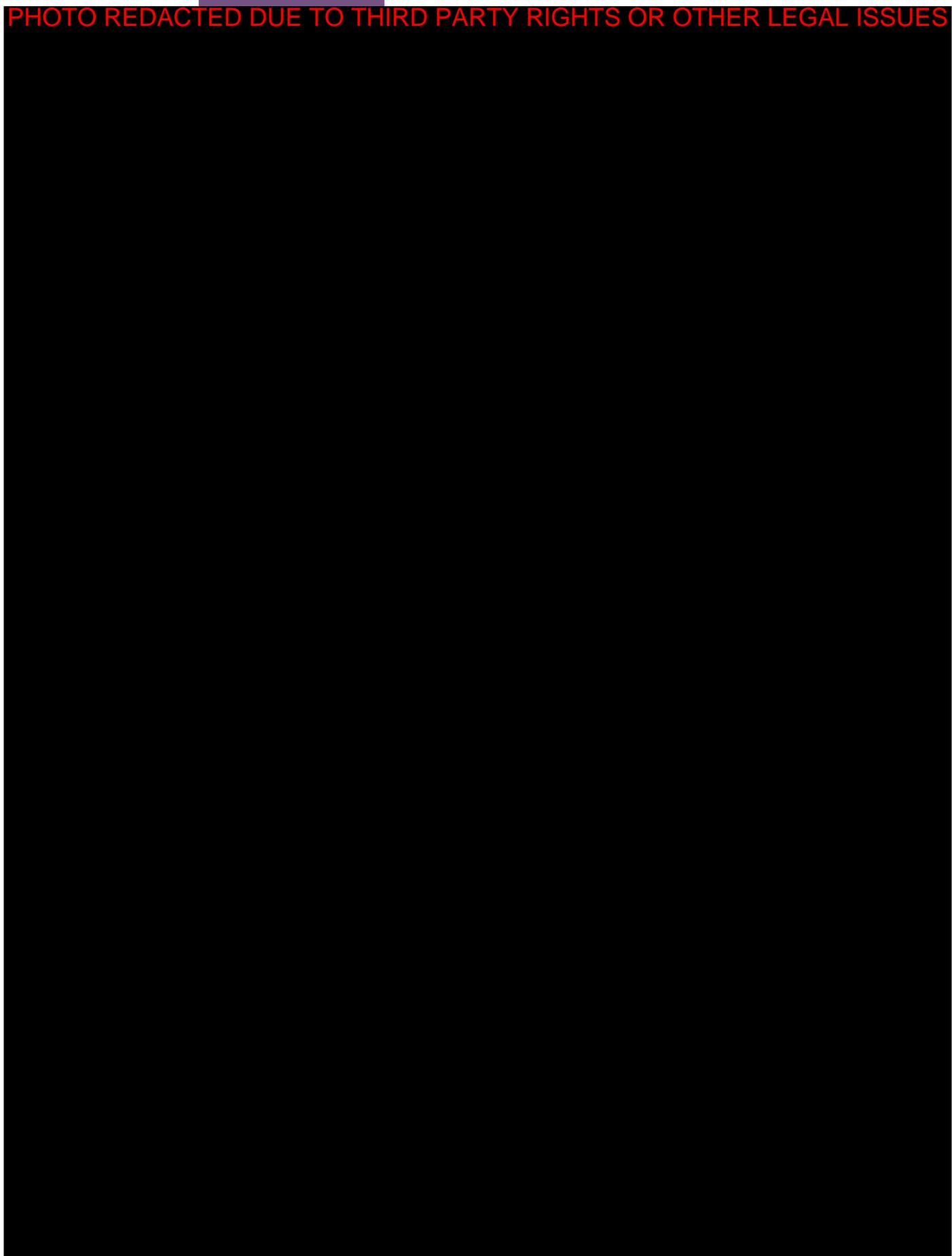
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Sector report
Primary

In January 2016, there were 1,310 primary schools in Wales. This is 20 fewer than in January 2015. There were 276,950 pupils in primary schools in January 2016, an increase of about 3,550 from the previous year. This is the sixth consecutive annual rise in primary pupil numbers. The number of pupils in primary schools is now 7% higher than it was six years ago.

This year, we inspected 178 primary schools.

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Summary:
Primary schools

This year, we identified 40 primary schools with excellent practice for at least one quality indicator. This represents 22% of the schools inspected, compared with 18% last year, and continues an improving trend of schools judged to have some excellent practice. We judged six schools as excellent overall, for both their current performance and their prospects for improvement, which is two more than were identified last year. In these schools, lessons are stimulating, with all groups of pupils achieving well and enjoying their learning. Feedback to pupils is meaningful and purposeful. Pupils have time to reflect on and to respond to this feedback so that it improves their learning. The feedback is manageable for teachers and pupils. Leaders in these schools know their school extremely well and are confident in identifying and addressing areas requiring improvement. They work strategically with key stakeholders and empower pupils to take an active part in shaping the life of the school.

About a quarter of primary schools inspected this year require Estyn monitoring, which is similar to the proportion last year. In these schools, pupils generally achieve adequate standards, although in a few instances standards are good. However, often leaders and managers do not identify the correct priorities for development, such as improving teaching and learning or providing teachers with suitable opportunities for professional learning.

This year, the proportion of primary schools requiring statutory intervention reduced when compared with last year. Inspectors placed seven primary schools (4%) in a statutory category following their core inspection this year. This is a reduction on the 20 schools (9%) identified last year. Three schools (2%) require special measures, compared with eight schools (4%) last year. Four schools (2%) require significant improvement, compared with 12 schools (5%) last year. Despite the improvements across the sector as a whole, there are important shortcomings in the quality of leadership and management in these few schools. Too often,

self-evaluation procedures are not sharp enough to enable leaders, including the governing body, to take the right actions to improve their schools. In a few of these schools, there is an over-reliance on temporary staff who do not have the relevant skills and experience for the post.

Figure 2.6:
Percentages of primary schools in levels of follow-up

22% **Excellent practice**
(40 providers)

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

43% 29% 24% 2% 2%

● Not in follow-up ● LA monitoring ● Estyn monitoring ● Significant improvement ○ Special measures

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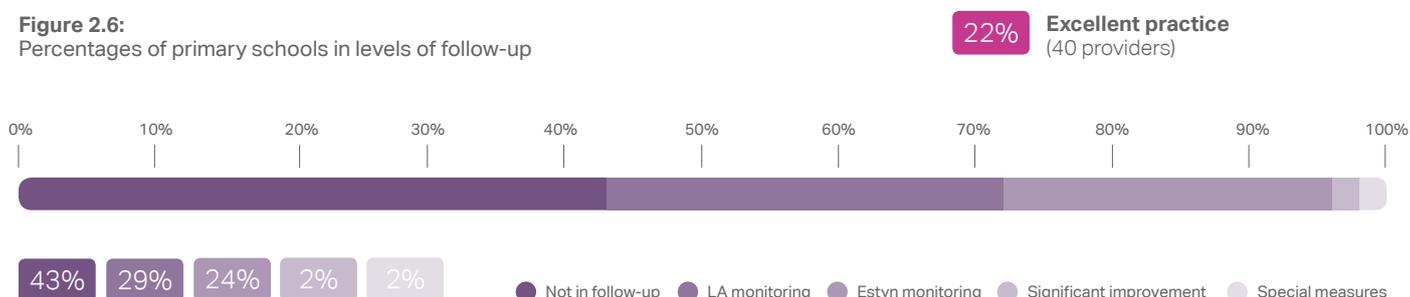
Outcomes:
Primary schools

Standards

Standards are good or better in around seven-in-ten primary schools inspected this year. This builds on the improvement seen last year. The proportion of schools judged as excellent or as unsatisfactory has remained broadly the same.

Where standards are good or better, the gap in performance between boys and girls, and between pupils eligible for free school meals and others, is narrowing. Most pupils with additional learning needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. In around a third of schools, more able pupils do not make enough progress because the work they are set is not challenging enough.

Pupils' literacy skills continue to improve. Many Foundation Phase pupils speak confidently using interesting vocabulary and they use their reading skills to good effect to support their learning. For example, younger pupils recognise their name and add it to a chart to show that they are present and older pupils use a dictionary to locate words in alphabetical order. Many older pupils' writing shows an awareness of the importance of engaging the reader and using imaginative language. For example, a pupil describes the ice seen from a porthole on the Titanic as sparkling like 'a ballerina's dress'.

In key stage 2, standards of literacy are good in about two-thirds of schools inspected. Most pupils use their oracy skills effectively, for example when presenting a reasoned argument on the benefits of Fairtrade. They apply their higher-order reading skills well to extract key information quickly in mathematics lessons when solving problems set in words. In about one-in-ten schools, a lack of challenge in reading materials and a rigid adherence to reading schemes impact negatively on pupils' enjoyment of reading. Where pupils' writing skills are good, they show pride in, and redraft and refine, their work. In a fifth of schools, the quality of writing and presentation is inconsistent across the school. In these schools, the overuse of worksheets often prevents pupils from presenting their work independently and creatively. Many pupils do not use their knowledge about how words sound to spell more accurately.

In around two-thirds of schools, standards of numeracy are good or better. In these schools, pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently when solving real-life problems. For example, older key stage 2 pupils work out the profit margin of items sold during their school's enterprise week. More able pupils use their knowledge across subjects, such as when they calculate the mean temperature and rainfall for Nairobi. In the Foundation Phase, pupils use their data handling and measuring skills as part of their everyday learning. Many weigh ingredients in a 'mud kitchen' and create and interpret simple tally charts showing findings from a bug hunt. In schools where standards of numeracy are adequate, there is an over-reliance on formal teaching and on worksheets that limit pupils' opportunity to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Figure 2.7:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

4%	68%	26%	1%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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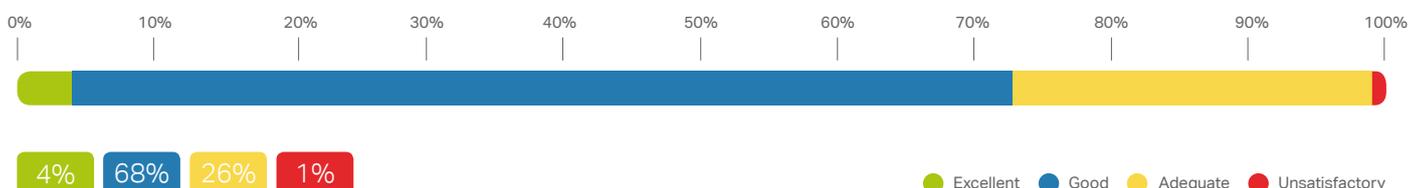
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Primary schools

In the majority of schools, there are still important shortcomings in standards of ICT. Most pupils routinely use tablets and computers to find and present information and they demonstrate sound awareness of e-safety. Yet many pupils do not have a strong enough grasp of the full range of ICT skills appropriate for their age, such as creating spreadsheets or managing and interpreting data. In the very few schools where ICT standards are strong, key stage 2 pupils use formulae in spreadsheets, for example when comparing the exchange rates of different currencies.

Standards of Welsh in English-medium schools are still too variable. Around a third of English-medium schools have recommendations relating to pupils not using their Welsh oracy skills well enough outside of formal lessons. Although many pupils in English-medium schools are enthusiastic about learning Welsh and know useful phrases, they do not often use them correctly or with confidence.

Taking every opportunity to increase literacy

Twenty-seven languages are spoken at **Kitchener Primary School**, with English spoken as an additional language by 86% of pupils. The school employs a broad range of strategies and teaching methods to ensure that all pupils have the best opportunities to develop their literacy skills. As a result, standards in literacy across the school have risen each year for the past three years.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

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Wellbeing

Standards of wellbeing are good or better in around two-thirds of schools. Nearly all pupils work well together and have good social and life skills. This has a positive impact on standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning. Many pupils show high levels of perseverance and resilience and a willingness to learn from their mistakes.

In around 70% of schools, school councils and other pupil groups make valuable contributions to school life. For example, older pupils act as 'play leaders' to support younger pupils at playtimes and help to resolve minor conflicts between other pupils. Eco-committees promote sustainable living through activities such as designing and building 'bottle greenhouses', and growing and selling produce. In around a third of schools where standards of wellbeing are less than good, 'pupil voice' is not strong and pupil councils are overly adult led.

This year, just under a third of schools have a recommendation to improve attendance, because either they do not have a track record for improving attendance or the rise in attendance has been slower than in other schools.

Encouraging less engaged learners

At **Cwmfelinfach Primary School**, pupils who display characteristics such as low self-esteem or lack of engagement are invited to become members of a 'Learning Spy group'. The group observes lessons and asks their peers questions about how they learn and what they need to know. It plays an important role in devising class posters and suggesting helpful strategies on how to work independently. This increases these pupils' self-esteem significantly.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

Figure 2.8:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

8% 57% 34% 1%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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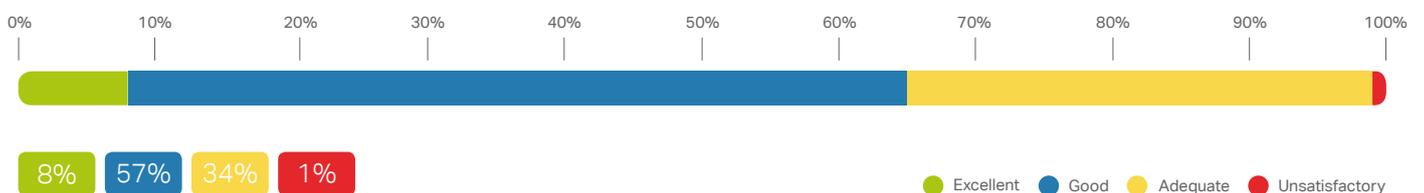
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Provision:
Primary schools

Overall, provision is good or better in almost 80% of schools inspected this year. This is an improvement on last year's figure of around 75%.

Learning experiences

Many schools provide good or better learning experiences. In the strongest schools, teachers plan stimulating learning experiences that motivate pupils of all ages and abilities. They often take account of pupils' interests and ideas. For example, in one nursery school, teachers helped pupils to set up a photo booth after the pupils identified the need when planning a party. Leaders in these schools ensure that all pupils experience a broad, balanced and creative curriculum in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2. Together with teachers, they have a clear focus on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills systematically and progressively.

There are shortcomings in curriculum provision in around a quarter of schools. In these schools, planning does not ensure that pupils use and build on their numeracy skills across the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills are too narrow and do not allow pupils to write at length

or independently across the curriculum. There are too many schools where learning in the Foundation Phase becomes too structured and formal too soon. This reduces pupils' ability to develop as independent learners. In these schools, pupils do not have enough chances to choose what and how they learn, particularly towards the end of the Foundation Phase.

Teaching

This year, teaching and assessment have improved, with just over seven-in-ten schools being good or better.

In the very few schools with excellent teaching, teachers plan innovative lessons that enthuse pupils in their learning. For example, pupils develop data handling and measuring skills when investigating the effect of weightlessness on seeds grown in the International Space Station.

Where teaching is strong, teachers ask challenging questions that extend pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills, and assess their understanding. Teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. They use assessment information to make sure that they plan learning experiences that challenge all pupils. Lessons progress at a good pace and teachers

intervene skilfully to support pupils at appropriate points during lessons.

A majority of teachers understand and make suitable use of a range of assessment strategies. Where these are most effective, feedback to pupils is focused and purposeful, with teachers giving pupils worthwhile opportunities to improve their work and to respond to oral and written comments. They involve pupils in evaluating their own learning and that of others.

There are shortcomings in teaching and assessment in around three-in-ten schools. In many of these schools, teachers do not provide effective feedback and suitable assessment opportunities so that pupils gain confidence and have a secure understanding of what they do well and how they can improve. This is because the quality of teachers' marking needs to improve, rather than because of a need to increase the amount or frequency of marking.

Nearly all schools have systems to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school. In a few schools, the information recorded does not reflect the standards that pupils achieve. In almost a third of schools, even where there is accurate tracking, teachers do not use this information to match learning activities to pupils'

Figure 2.9:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 3% | 75% | 20% | 1% |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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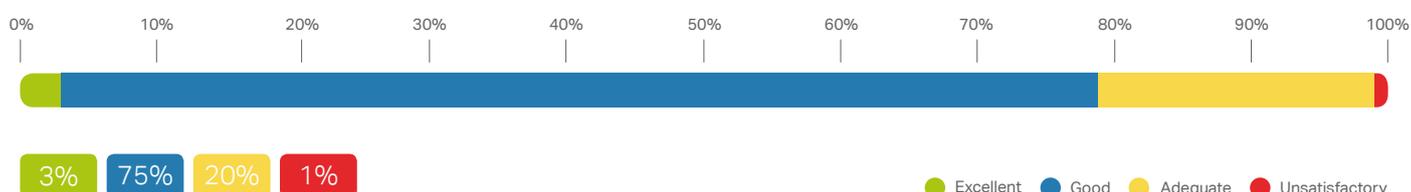
abilities. For example, activities for more able pupils often require completing extra amounts of similar work, rather than providing carefully thought-through tasks that challenge pupils to think more deeply.

Care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance remains good or better in just over nine-in-ten schools.

The most effective schools make good use of an extensive range of external and specialist services to provide support for pupils and their families. Staff identify the additional needs of pupils accurately at an early stage. They put well-planned intervention programmes in place to provide these pupils with necessary support from within and outside the school. They track and evaluate pupils' progress systematically. Staff liaise well with parents and review their child's progress with them regularly. As a result, parents are better able to support their child's learning and this helps pupils to make progress against agreed targets.

Fewer than one-in-ten schools inspected receive a recommendation to improve their care, support and guidance. In these schools, around a third

of recommendations highlight a need to improve the provision for pupils with additional learning needs, such as making individual education plans more specific. As identified last year, nearly all schools have suitable arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Learning environment

Most schools provide an inclusive and welcoming environment. They celebrate diverse cultures and languages well. The most effective schools work diligently to establish links with hard-to-reach families. They help to promote high aspirations for these pupils and support parents and carers to develop the skills to help their children.

Most schools create attractive learning environments and have enough suitable learning resources. In the best cases, they plan outdoor space imaginatively to provide pupils with a wide range of physical and creative opportunities and challenges. Where schools need to improve the physical learning environment, this mostly relates to improving the access or the provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Phase.

Creating an engaging learning environment

A majority of pupils at **Monkton Priory Community Primary** have limited experiences of places beyond their community. The school aims to provide a "window on the world" that enriches pupils' learning experiences by providing real-life experiences for topics that pupils have studied in the classroom. As a result, pupils' behaviour, attendance and performance have improved.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

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Leadership and management:
Primary schools

Leadership and management are good or better in nearly three-quarters of schools. This is a slight improvement on last year.

Leadership

This year, the proportion of primary schools with good or excellent leadership increased slightly to 72%, while the proportion with unsatisfactory leadership reduced to 3% from 7% last year.

In the one-in-ten schools where leadership is excellent, leaders respond well to challenges such as those brought about by amalgamation or the unexpected arrival of large numbers of pupils with diverse needs. These leaders act purposefully to ensure that the school continues to meet the needs of all its pupils. They support school-to-school collaboration, and strike a careful balance between spending time out of school and focusing on their own school's priorities. Governors in these schools have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, gained from first-hand experience. Leaders and governors in these schools are committed to developing pupils' responsibilities. They listen carefully to pupils' opinions and respond seriously to their views.

Leaders in the many schools with good leadership provide strong strategic direction and nurture an ethos of continuous improvement. They have a clear vision for the school and ensure that staff, parents and pupils understand and share this vision. Approaches and practices in these schools are consistent and coherent, and flexible enough to draw on the expertise, styles and strengths of individual teachers. In these schools, links between the actions that leaders plan and improvements in pupils' progress are clear. Key to the success of these schools is performance management that identifies professional learning and holds staff to account for pupils' progress and outcomes.

In about a quarter of schools where leadership is judged as adequate, there is a lack of urgency about improving pupils' standards and wellbeing. Progress since the previous inspection is limited, and leaders fail to recognise and address weaknesses. For example, these schools often do not deliver the expected Foundation Phase practice, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Leaders have not identified this as a weakness because monitoring procedures do not

have a broad enough focus or because leaders have a weak understanding of the Foundation Phase.

Nearly one-in-five schools have a recommendation to improve the work of the governing body. Although this is fewer than the proportion identified last year, governors in a minority of schools are not involved enough in developing the strategic direction of their schools and do not review self-evaluation reports and improvement plans closely enough.

Improving quality

Just over two-thirds of schools have good or excellent procedures for evaluating the quality of their work and for planning for improvement. This is about the same as the proportion identified last year.

Schools with rigorous quality assurance processes use self-evaluation and improvement planning to make a significant difference to pupils' experiences and achievements. They support staff and governors in working together to collect, analyse and evaluate information from a wide range of sources and use this information to identify priorities for improvement, set challenging targets and generate practical action plans. They ensure close links between self-evaluation,

Figure 2.10:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

| 8% | 65% | 24% | 3% |

Excellent   Good   Adequate   Unsatisfactory

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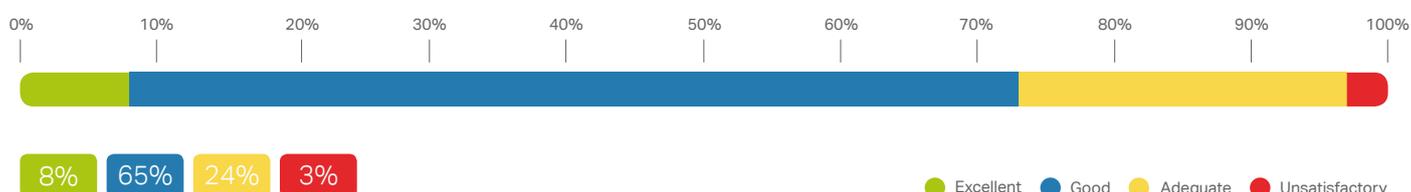
improvement planning, monitoring, performance management, and professional learning.

Increasingly, the most effective schools involve pupils in self-evaluation, with a very few school councils developing their own improvement plans. These schools take the contributions of pupils seriously, and involve pupils in quality assurance activities, including observing teaching. Leaders give careful consideration to pupils' opinions when writing self-evaluation reports and when determining priorities for improvement. They value the contributions of all stakeholders and secure commitment from them for the process of school improvement.

In around a third of schools, processes for improving quality are weak. In these schools, leaders and governors do not have an accurate picture of the school's work. They do not monitor progress towards meeting targets regularly or evaluate the impact of initiatives well enough. Action plans do not focus on pupils' outcomes.

Partnership working

Most schools have effective partnerships. A key feature of these schools is the purposeful links with parents. These links are particularly effective in schools that encourage parents to learn alongside their children, or to improve their own skills. Leaders in these schools understand the benefits of helping parents to support their children's learning at home. They invest time and money in providing a variety of social and learning activities that

involve parents in the life of the school. These activities prove particularly beneficial when schools engage hard-to-reach parents and communities. For example, in areas where many families have English as an additional language, schools employ specific staff to lead this work. Leaders ensure that community engagement remains a high priority and involves all staff. In the most successful examples, this work secures close relationships with parents and members of the local community, who recognise the school as a community hub and a place of learning for all.

Resource management

More than seven-in-ten schools have good or excellent procedures for managing their resources.

In these schools, highly-skilled staff plan and deliver the curriculum. In the best examples, staff with specific expertise make a particularly valuable contribution to pupils' learning in art, music or ICT. These schools also provide effective professional learning, with time set aside for staff to learn from one another by sharing ideas, experiences and expertise. This includes opportunities for staff to observe each other teach and to collaborate with staff from other schools and establish new initiatives or develop classroom research. These schools also invest time and resources for staff at all levels to develop their leadership skills. They encourage staff to be reflective and to be critical friends to each other. In a few schools, teachers do not have enough opportunities to learn from the good practice of those within their school or in other schools.

Improving pupils' skills through joint working

By setting learning challenges for each other, pupils in **Ysgol Dyffryn y Glowyr** and a partner school have developed their creative writing to a high standard, improved their discussion skills, and generated greater enthusiasm for mathematics. Pupils arrange regular video-conferences and plan challenges jointly with teachers and pupils to provide experiences that promote pupils' thinking, ICT, self-evaluation, literacy, numeracy and reasoning skills.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

Many schools use the Pupil Deprivation Grant effectively to support disadvantaged pupils of all abilities. A few schools do not collect evidence to evaluate whether their spending has led to improvements for pupils eligible for free school meals.

In the very few schools that struggle to manage their resources well, there are often too many temporary teachers and support staff. This instability in staffing has a negative effect on pupils' progress. In these schools, performance management processes are often weak, and there is not enough focus on professional learning.

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Follow-up activity:
Primary Schools

During this year, most of the schools placed in Estyn monitoring last year improved and did not need further monitoring by inspectors. However, a few schools made insufficient progress, and now require significant improvement. In these schools, improvements in the quality of teaching and the accuracy of teacher assessment have been too slow, resulting in a decline in pupils' standards.

During this year, most of the schools placed in significant improvement last year were removed from further monitoring.

A very few schools required a second monitoring visit to ensure that recent improvements became embedded.

This year, around a half of the primary schools that required special measures last year were removed from further monitoring activity. In these schools, improvements have been rapid. In a few schools remaining in special measures, ongoing reorganisation or closure proposals make it difficult for the school to attract the right teachers and leaders to improve the quality of the provision.

Ysgol Gynradd Tudno is situated in Llandudno. In November 2014, inspectors judged that the school required significant improvement.

Since the inspection, strong leadership from a new headteacher and improvements to the senior management structure have ensured that leaders and managers have well-defined roles and responsibilities. These roles have been developed and supported through participation in professional development opportunities. Senior leaders regularly undertake scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations to evaluate the quality of the provision and its effect on standards.

They each lead a small team that focuses on improving aspects of provision, such as developing coherent curriculum schemes of work, and they routinely evaluate its impact on standards.

Across the school, teachers develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, ICT and wider learning skills. For example, they have introduced a revised curriculum that identifies a wider range of opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills in subjects and areas of learning across the curriculum. As a 'Lead Creative School', staff make innovative use of creative arts projects, such as working with Welsh artists and

musicians to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work and become more independent. This provides valuable opportunities for pupils to participate in problem-solving activities in art and music, and through cross-curricular activities. This project has made a positive contribution to pupils' enjoyment in their learning and improved standards.

In February 2016, inspectors judged that the school had made strong or very good progress against all of the recommendations from the inspection and no longer requires monitoring.

For more information, please read the **monitoring visit report**.

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Section: 2

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

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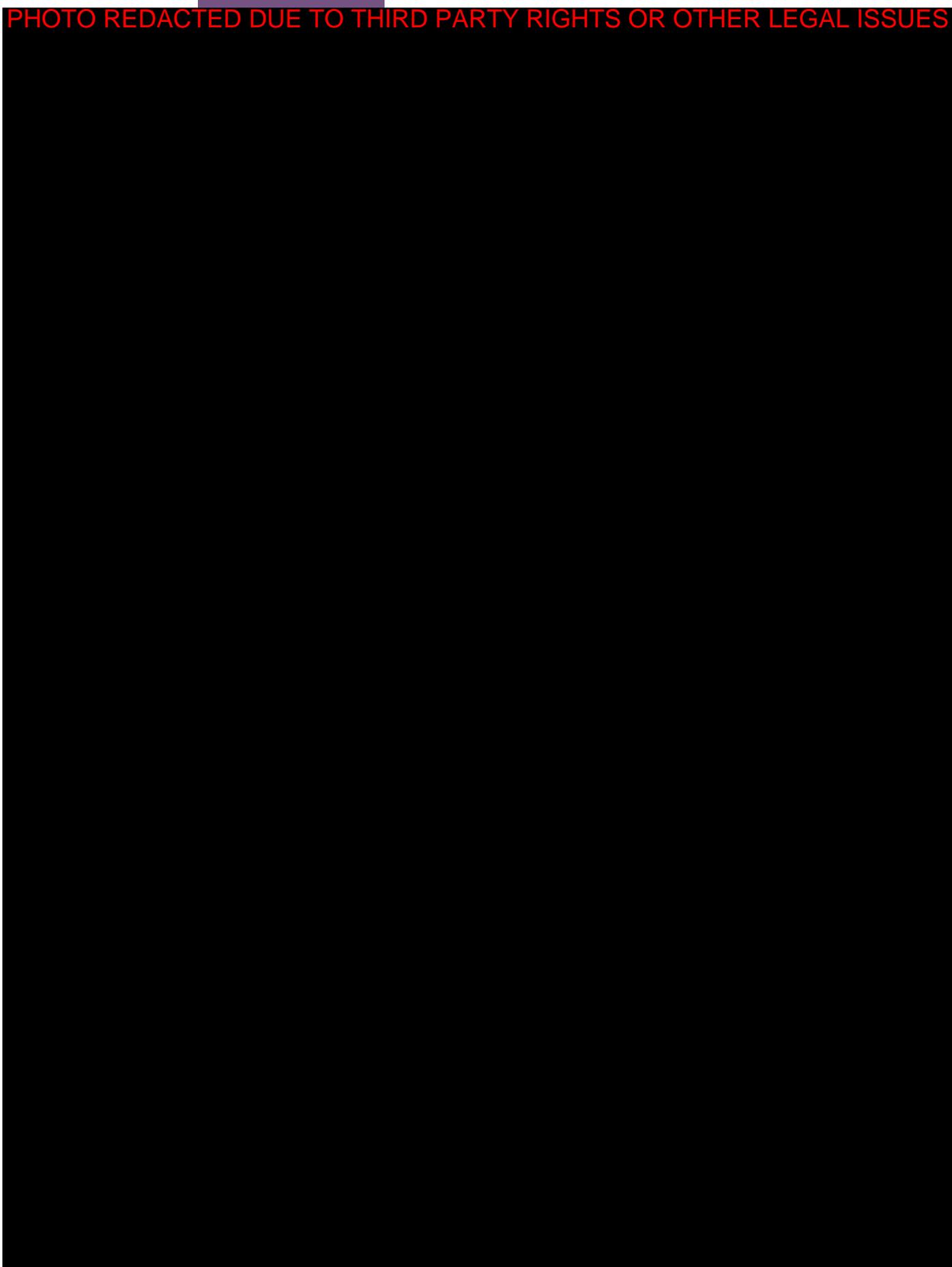
Sector report
Secondary schools

In January 2016, there were 205 secondary schools in Wales. This is two fewer than in January 2015. The number of pupils in secondary schools continues to decrease. In January 2016, the number on roll was 178,650, a decrease of around 3,700 pupils from the previous year. This year, we inspected 33 secondary schools.

Summary:
Secondary schools

This year, we identified excellent practice in around a quarter of secondary schools inspected. This is lower than the proportion identified last year. This year, 6% of schools were judged to have excellent outcomes. This is also lower than was the case last year. Almost one-in-five schools inspected this year were judged to provide excellent learning experiences. These schools use an extensive range of effective strategies to improve pupils' skills, especially literacy and numeracy.

The number of schools requiring monitoring by Estyn rose from 35% last year to 48% this year. These schools have not secured strong enough outcomes for their pupils. In many cases, leaders have begun to put in place strategies to improve the school's performance, but it is too early to see the impact of these arrangements on pupil outcomes.

This year, five schools were placed in a statutory category following a core inspection. One school was identified as requiring significant improvement and the remainder were placed in special measures. In these schools, leaders do not hold staff to account rigorously enough and self-evaluation processes are not sufficiently robust to enable leaders to plan improvements in important areas of the school's work.

Figure 2.11:
Percentages of secondary schools in levels of follow-up

24% **Excellent practice**
(8 providers)

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

15%   21%   48%   3%   12%

● Not in follow-up   ● LA monitoring   ● Estyn monitoring   ● Significant improvement   ● Special measures

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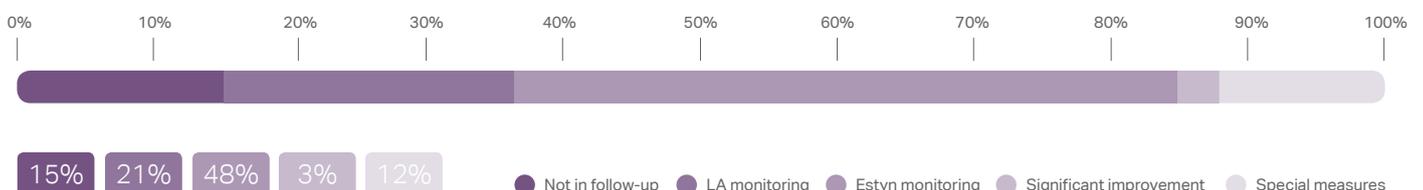
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Outcomes:
Secondary schools

Standards

Standards are good or better in two-fifths of secondary schools. This is similar to the proportion last year but, this year, fewer schools were judged to have excellent outcomes.

In the very few schools where standards are excellent, pupils of all abilities make particularly strong progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Nearly all pupils show great enthusiasm and resilience in their learning and undertake challenging activities with confidence. Many apply their skills and knowledge quickly and effectively in lessons. This helps them to make rapid progress in their learning as they move through the school. In these schools, pupils perform consistently above expectations in end of key stage 4 examinations.

In a minority of schools, more able pupils achieve well, making good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In a few schools, more able pupils develop their thinking skills well, for example by creating and asking higher order questions to plan and extend their own learning.

In many of the other schools inspected this year, the majority of pupils read confidently and competently. They readily pick out the main information in text and make effective use of what they read. A majority of pupils write at length confidently. A minority of pupils do not take enough care with the organisation, spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation of their written work.

In a majority of schools, many pupils are confident when using decimals, percentages and fractions. These pupils analyse data accurately and produce suitable graphs to display results. They perform mental arithmetic calculations confidently. However, only a minority of pupils have sound numerical reasoning skills and can solve problems logically. In a minority of schools, a minority of pupils have weak basic number skills. This means that they struggle to solve problems in mathematics lessons and when asked to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.

In most schools, pupils can word process, use basic data handling packages and produce simple presentations in ICT lessons. In a very few schools, pupils extend and develop their ICT skills in subjects across the curriculum. In the other schools, pupils only use their ICT skills at a low level in a few subjects beyond ICT lessons.

In many schools, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in developing their skills, particularly in literacy, through targeted support. As a result, most have the necessary reading skills to enable them to access mainstream lessons. Although these pupils make progress with their writing, many struggle with the writing requirements of tasks set in mainstream lessons.

In many schools, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved a little. In weaker schools, these pupils perform less well in comparison with those in similar schools, particularly in English or Welsh first language and in mathematics. A minority of schools do not improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils eligible for free school meals well enough to enable them to achieve their potential in these core subjects. Pupils eligible for free school meals perform better in the arts than in many other subject areas. The gap in performance in arts subjects between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils is smaller than the gap in performance in English or Welsh first language and in mathematics.

Figure 2.12:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?

6%	33%	48%	12%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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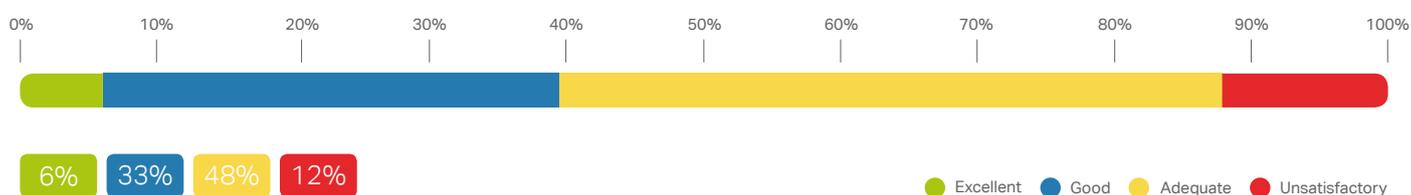
Standards of Welsh second language in many English-medium schools are improving, with the numbers achieving qualifications in Welsh at the end of key stage 4 increasing. However, it is only in a very few of these schools that most pupils follow the full course in Welsh second language. Although many pupils in English-medium schools use basic phrases confidently during registration periods and assemblies, the use of Welsh outside of Welsh lessons is rare. In most English-medium schools, most pupils lack confidence when speaking Welsh. Many pupils in Welsh-medium schools and in Welsh streams in bilingual schools speak and write well in Welsh and use their language skills confidently across the curriculum, although a minority make a few grammatical mistakes.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is good or better in three-quarters of secondary schools. This is an improvement on last year, brought about largely by the continuing improvement in attendance, particularly for pupils eligible for free school meals.

In the few schools where wellbeing is excellent, the extent of pupil involvement within and beyond school life is a significant strength. Many pupils participate in evaluations of teaching and learning and of policy development and this is having a positive impact on their wellbeing and performance. Attendance of all groups of pupils in these schools is consistently high and better than in similar schools.

In many schools, pupils understand how to eat healthily and appreciate the positive value of exercise. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in extra-curricular activities and take an active part in community activities and fundraising for charities.

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and feel supported if there are any instances of bullying. Many pupils behave well, are punctual and have positive attitudes to their learning. A few pupils have a poor attitude towards school and disrupt the learning of others.

In many schools, attendance is improving and rates of persistent absence continue to fall, with most pupils attending well and understanding the importance of regular attendance. Overall, the variation in attendance between

Accelerating pupil learning in Welsh

Pupils at **Treorchy Comprehensive School** develop their Welsh language skills particularly well. Continuity and consistency between key stages 2 and 3 are ensured by the school working with its feeder primary schools to deliver lessons to Year 6 pupils and to prepare resources and schemes of work. The whole-school approach to bilingualism and to the Welsh dimension links Welsh language to heritage and culture to enrich and accelerate pupils' learning.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

schools has decreased and many schools have responded well to the challenge to improve attendance rates. In a few schools, the rate of persistent absence remains high and the attendance of pupils eligible for free schools meals is significantly worse than in similar schools.

Figure 2.13:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

15% 61% 24% 0%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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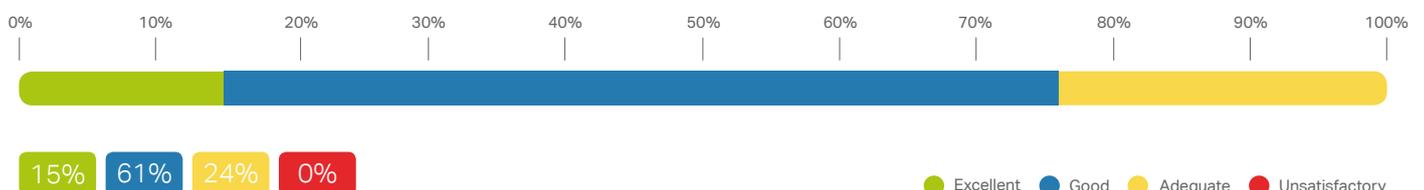
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Provision:
Secondary schools

Provision is good or better in many secondary schools inspected this year. This is an improvement on last year, largely due to improvements in care, support and guidance. However, shortcomings remain in the provision for developing skills and in the quality of teaching and assessment.

Learning experiences

In a few schools, pupils benefit from a wide range of learning experiences that contribute particularly well to their development and progress. In these schools, there are well-considered and consistent approaches that develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. These schools provide enrichment activities and learning opportunities that enhance pupils' social skills and build their confidence and resilience, including opportunities to become peer mentors, sports leaders, or pupil ambassadors for the United Nations Charter for the Rights of the Child.

Many schools plan a range of useful opportunities to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum, particularly their literacy skills, with a majority of pupils becoming more effective readers and more able to write confidently. In around a third of schools, there are significant shortcomings in skills development, often because the contexts for developing the skills are inappropriate, for example when pupils complete extended writing tasks with too little or too much support to enable them to work independently, or when low-level numeracy work in subjects does not stretch pupils to develop these skills. The provision for developing ICT skills remains weak in many schools. Only a very few schools ensure that there are enough relevant and progressive opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills across subjects other than in ICT lessons.

In many English-medium schools, pupils have suitable opportunities to learn about the culture and history of Wales. However, in the majority, provision for Welsh language development is a weakness. These schools do not have a clear strategy to promote pupils' use of the Welsh language outside of Welsh lessons. Nearly all Welsh-medium schools plan effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and command of the language.

Many schools work well with partners, such as local businesses, further and higher education institutions and charities, to provide enrichment experiences and extend the learning opportunities for pupils. Most schools develop pupils' understanding of sustainability and global citizenship well.

Teaching

Teaching is good or better in only a minority of schools. Where teaching is effective it is planned and structured so that pupils make good progress over time. In these schools, teachers have high expectations of all pupils, monitor their learning carefully and provide useful feedback.

In the very few schools where teaching is excellent, teachers' planning strikes a skilful balance between arousing curiosity, developing subject knowledge, and improving and extending pupils' skills. A particularly strong feature in these schools is the quality of questioning. Teachers use a full range of questioning techniques to probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to develop their ideas. In these schools, teachers provide creative opportunities for more able pupils to develop their own interests and undertake challenging tasks. This happens seamlessly so that it complements and extends what is already happening in the classroom. Consistency in the quality of marking and assessment is also a strong feature in these schools. They have an effective whole-school approach, based

Figure 2.14:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

12% 55% 30% 3%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate   ● Unsatisfactory

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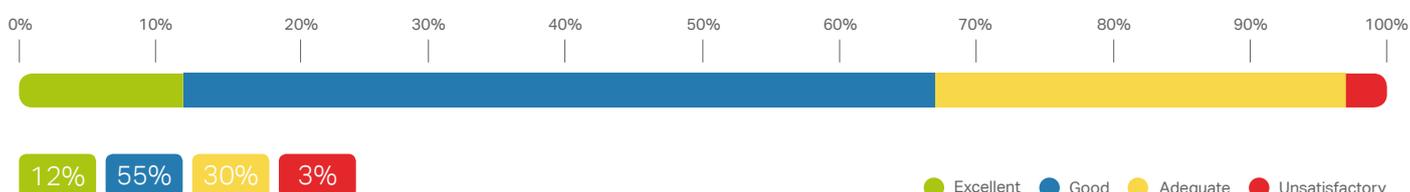
on providing feedback that helps pupils to improve their work, with assessment policies and arrangements that make marking manageable and meaningful.

In many schools the quality of teaching is inconsistent. In a majority of lessons in these schools, expectations are not high enough, in particular for more able pupils, and the time allocated to developing subject knowledge and skills is unbalanced. In a minority of lessons, the pace of learning does not take into account whether pupils have understood what is being taught. In these lessons, although teachers plan activities that keep pupils busy, the activities do not further or deepen their learning.

Most schools have useful tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress. Many use these systems effectively to identify the need for additional support, particularly for pupils in key stage 4 who are not on track to meet their targets. Only a minority make effective use of this information to monitor the performance of groups of pupils across all year groups.

In many schools, most teachers provide useful verbal feedback during lessons that helps pupils to develop their understanding and skills. However, written feedback is a significant shortcoming in many schools. It is often of inconsistent quality and has little impact on the quality of pupils' work and the progress they make.

Care, support and guidance

Many schools have well-established arrangements to look after their pupils, support

their health and wellbeing and guide them as they move through school.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs or those experiencing personal or emotional difficulties is generally strong in many schools. These schools work well with partners, including cluster primary schools, specialist services, external agencies and other providers to make sure that individual pupil needs are identified and addressed. They monitor carefully the support provided and its impact. In a few schools, teachers do not make enough use of the information they have on the additional needs of pupils to support them in mainstream lessons.

In many schools, there are useful systems to monitor attendance, reduce persistent absence and promote good behaviour. This has led to improved attendance rates and behaviour. In a few schools, strategies for improving attendance and behaviour are not applied consistently and persistent absence and disruptive behaviour are not challenged.

Many schools have comprehensive programmes and strategies to develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural values. They provide useful advice and guidance about courses and careers to pupils and their families when they reach decision points. In a very few schools, the guidance and information provided are limited or not impartial.

Nearly all schools have suitable arrangements to safeguard pupils. In a very few schools, bullying is not dealt with well enough. The response of staff to incidents of bullying is inconsistent and these

Enriching the modern curriculum

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is one of the pioneer schools developing a new curriculum for Wales. The school draws on its Welsh roots and global links to provide rich, engaging learning experiences for its pupils. For example, the school provides schemes such as 'Cau'r Bwlch' (Closing the Gap) to prepare provision that is tailored for specific pupils.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

schools do not monitor the impact of their anti-bullying policy and practice.

Learning environment

Many schools have an inclusive ethos and staff work hard to make sure that all pupils have the opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. These schools promote tolerance and respect. The classrooms, corridors and public areas are generally well maintained and attractive, and they support learning with useful and relevant displays.

A very few schools are less successful in making sure that all pupils share the values of respect and tolerance, and expectations for behaviour towards others are too low. A very few schools also have poor standards in aspects of their accommodation, particularly toilets.

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Sector summaries:

Leadership and management:
Secondary schools

Leadership

Leadership and management are good or better in around half of schools inspected this year.

In a very few schools, leadership is excellent. In these schools, there is inspirational leadership from the headteacher, supported by leaders at other levels who share a common vision based on high expectations. This vision is embraced by staff, pupils and governors. There is a sustained focus on achieving standards above expectations through consistently high-quality teaching. The headteacher shares leadership responsibilities well and makes sure that leaders at all levels are thoroughly prepared for their roles. Succession planning is highly developed, with middle leaders playing a powerful role in securing improvement. These schools have comprehensive and robust performance management arrangements, including for support staff, with objectives that link directly to the school's priorities. Underperformance is challenged effectively. Governors provide extremely effective challenge and leadership. They know their schools well and share a determination that no pupil will be left behind. Their focus

is on making sure that all pupils, including the disadvantaged and vulnerable, achieve well.

Leadership is judged as adequate in a third of schools. In these schools, leadership does not have a significant impact on important areas of the school's work, particularly on the quality of teaching and standards. Leaders do not provide staff with clear enough direction to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The distribution of leadership responsibilities is often uneven and there is not enough rigour in how senior leaders hold middle leaders to account, and in how middle leaders hold their teams to account. Middle leaders generally manage the day-to-day work of their departments suitably. However, a minority do not use data and information well enough to evaluate performance and do not focus enough on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

In a few schools, leadership is unsatisfactory. In these schools, lack of direction, failure to hold others to account, low expectations, and an insufficient focus on teaching and learning are the common shortcomings of leadership at all levels.

In around half of schools, governors understand their role as a critical friend. They hold the leadership and staff to account for the standards achieved and for the quality of teaching and learning. In the other schools, governors do not have a secure knowledge of how well pupils are doing. Often this is because these schools do not analyse performance data well. As a result, governors do not know the strengths and weaknesses of their school and what needs to improve.

Improving quality

In only a third of schools inspected this year is the way that leaders improve quality in their schools good or better. In nearly all schools, the main shortcoming in improving quality is a lack of focus on evaluating teaching and learning.

The schools that have excellent leadership are also very successful in evaluating how well they are doing, identifying shortcomings and acting to improve. They are reflective, have a culture based on high aspirations, and have a successful track record of sustained improvement. Their systems for monitoring and evaluating their work are not bureaucratic, are well understood by all staff, and focus rigorously on learners' experiences and their progress. Self-evaluation activities focus on the impact of teaching

Figure 2.15:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

9% 45% 33% 12%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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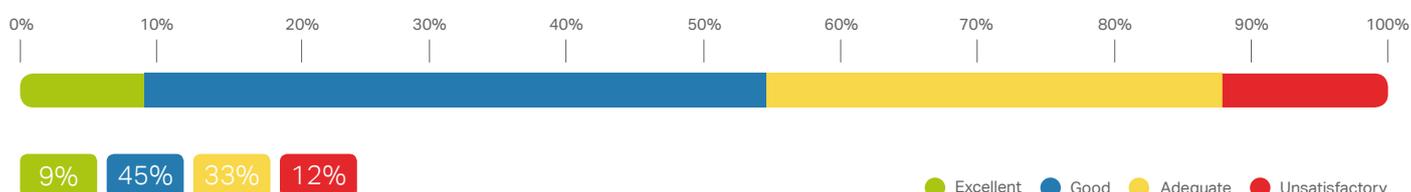
and identify aspects of teaching that need improving at individual, departmental and whole-school level. These schools analyse data thoroughly to inform their judgements about the impact of learning and teaching, and to set challenging targets.

Many schools make use of a suitable range of data and information to evaluate standards and quality of provision. In around half of schools, these evaluations are not precise enough to be of value in identifying priorities for improvement. The most common shortcoming is that self-evaluation activities, particularly lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, focus too much on what the teacher does and not enough on the progress made by pupils. A minority of schools do not compare their results with similar schools or focus sharply enough on performance compared with modelled outcomes that show how closely actual performance matches expected performance. As a result, important areas for improvement are missed.

Partnership working

Most schools have effective partnership arrangements. The shortcomings identified last year in relation to partnerships with primary schools and the monitoring and quality assurance of external alternative provision remain areas for improvement this year.

In the few schools where partnership working is excellent, there is a strong focus on making sure that arrangements benefit pupils' learning experiences and

wellbeing. They have innovative curriculum links with cluster primary schools. Developing pupils' skills is approached as a joint endeavour, with highly effective transition support for pupils. These schools have established clear quality assurance procedures, which enable them to review regularly the quality and impact of external vocational provision on the progress of older pupils.

Most schools have partnerships with other providers to give pupils more choices and options in key stage 4. Most also have effective professional relationships with agencies that support vulnerable pupils. In the majority of schools, there is only limited quality assurance of external provision and the impact on pupils' progress is not monitored or tracked effectively enough. As a result, a very few pupils leave school without useful qualifications.

Most schools have successful pastoral links with primary schools that help pupils to settle well. However, in many schools, curriculum links with partner primary schools do not focus enough on the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

Resource management

The management of resources is good or better in just under two-fifths of schools.

In the few very best schools, there is a strong focus on professional learning for all staff. Teachers and leaders across the schools are involved in an extensive range of networks of professional practice within the school and at local, regional and national level.

Driving improvement through professional development

The 'Aspiring Leaders' programme at **Pontarddulais Comprehensive School** enables teachers to focus on improving different aspects of the school's work to improve pupil performance. Established and aspiring middle leaders are provided with training and support for a range of activities, including leading an aspect of whole-school improvement and participating in school-to-school self-evaluation.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

In a few schools, arrangements to share good practice have not impacted enough on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning. In a very few schools, poor management of arrangements for teacher absence has led to inconsistent learning experiences for pupils.

The very few schools where outcomes are excellent manage their budgets very well. Their careful and targeted use of specific grants, including the Pupil Deprivation Grant, leads to improved outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. In a minority of schools, the expenditure of the Pupil Deprivation Grant has not had much impact on improving the attendance or the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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Follow-up activity:
Secondary schools

This year, 15 of the 39 secondary schools that required or remained in Estyn monitoring last year made good progress and were removed from Estyn monitoring. Three schools showed limited progress against the recommendations. Two of these schools were placed in special measures and the other was judged to be in need of significant improvement. The remaining 21 schools demonstrated some progress since their core inspection, but have not improved enough. We will continue to monitor these schools.

At the start of this year, nine schools were in need of significant improvement. During this year, one school was removed from this category as the arrangements they introduced to strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning have led to substantial improvements in teaching and learning, and in pupil outcomes. The other six schools, although making some progress against the recommendations from their core inspection, have not made enough improvement. Estyn will continue to monitor their progress closely.

At the start of this year, there were seven schools in special measures. During the year, one school was removed from this category. This school has been successful in strengthening leadership and improving teaching and learning. The other schools have not made enough progress in addressing shortcomings in teaching and leadership. As a result, progress in improving pupil outcomes has been too slow and these schools remain in special measures.

King Henry VIII Comprehensive School in Monmouthshire was identified as requiring significant improvement following its inspection in December 2014. At this time, inspectors judged the school's performance and prospects for improvement to be adequate because leaders had not secured sufficiently strong outcomes for pupils and there was too much variation in the quality and rigour of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

During the monitoring visit in June 2016, inspectors found that standards had improved and that the school had made strong progress in making its self-evaluation and improvement planning processes more effective. The school was judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014, and no longer requires follow-up from Estyn.

For more information about this, please read the **monitoring report or visit**.

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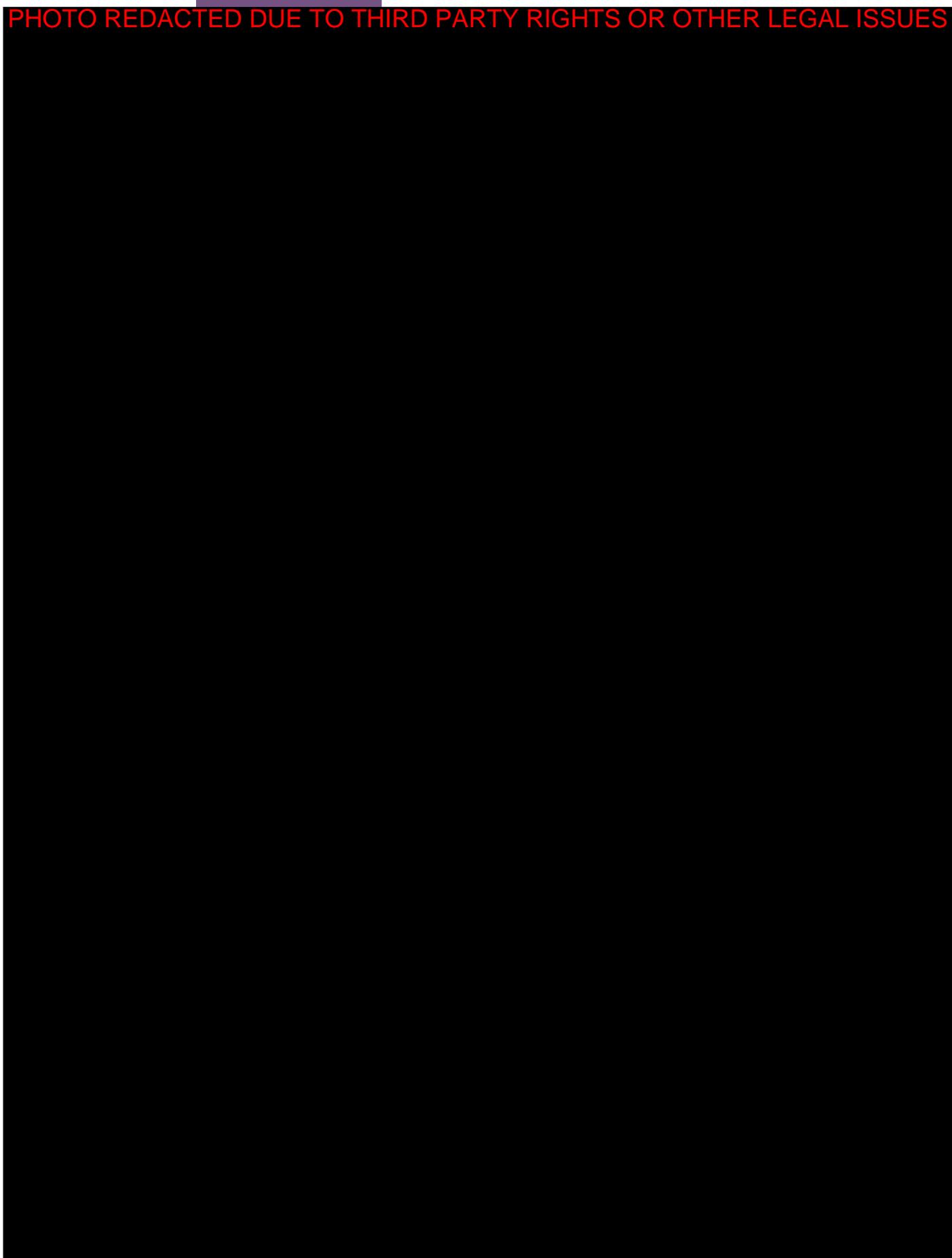
Sector report
Maintained all-age schools

Over the last four years, there has been a growth in the number of maintained all-age schools opening across Wales. These schools accept pupils at age three or four and provide education for them until they are 16 or 18 years old. Many of these schools are on two or more sites. In January 2016, there were seven all-age schools in the maintained sector in Wales. A further three all-age schools opened in September 2016.

Figure 2.16:
All-age schools in Wales, as at 1 September 2016

Open in 2015-2016

Opened 1 September 2016

St Brigid's School

Ysgol Bro Hyddgen

Ysgol Henry Richard

Ysgol Bro Pedr

Ysgol Bro Teifi

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

Abertillery Learning Community

Ysgol Bae Baglan

Ysgol Llanhari

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg

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This year, Estyn undertook its first two inspections of all-age maintained schools. The context and size of these two schools differ greatly. One school caters for about 500 pupils on a single site and the other school for about 1,400 pupils, with the primary and secondary phase in buildings about 1.5 miles apart. Both schools receive a significant intake of pupils in Year 7 from other partner primary schools. This creates significant challenges in planning for transition. Both schools were judged to have strengths in their primary phase provision, but had shortcomings in the secondary phase. Both schools were also judged to have adequate leadership, largely because of weaknesses in self-evaluation and planning for improvement. One school requires Estyn monitoring and the other requires significant improvement.

For more information about the two schools inspected, please read the inspection reports:

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

St Brigid's School

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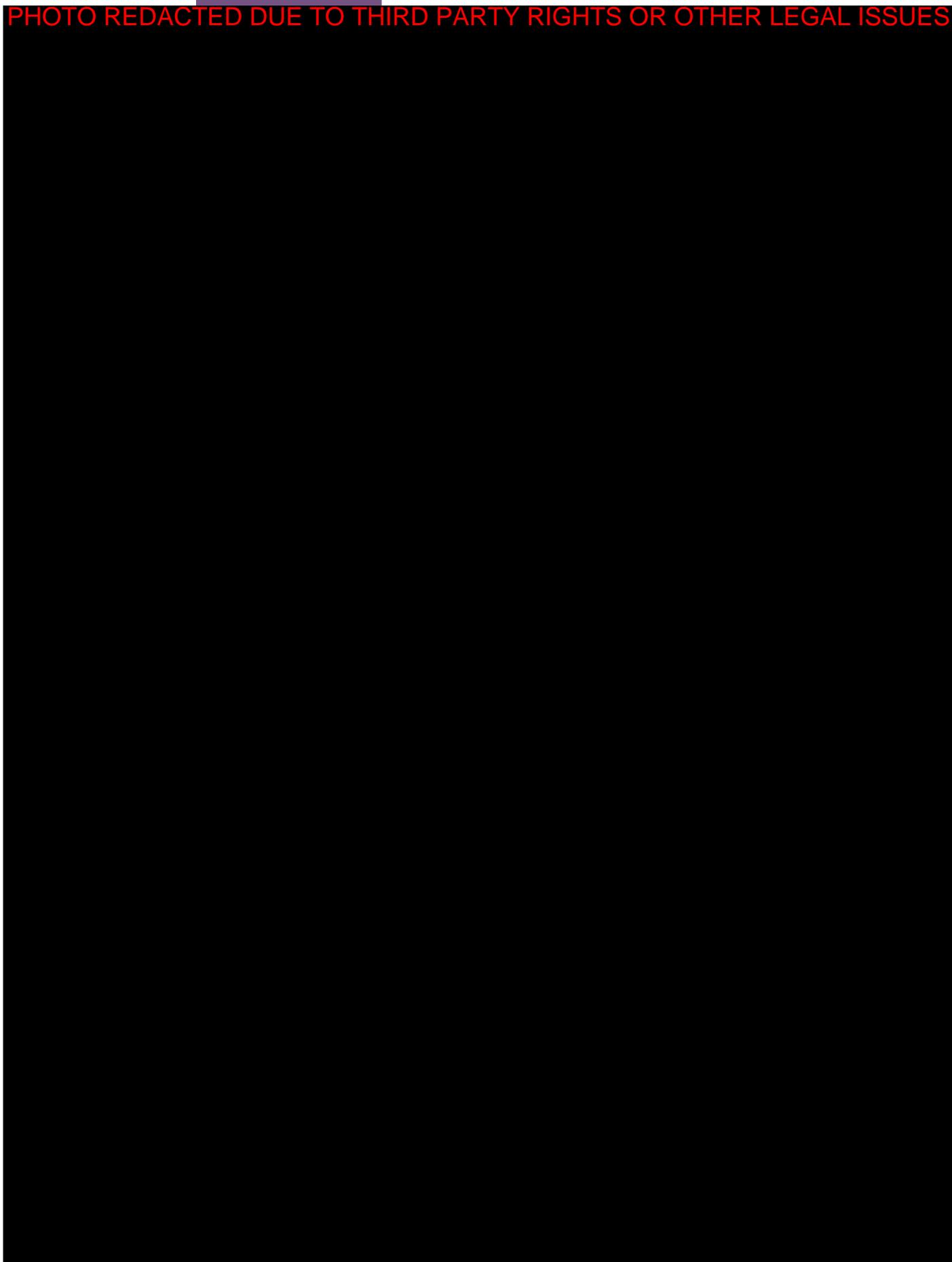
Sector report
Maintained special schools

In January 2016, there were 39 maintained special schools in Wales, the same as last year. These schools provide for a range of needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils attending maintained special schools continues to increase slightly year-on-year. In January 2016, the number on roll was 4,540, an increase of nearly 100 pupils from the previous year.

This year we inspected six maintained special schools.

For more information about the six schools inspected, please read the inspection reports:

Maes Ebbw School

Pen-Y-Cwm Special School

Riverbank Special School

Woodlands High School

Ysgol Hendrefelin Special School

Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn

Summary:
Maintained special schools

This year, one of the schools inspected was identified as having some excellent practice. This school has a wide range of strong partnerships that have a very positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Inspectors placed one school in special measures, and two schools required Estyn monitoring. These schools have weaknesses in their self-evaluation processes and do not make enough use of the full range of evidence to quality assure their work or plan for improvements.

Governors in these schools do not have a good enough understanding of their school's performance and do not provide enough challenge for the school to improve.

Figure 2.17:
Numbers of maintained special schools in levels of follow-up

1	Excellent practice
	(1 provider)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

1	2	2	1

● Not in follow-up   ● LA monitoring   ● Estyn monitoring   ● Special measures

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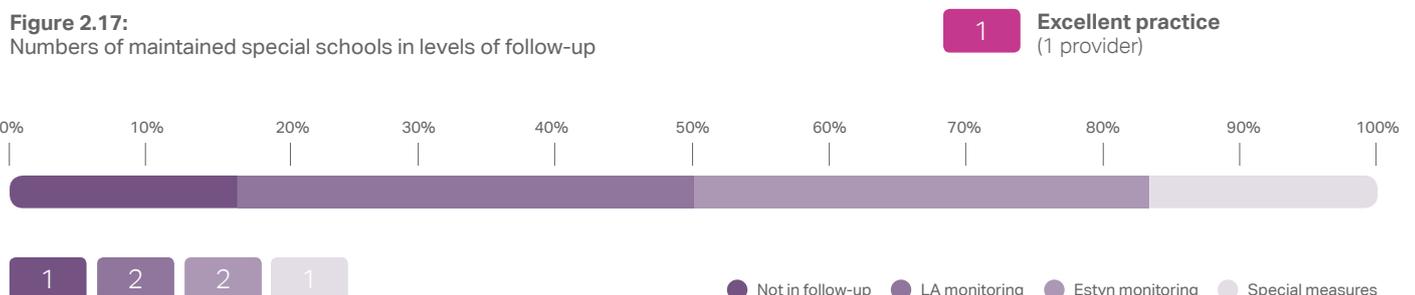
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Outcomes:
Maintained special schools

Standards

Standards are good in four of the schools inspected this year and adequate in the two other schools.

Where standards are good, pupils make suitable progress in relation to their needs, abilities and prior attainment. Most pupils make good progress in their preferred means of communication. Many pupils make good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills and apply these skills successfully in day-to-day situations. For example, they sequence dates, read scales and measure liquids accurately. More able pupils write well for a range of different purposes and use suitable vocabulary. A majority of pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the Welsh language and culture well. They understand greetings and simple Welsh phrases. A majority of pupils develop their ICT skills well in ICT lessons and produce colourful, attractive posters. A few more able pupils apply their skills effectively in other lessons. For example, they record data and produce graphs in mathematics lessons and create presentations in English lessons. However, overall, only a minority of pupils use their ICT skills effectively across the curriculum. Older pupils follow a range of courses and gain relevant qualifications, including GCSEs, sports leaders' certificates and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This prepares them well for the next stage of their learning and for future life. Most school leavers move on to further education or training.

Where standards are adequate, pupils do not use their reading and writing skills well enough across the curriculum. In one school, pupils do not consistently achieve their individual education or behaviour targets.

Wellbeing

In all the schools inspected, wellbeing is good. Pupils feel safe in school and are keen to learn. They have a good understanding of the importance of making healthy choices, including keeping fit and staying safe online. Pupils develop skills in a range of sporting activities, including swimming, gymnastics and football. Pupils with complex needs engage in a variety of activities that develop their co-ordination skills.

Most pupils behave well in class and around the school and rates of exclusion are low. Most pupils show care and consideration for others. A few develop their social skills further through acting as buddies or mentors for younger pupils. Other pupils take responsibility for a range of tasks, including collecting registers and selling products they have made at school in the local market.

Figure 2.18:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?

| 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory
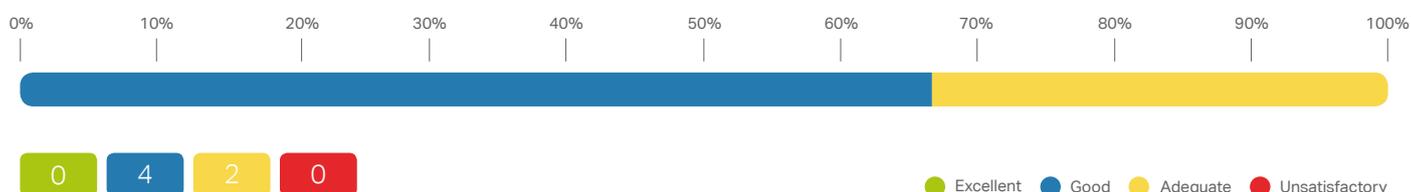
Figure 2.19:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

| 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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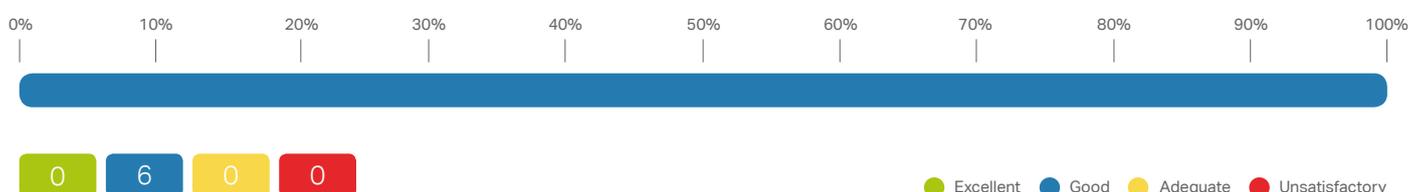
Provision:
Maintained special schools

The learning experience is good in four schools and adequate in two. All schools provide learning experiences that are interesting, broad and balanced. Pupils in a minority of schools are able to work alongside mainstream peers. For example, older pupils access vocational opportunities in mainstream providers that help to develop their confidence, independence and self-esteem. In a minority of schools, there are valuable opportunities for pupils to access work related experience in the community, for example serving in a coffee shop and doing grounds work at a local school.

Overall, planning for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in designated lessons is good. However, planning to develop these skills across the curriculum is inconsistent. In nearly all schools, there is effective provision for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Welsh language and culture.

Teachers and support staff work together well. Nearly all staff understand the needs and abilities of their pupils and have high expectations regarding pupils' work and behaviour. In most lessons, the pace of learning is suitable and activities are well matched to the needs of pupils. In a minority of schools, staff have inconsistent expectations of pupil behaviour. As a result, pupils do not engage in lessons as well as they could. In a few lessons, tasks do not provide pupils with enough challenge. In these schools, teachers' written feedback does not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve.

The care, support and guidance provided by schools are good in three schools, adequate in one school and unsatisfactory in two schools. Across the rest of the current inspection cycle, care, support and guidance have been good or better in many maintained special schools. In the three schools where care, support and guidance are adequate or unsatisfactory, the quality of the policies and practices for promoting e safety is poor and other key policies to promote and protect wellbeing are incomplete. For example,

in one school there is no clear policy or agreed approach to delivering sex and relationships education and there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of this important topic.

Figure 2.20:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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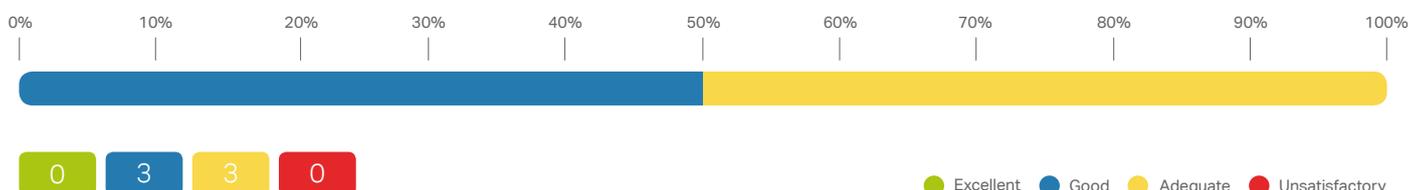
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Leadership and management: Maintained special schools

Leadership is good in three schools, adequate in two and unsatisfactory in one school.

As identified in previous years, where leadership is good, leaders create a clear vision for the school that all staff understand and believe in. Senior leaders work well together and with governors, staff, pupils and parents. Governors understand the work of the school and have wide-ranging experiences that they use to support the work of the school.

Two schools have effective systems for evaluating the quality of their work. These schools use a range of first-hand information, including the views of pupils and parents. In the schools where leadership is less than good, managers do not use enough information on pupil progress to inform performance management of staff.

In the school where leadership is unsatisfactory, the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team are not clear and communication within the school is ineffective. Leaders do not set a clear strategic direction and the school does not know its strengths or areas for improvement.

Nearly all schools have well-established links with a range of partners, such as the police, local charities and colleges of further education. This makes a significant contribution to the life of the school and impacts positively on pupils' standards and wellbeing. In one school, partnership with sports coaches helps pupils to experience a wider range of sports, including archery and judo, and older pupils gain qualifications in sports leadership, with a few becoming coaches in their community.

In all schools, staff have suitable opportunities to increase their subject knowledge and understanding. In two schools, training is based only on individual staff needs and does not link to whole-school priorities. Four schools work well with other schools through networks of professional practice. For example, one school has worked in a network to develop materials to support behaviour management.

Sharing expertise with parents, carers and schools

Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn is the regional centre for autism in North Wales and shares its expertise with parents, carers and local schools and colleges. The school has an inclusive strategy of engaging all stakeholders around the learners and uses the expertise of other professionals and agencies.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

Figure 2.21:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

0	3	2	1

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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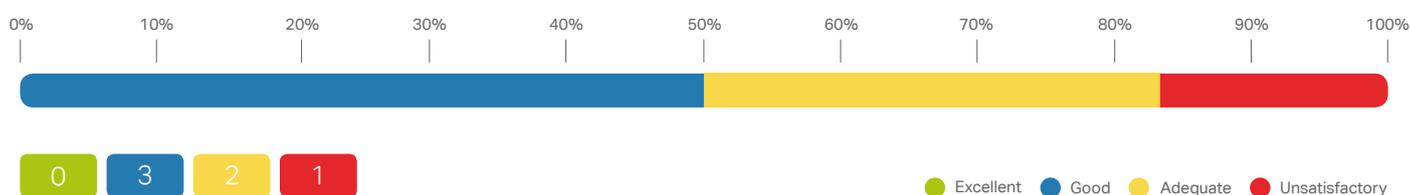
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Follow-up activity:
Maintained special schools

This year, four of the five schools that were placed in follow-up monitoring categories last year have been removed from follow-up activities. Two schools were in need of significant improvement and one of these made sufficient progress against the recommendations. The other school has not received a follow-up visit and remains in category.

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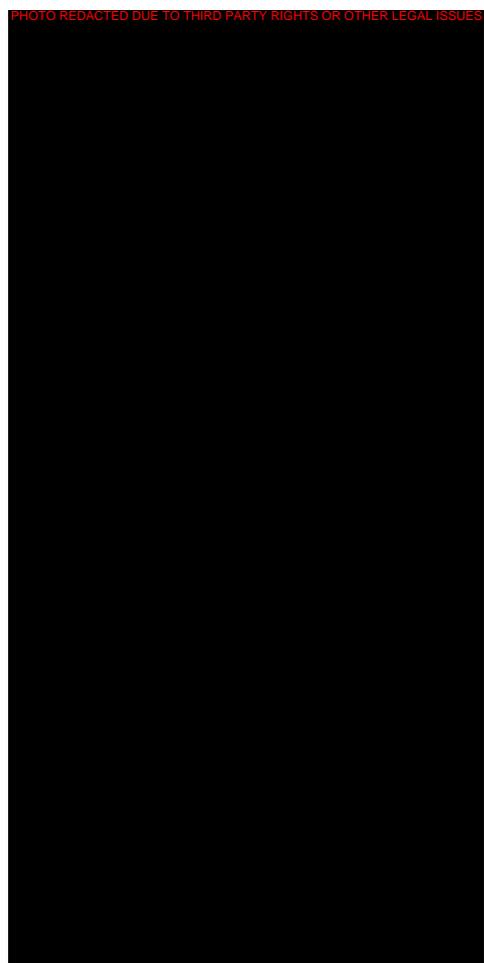
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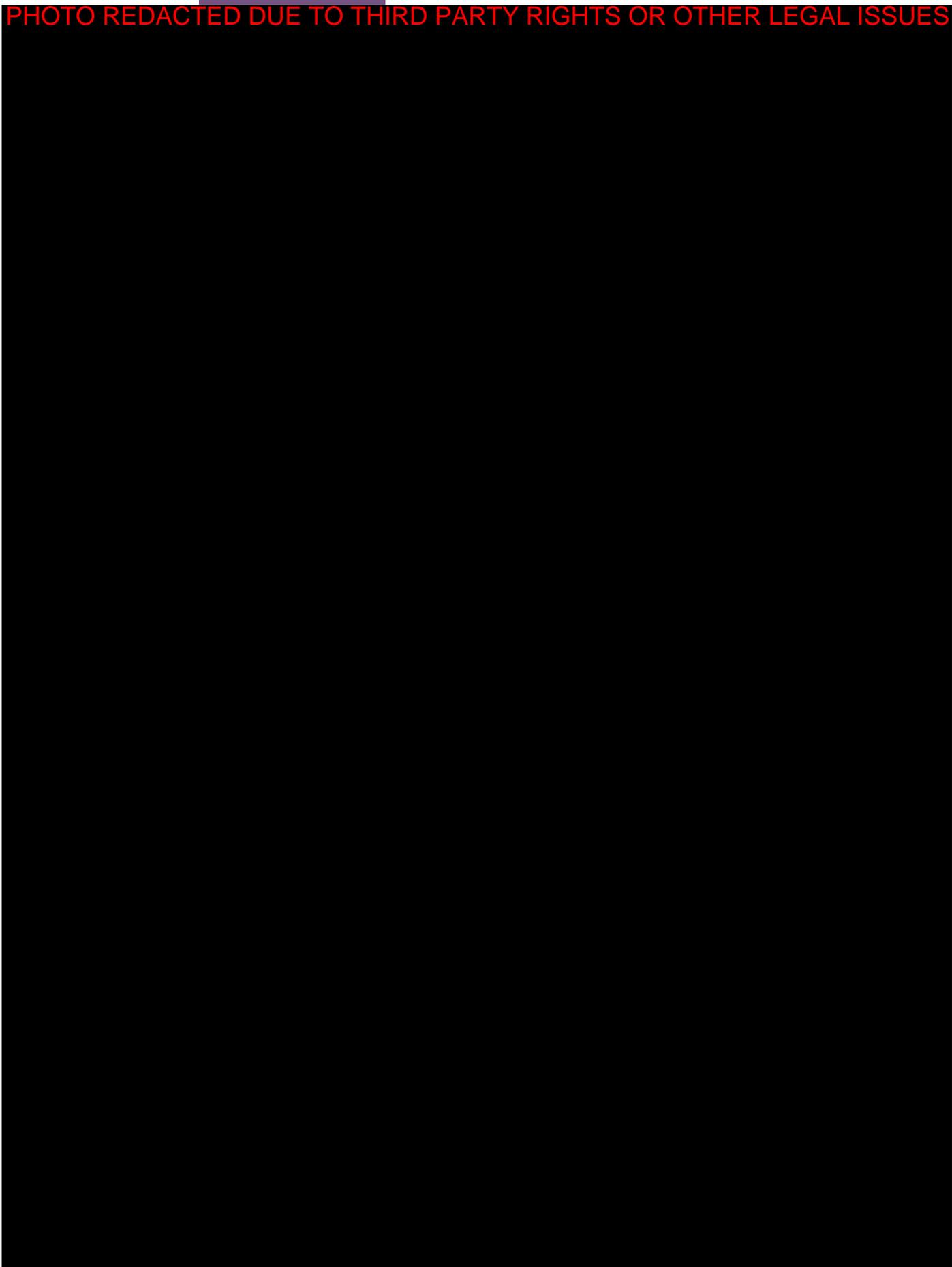
Sector report
Independent special schools

In January 2016, there were 32 independent special schools in Wales. These schools educate approximately 835 pupils with a range of needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the schools are small and pupils usually live in children's homes linked to the schools.

Four new independent special schools opened this year, and four established independent special schools closed. In July 2016, three schools had no pupils because there were no young people in the linked children's homes or because the young people residing in the homes were attending mainstream schools or alternative educational provision.

In addition to full inspections, Estyn carries out regular monitoring inspections of independent special schools, normally every 12 to 18 months. This year, we inspected one independent special school and carried out monitoring visits to 16 schools.

For more information about the one school inspected, please read the inspection report:

Genus Education

Compliance with Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

In inspections of independent special schools, we judge the extent to which the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

The school we inspected this year met all the standards.

Eight of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process did not meet all of the standards. Five of them failed to comply with Standard 1: The quality of education provided. In these schools, curriculum policy statements are not supported by detailed planning and schemes of work. As a result, learning experiences are too narrow and do not meet the needs of all learners. Three schools failed to comply with Standard 2: The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. In these schools, there is a lack of planning to help pupils gain an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.

Two schools that were newly registered last year received follow-up registration visits this year to monitor continued compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. One school met all of the standards. The other school did not meet all of the standards and will receive a further visit.

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Outcomes:
Independent special schools

For commentary about the standards and wellbeing in the school we inspected this year, please read the inspection report for Genus Education.

Provision:
Independent special schools

In many of the schools visited as part of the inspection and monitoring processes, teachers plan the curriculum well to meet the individual needs of pupils. They make imaginative use of resources in their local area to extend the range of learning experiences and provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop independent living skills. However, due to the low numbers of pupils attending most of these schools, pupils generally do not have enough opportunities to learn alongside and interact with their peers.

The schools for pupils with more complex needs that were visited provide particularly effective support for pupils' health and wellbeing, including access to specialist medical and therapy services.

In nearly all schools that are linked to children's homes, teachers and members of the care team work well together to provide a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, most pupils improve their behaviour and attendance over time. In a few schools where staff do not apply behaviour management approaches consistently, pupil behaviour and attendance are a concern. Where there are strong links between teachers and the children's home care team, the curriculum extends beyond school hours to include a range of activities that reflect the needs and interests of pupils. In a minority of these schools, members of the care team have completed further training in the skills necessary to support learning in the classroom.

A few independent special schools have developed effective partnerships with local further education institutions. These partnerships have helped pupils to make successful transitions to further learning and employment.

Leadership and management:
Independent special schools

In nearly all of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process, leaders have a clear vision for the school that they share effectively with staff and other stakeholders.

Nearly all of the schools are very small and there are limited opportunities to learn from other providers. A few schools work with similar providers or independent advisers to gain an external view of their work, to keep up to date with best practice, and to improve the quality of their self-evaluation and improvement planning. In a minority of schools, quality assurance activities are not rigorous enough and do not draw on a wide range of information. As a result, these schools do not have a good enough understanding of how they can improve outcomes for pupils.

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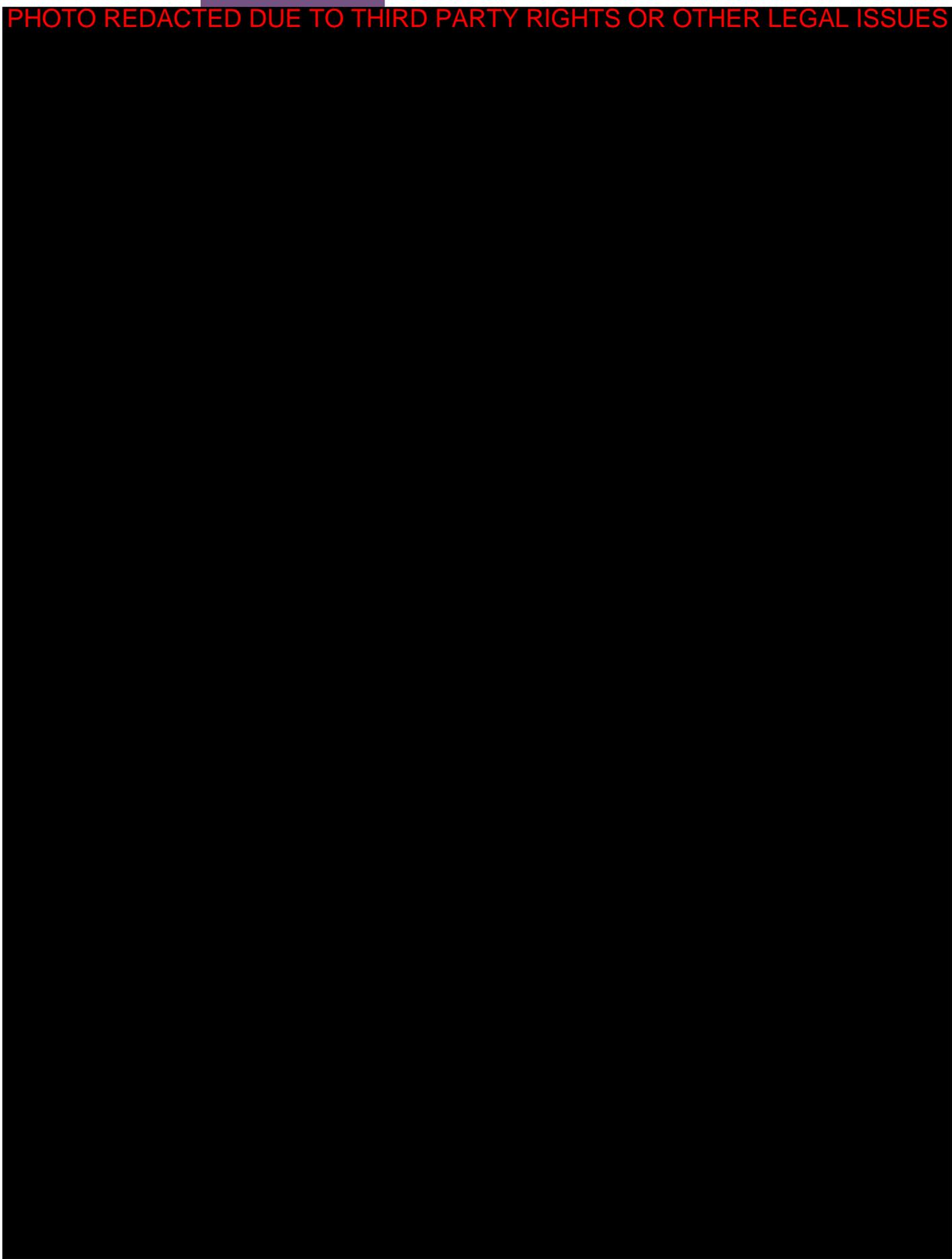
Sector report
Independent mainstream schools

In January 2016, there were 34 independent mainstream schools in Wales. These schools educate just over 8,000 pupils.

This year, we inspected four independent mainstream schools. Three of these schools are all-age schools providing for pupils across the primary and secondary phases and the other school provides solely for pupils up to the age of 14.

For more information about the four schools inspected, please read the inspection reports:

Cardiff Steiner School

Ely Presbyterian Church School

Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls

Kings Monkton School

Summary:
Independent mainstream schools

This year, we identified one school as having excellent outcomes and practice. This school has a distinctive cross-curricular learning skills programme to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, as well as their wider research, problem solving and self-evaluation skills. In each phase of the school, there are planned opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in a subject-specific context. Pupils are then able to transfer and apply these techniques successfully across the curriculum. As a result, they develop these skills in a wide range of contexts and become successful independent learners.

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Compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

In the inspection 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. This year, two of the schools inspected met all of these regulations. In the other two schools, we identified shortcomings in either one or a very few regulations. In one school, the shortcomings related to Standard 1: The quality of education provided. In the other school, the shortcomings were in Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils. We will monitor these two schools to make sure that they have made the required improvements to maintain registration.

Figure 2.22:
Numbers of independent mainstream schools that met regulations / did not meet all regulations

| 1 | **Excellent practice** (1 provider) |

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

| 2 | 2 |

● Met all regulations   ● Did not meet one or more regulations

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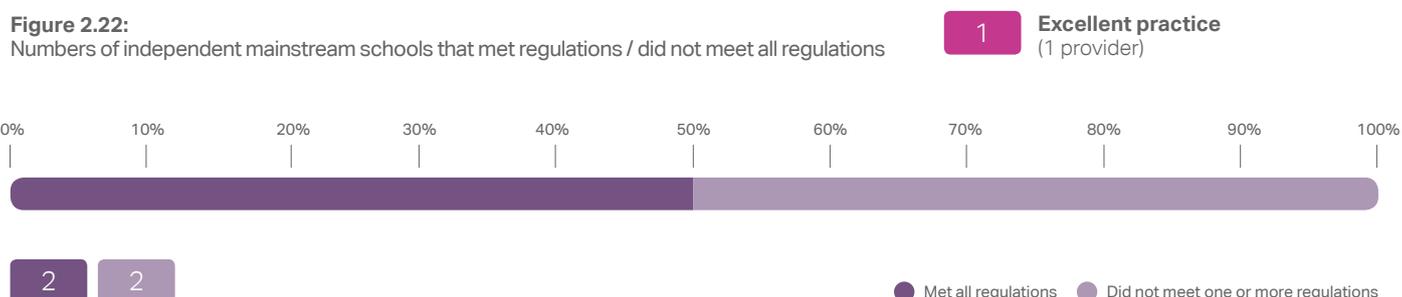
Outcomes:
Independent mainstream schools

Standards

Standards are excellent in one school inspected this year, good in two schools and adequate in the other school.

The school with excellent standards is an all-age school where pupils are exceptionally competent learners and achieve extremely high outcomes at each stage of their learning. At the end of key stage 4 and in the sixth form, pupils' performance in public examinations is outstanding when compared with that in other schools in the maintained and independent sectors.

In the schools where standards are good or better, most pupils make strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. Many pupils recall their previous learning quickly and accurately and they use this knowledge well to solve problems and to understand new topics and concepts.

In all schools inspected, pupils have strong communication skills. Most pupils speak clearly and confidently and are able to explain, persuade, and ask questions to clarify and extend their understanding.

In three of the schools inspected, most pupils achieve at least the expected level of progress in their reading skills and many show strong understanding and engagement with texts. They read with fluency and accurate expression. In these schools, many pupils also make at least good progress in developing their writing skills and most pupils develop strong numeracy skills, with a very few making rapid progress. In one school, pupils' reading skills and the standard of their written work vary too much and pupils do not make enough progress in developing their numeracy skills.

Wellbeing

Pupil attendance rates are high in all of the schools. Nearly all pupils are involved enthusiastically in the life of the school and the wider community and this makes a valuable contribution to developing their social and life skills. Most pupils behave well in lessons and have a positive attitude towards their learning.

Figure 2.23:
Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?

Excellent: 1 Good: 2 Adequate: 1 Unsatisfactory: 0

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory
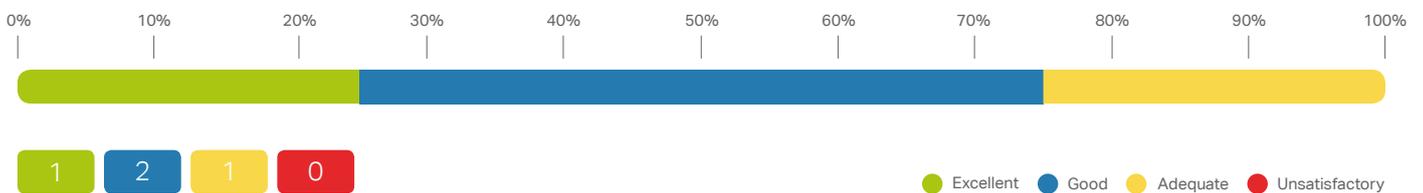
Figure 2.24:
Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

Excellent: 1 Good: 2 Adequate: 1 Unsatisfactory: 0

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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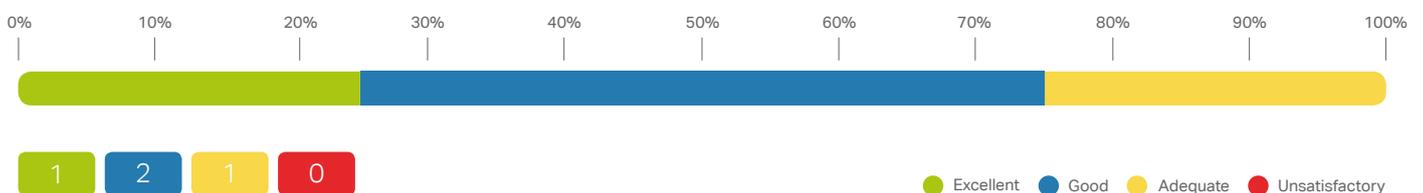
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Provision:
Independent mainstream schools

Provision is excellent in one school inspected this year, good in two and adequate in the other.

All schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum. In two all-age schools, there are good links across the different phases of the school to make sure that pupils' experiences build effectively as they progress through the school. In the other all-age school, planning in a few subjects is not detailed enough.

One school provides an extensive range of high quality extra-curricular activities that significantly enriches the learning experiences of all pupils. In the other schools, a more limited range of extra-curricular opportunities is offered.

In one school inspected, pupils benefit from a highly effective programme to develop their literacy, numeracy and independent learning skills across the curriculum. In the other schools, planning for the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum is less advanced.

Teaching is good or better in three schools and adequate in the other. Where teaching is excellent, this is often because activities are very well planned. Teachers create a culture of high expectations and use their strong subject knowledge to challenge and stimulate pupils' thinking.

In all schools, many teachers have a clear understanding of their pupils' strengths and areas for development. This enables them to respond particularly well to their individual learning needs. There are shortcomings in teaching in a few lessons in two schools and a minority of lessons in another school. The shortcomings usually arise because expectations are too low, the pace of learning is slow and activities do not match the needs of pupils of differing abilities.

Only two of the four schools have systematic and well-managed arrangements to monitor pupils' progress. In these schools, teachers routinely identify whether pupils require additional support or extension activities and they take appropriate follow-up actions to ensure that pupils reach their full potential.

Two schools have highly-effective arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing, which make a strong contribution to raising standards. In all schools, provision for pupils with additional learning needs is at least secure and one school provides extremely valuable support.

All schools have a strong sense of community and nurturing ethos, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' confidence and wellbeing.

Improving pupils' skills across the curriculum

The cross-curricular learning skills programme at **Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls** successfully develops pupils' core learning skills. Each phase of the school has arrangements for building learning techniques that pupils can transfer and apply in different contexts. For example, to develop effective study habits, Year 7 pupils follow a 'learning to learn' programme focusing on topics such as learning styles, multiple intelligences and how their brain works.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

Figure 2.25:
Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

1	2	1	0

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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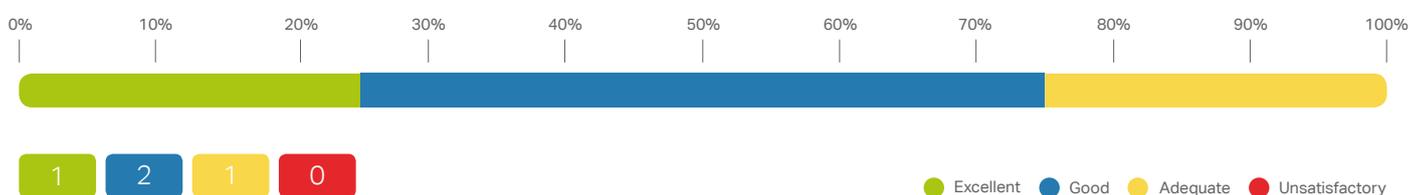
Leadership and management:
Independent mainstream schools

Leadership and management are excellent in one school, good in two schools and adequate in the other school.

In the school where leadership is judged to be excellent, senior leaders provide clear direction and promote high expectations in all areas of the school's work. Across the school, there is a strong focus on improvement, underpinned by a shared sense of purpose and commitment to the school's vision and values. This contributes significantly to the outstanding standards that pupils achieve, their high levels of engagement and positive attitudes to all aspects of their school life.

In all schools, the governing body, proprietor or trustees provide strong direction and valuable support for their school's work.

In the school where leadership is judged adequate, arrangements for reviewing important areas of the school's work are not robust and individual staff targets for improvement are not specific enough. For example, important shortcomings in a minority of lessons are not identified and, as a result, pupils in these classes do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.

In the school where improving quality is excellent, there is a strong emphasis on the rigour of self-evaluation and acting on outcomes to drive forward improvement. However, the arrangements to improve quality are not robust in two of the schools, mostly because self-evaluation activities do not draw well enough on first hand evidence to make accurate judgements about the quality of the school's work. In particular, evidence from lesson observations is not used to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and standards.

All of the schools' arrangements for partnership working are good or better. Pupils benefit from valuable links with the local community to enhance both the formal curriculum and extra-curricular provision. In all schools, partnerships with parents and guardians are particularly strong.

Three schools have good or better arrangements for resource management and the other school has adequate arrangements.

Figure 2.26:
Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

1	2	1	0

● Excellent　● Good　● Adequate　● Unsatisfactory

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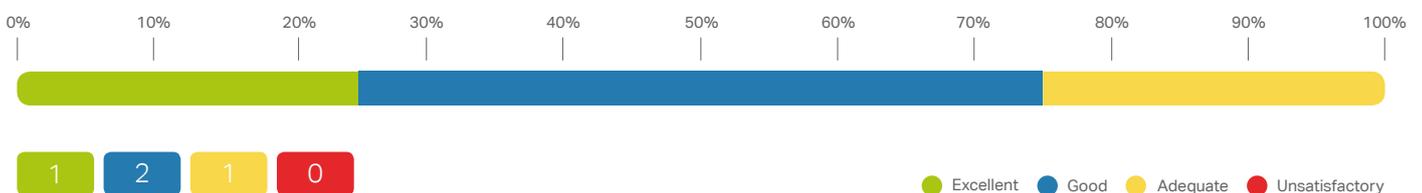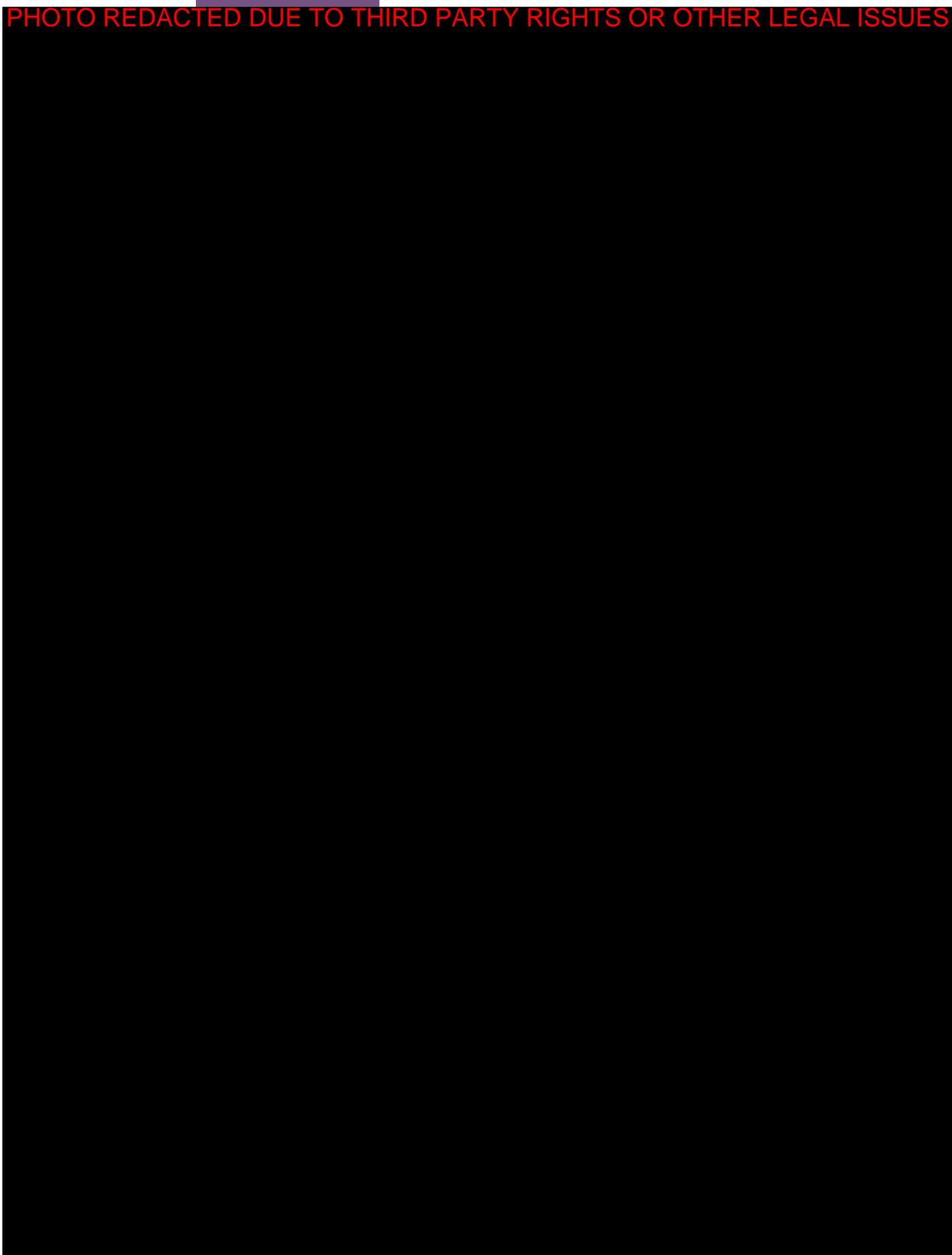
Sector report
Independent specialist colleges

This year, there were six independent specialist colleges in Wales. These colleges educate approximately 220 learners aged 16 and over. The colleges provide for a range of needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

In addition to full inspections, Estyn carries out regular monitoring visits of independent specialist colleges. This year, we inspected one independent specialist college and carried out two monitoring visits.

This year, we also undertook a thematic survey across the six specialist colleges. This survey was to evaluate how well independent specialist colleges measure the progress learners make and the extent to which learners are prepared for transition to further education or employment when they leave college.

For more information about the college inspected, please read the inspection report:

Priory College North Wales

Our thematic survey, **Learner progress and destinations in independent specialist colleges**, provides more information about this sector.

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Outcomes:
Independent specialist colleges

Please read the inspection report for Priory College North Wales for commentary about the standards and wellbeing in the college we inspected this year.

Provision:
Independent specialist colleges

Most colleges visited as part of inspection, monitoring or the thematic survey plan tailored programmes of learning to meet the needs and interests of individual learners. In these colleges, nearly all learning programmes provide a suitable range of formal learning and informal activities that have a clear focus on developing learners' independence and life skills.

In half of the colleges, literacy and numeracy skills are developed very well across the full range of lessons. In these colleges, all teachers have a clear understanding of the learners' literacy and numeracy targets and plan very well to include practical activities in their teaching that will support achieving these targets.

In two of the colleges, all staff have a thorough understanding of learners' targets and use these targets as a priority when planning their teaching methods and strategies. Teachers and support staff constantly review these targets to make sure that they are relevant and up-to-date. However, in a minority of lessons in the other colleges, the work planned does not reflect suitably the outcomes of initial assessments and learners' targets.

Leadership and management:
Independent specialist colleges

Four of the colleges visited use an appropriate range of data to measure learner progress. They capture data effectively to measure learner progress in skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, as well as learners' achievements in qualifications and units of credit. They use this information well as part of their ongoing self-evaluation processes. In one college, target-setting and data collection are underdeveloped. This means that the college is unable to

analyse a range of data on learner progress, achievements and outcomes to inform improvement planning. As a result, managers do not evaluate accurately how much progress learners make over time in relation to their needs or abilities.

Both of the colleges visited as part of the regular monitoring process have made good progress against recommendations identified during their inspection in 2014.

For example, one of the colleges has recently introduced online tracking of individual learners' progress. This enables staff to see at a glance how well learners are doing across the curriculum, to give praise and to intervene, where necessary.

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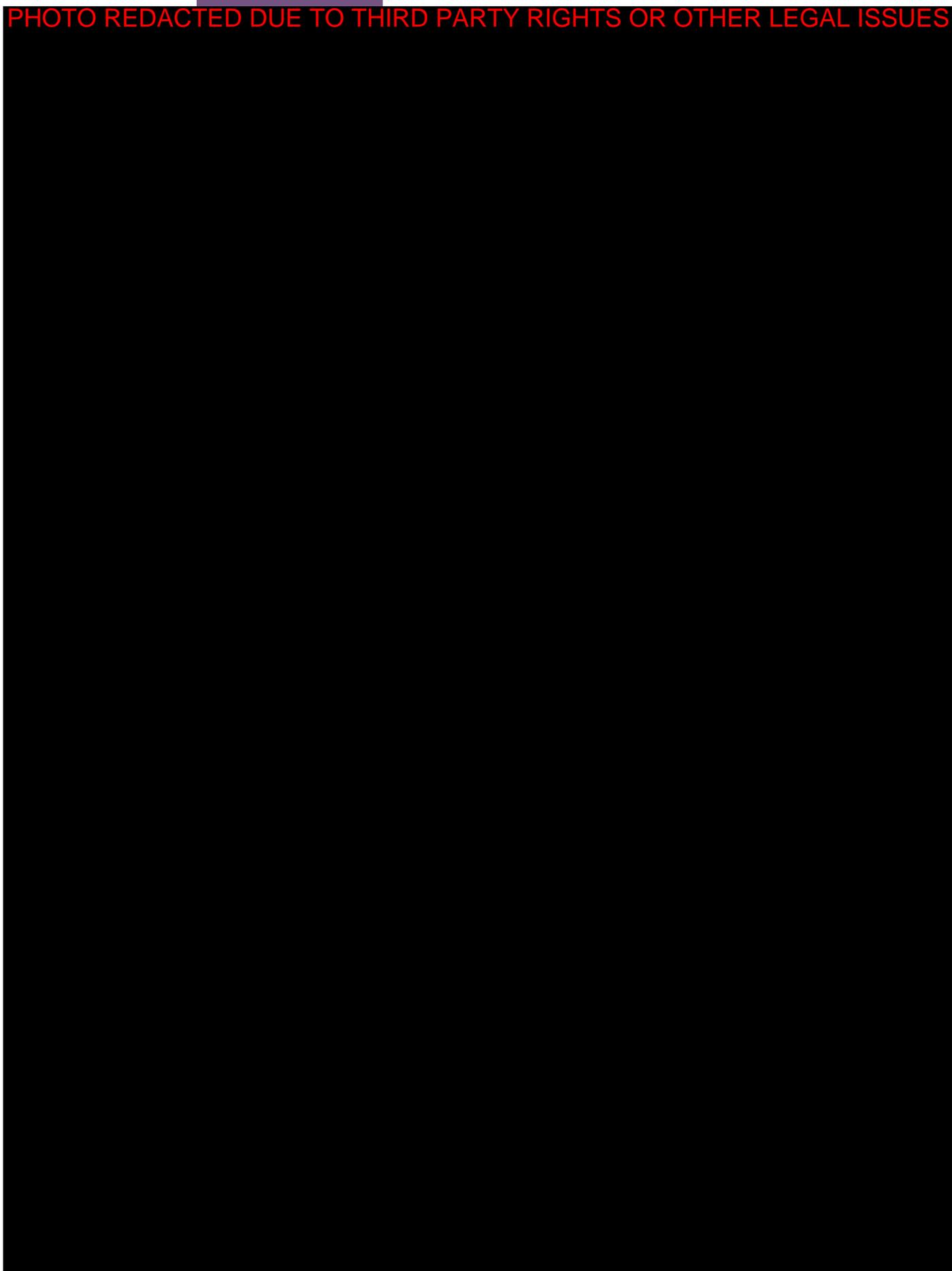
Sector report
Pupil referral units

In January 2016, there were 25 registered pupil referral units (PRUs) in Wales, educating approximately 730 pupils. This is three fewer PRUs than were registered last year. In part, this is due to the development of 'portfolio' PRUs, where a number of previously separate PRUs have closed and a new, often split-site, PRU opens under a single management committee.

PRUs cater for pupils with a wide range of needs who are not suited to education in mainstream schools or have been excluded from them. These pupils include those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, those with mental health issues, and young mothers.

This year, we inspected four PRUs. All of the PRUs inspected had two or more sites and had experienced recent re-organisation.

For more information about the four PRUs inspected, please read the inspection reports:

Carmarthenshire Secondary Teaching and Learning Centre

Hafan Dyfodol Disglair

Powys Pupil Referral Unit

Wrexham Pupil Referral Services

Summary:
Pupil referral units

This year, no PRUs were identified with excellent practice. Inspectors placed all four PRUs in a statutory category of follow up. Three were in need of significant improvement and one required special measures.

All of these PRUs have significant weaknesses in leadership and management, yet local authorities do not provide them with enough support, and their management committees do not provide enough challenge. Self-evaluation and staff performance management are underdeveloped and the PRUs do not focus well enough on improving outcomes for pupils. As a result, there are important gaps in the curriculum and the quality of teaching is too varied. Across all four PRUs, a significant minority of pupils do not attend or behave well.

Figure 2.27:
Numbers of pupil referral units in levels of follow-up

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

3 1

● Significant improvement   ● Special measures

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Outcomes:
Pupil referral units

Standards

Standards are adequate in all four PRUs we inspected this year. This is worse than the norm across the inspection cycle as a whole, where standards are good or better in just under half of PRUs.

In all four PRUs, the majority of pupils gain a range of appropriate qualifications and move onto college or further training. In three out of the four PRUs, a few pupils leave without gaining any qualifications. A minority do not move onto college, further training or employment.

Although the majority of pupils across all four PRUs improve their literacy skills over time, a minority do not make suitable progress. These pupils do not develop their reading or writing skills well enough and make too many common spelling mistakes. They use one-word answers and a limited vocabulary.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills well in designated mathematics lessons. However, across the PRUs, pupils do not develop these skills throughout the curriculum or apply them to everyday life.

Standards in ICT are inconsistent. In two PRUs, nearly all pupils make good use of ICT to support and present their work. In the other two PRUs, the majority of pupils do not develop their ICT skills well enough. For example, they make little use of ICT to research the topics they are studying.

Wellbeing

Pupils' wellbeing is adequate in two of the four PRUs inspected. In the other two PRUs, wellbeing is unsatisfactory. This is worse than across the inspection cycle as a whole. Across all four PRUs, a significant minority of pupils do not attend regularly or behave well. They arrive late, disturb lessons and do not follow instructions. However, most pupils feel safe in their PRU and believe that staff treat them with respect. In two out of four PRUs, pupils understand the need for healthy eating and exercise. In the other two PRUs, many pupils smoke and buy unhealthy food and drinks near the premises.

Three out of the four PRUs involve pupils in community events such as raising money for charity. This helps these pupils to improve their social and life skills. In two PRUs, pupils are involved in decisions about improving the work of the PRU. In the other two PRUs, pupils do not give their views regularly. In one PRU, senior managers do not acknowledge pupils' suggestions.

Figure 2.28:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory
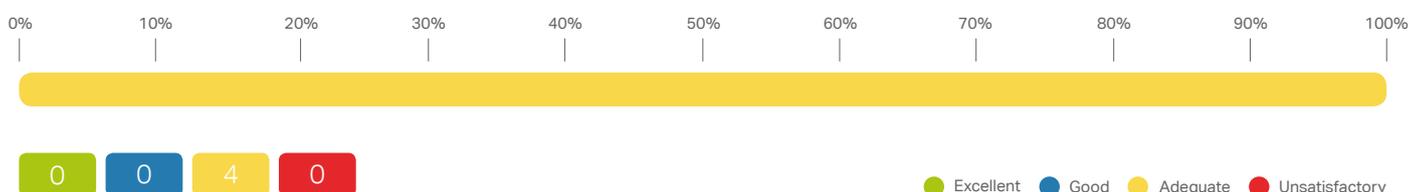
Figure 2.29:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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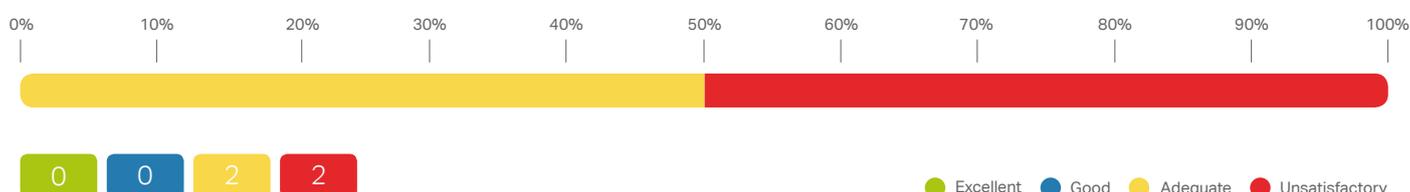
Provision:
Pupil referral units

Provision is adequate in three of the four PRUs inspected this year. In the other PRU, provision is unsatisfactory. This is also worse than for the cycle of inspections as a whole, where provision is good or better in just under half of the PRUs inspected.

All four PRUs provide opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications and to experience outdoor activities and educational visits. However, there are important weaknesses in the curriculum across the four PRUs. There is unequal access to subjects on different sites and, in one PRU, pupils do not have the opportunity to finish courses that they started in their schools. Half of the PRUs do not teach any science. In one PRU, pupils who have previously attended Welsh-medium schools are not able to continue to develop their Welsh literacy skills or gain qualifications in Welsh at an appropriate level.

Planning for the development of literacy and numeracy skills in three PRUs is not good enough. The other PRU does not plan well for developing pupils' ICT skills.

Teaching is adequate in three PRUs and unsatisfactory in the other. In many lessons, teachers plan carefully to meet the pupils' needs. They set a wide range of interesting tasks and expect pupils to behave well. In a minority of lessons in three PRUs and in a majority of lessons in the other, teaching is not effective. In these lessons, teachers have low expectations and do not manage behaviour well.

Across the four PRUs, pupils do not receive enough written feedback on how to improve their work. Pupils do not have regular opportunities to assess their work or the work of others.

Care, support and guidance are adequate in three PRUs and unsatisfactory in the other. In all four PRUs, pupils are encouraged to think about their beliefs and values and those of others. However, three PRUs do not provide a daily act of collective worship. In all PRUs, vulnerable pupils get help with issues that concern them. Arrangements for safeguarding in all four PRUs do not fully meet requirements. For example, in three PRUs there were concerns about pupil supervision and site security.

Three out of the four PRUs take care to identify the additional learning needs of pupils and give them extra support. In two PRUs, pupils' targets are not challenging or specific enough.

All four PRUs have suitable behaviour policies that cover anti-bullying. However, staff do not follow these policies consistently. As a result, pupils do not always behave as well as they could. In one PRU, pupils take part in setting a reward system and this helps to improve their behaviour and motivation.

All PRUs have a caring ethos. However, only two PRUs have a good learning environment. In the other two PRUs, the environment is adequate or unsatisfactory because buildings are not fit for purpose, there is limited space outside, and buildings are poorly maintained.

Figure 2.30:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

0	0	3	1

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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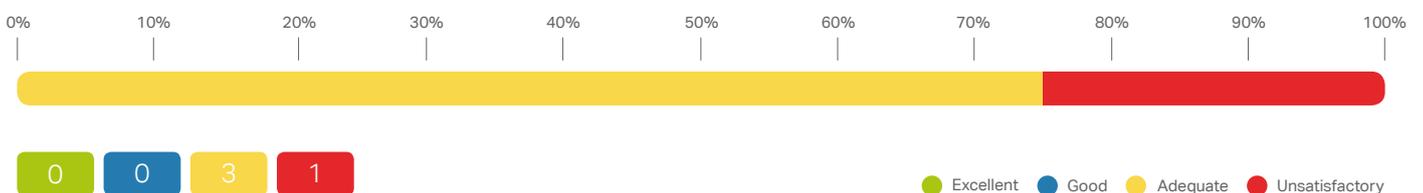
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Leadership and management:
Pupil referral units

Leadership and management are adequate in two PRUs and unsatisfactory in the other two.

All four PRUs have undergone a great deal of change prior to inspection. There are temporary arrangements for management. Staff are often unclear about managers' expectations or their own responsibilities. These changes and uncertainties mean that leaders and managers do not focus enough on improving standards and teaching.

In all four PRUs, local authorities do not do enough to make sure that the PRU is successful. For example, they do not monitor the quality of the PRU's work. They do not provide induction for the new teacher-in-charge, give technical support, or make sure that staff performance is good enough.

Management committees do not challenge managers robustly. They do not make sure that outcomes are good for the pupils or check that the quality of teaching is good or better.

All four PRUs do not manage staff performance well. Although there are performance management arrangements in two PRUs, this has not had a positive impact on pupil outcomes. There is not enough scrutiny of pupils' work or teachers' planning. As a result, managers do not know how well staff and pupils are doing.

Improving quality in all four PRUs is unsatisfactory. The self-evaluation reports do not have enough detail about how well pupils achieve or how good teaching is. This makes it difficult for the PRUs to plan improvements.

None of the four PRUs use data rigorously to find out how well they are performing. Only two out of four PRUs track pupils' progress well and, in one of these PRUs, this work is very recent. Where PRUs use outside agencies, they do not make sure that their work with pupils is of good quality.

All four PRUs make good use of a wide range of partners within the community to provide timely advice to pupils. Two of the PRUs have built effective links with local further education institutions to improve opportunities and help plan for progression.

Resource management in three PRUs is adequate and unsatisfactory in the other. Staff are suitably qualified. However, they do not all receive the training that they need to address national priorities such as literacy and numeracy.

Follow-up activity:
Pupil referral units

Estyn identified two out of three PRUs inspected last year as requiring Estyn monitoring and no PRU was placed in a statutory category of follow up. This year, we visited both PRUs in Estyn monitoring and they had made enough progress to be removed from follow up. Both PRUs acted promptly to address recommendations. For example, one PRU made very strong progress in its use of data. As a result, it has improved tracking of pupils' progress. The PRU now identifies which pupils need extra support with their work and attendance and where additional staff training is needed. Both PRUs have improved their management of staff performance. Managers regularly look at lessons and pupils' work. They now identify where teaching is not good and give support where necessary.

Figure 2.31:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |

Excellent Good Adequate Unsatisfactory

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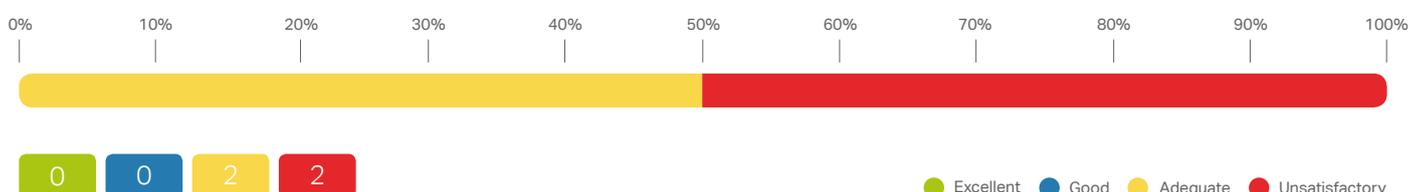
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Local authority education services for children and young people

Estyn's last cycle of local authority core inspections ran from 2010 to 2014. Due to concerns raised during these inspections, Estyn monitored the progress of 15 of the 22 authorities. The final authority was removed from this monitoring process in early 2016. This year, Estyn also inspected the four regional consortia that provide school improvement services on behalf of the 22 authorities.

Regional consortia

In January 2016, the total number of maintained schools served by local authorities was 1,574. There were 432 schools in the North Wales consortium (GwE), 504 in the South West and Mid Wales consortium (ERW), 396 in the South Wales consortium (CSC), and 242 in the South East Wales consortium (EAS).

Each regional consortium provides school improvement services on behalf of five or six local authorities in line with the Welsh Government's national model for regional working (2015a). We inspected all four consortia between February and June 2016, supported by inspectors from the Wales Audit Office. In these inspections, we evaluated the support provided for school improvement and four aspects of leadership and management.

Support for school improvement

Two of the regional consortia provide good support for school improvement and the other two provide adequate support.

Regional consortia know most of their schools well and categorise schools appropriately. Consortia generally challenge schools robustly on their performance, provision and leadership. The reports they prepare on most schools, on behalf of local authorities prior to inspections or monitoring visits, provide a helpful and generally accurate view of performance, provision and leadership.

Over the last three years, the consortia have improved their knowledge of where good practice exists in schools and they have also improved how well they share this good practice regionally and nationally.

All consortia have a valuable range of information about their schools, although they vary in how well they analyse and use data. For example, often there is a narrow focus on headline indicators of performance, without detailed analysis of the factors that contribute to this overall performance or to differences in the performance of groups of pupils. In particular, the consortia have not focused enough on the progress of vulnerable learners and more able learners.

For more information about the regional consortia inspections, please read the inspection reports:

Central South Consortium

EAS Consortium

ERW

GwE Consortium

The consortia are developing more effective strategies for challenging, supporting and monitoring schools causing concern. While consortia usually provide sound information to local authorities about schools causing concern, local authorities do not always act on this information by using their powers of intervention. This limits the extent to which the consortia can help schools improve. Also, where local authority education services such as school reorganisation or human resources are ineffective, this can hamper the progress of a school, even if the consortium provides a good school improvement service.

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All four consortia offer direct support to schools for core curriculum areas such as English, Welsh, science and mathematics. They have all strengthened their support for governors. They are developing suitable programmes to support the professional development of teachers, teaching assistants and leaders. Three of the consortia provide good support for Foundation Phase. The quality of support for schools has improved since the consortia started and the balance between the consortia's support and challenge role has also improved.

An increasing amount of support for schools is now provided by other schools, brokered by the consortia. This school-to-school support helps to build capacity in the education system. For example, the South East Wales consortium (EAS) has identified a group of schools with particularly strong practice in teaching and learning in mathematics. These schools act as hubs to provide effective school-to-school support for their peers. However, across Wales, school-to-school work is not monitored carefully enough by the consortia to evaluate whether the support is having a positive impact on school improvement.

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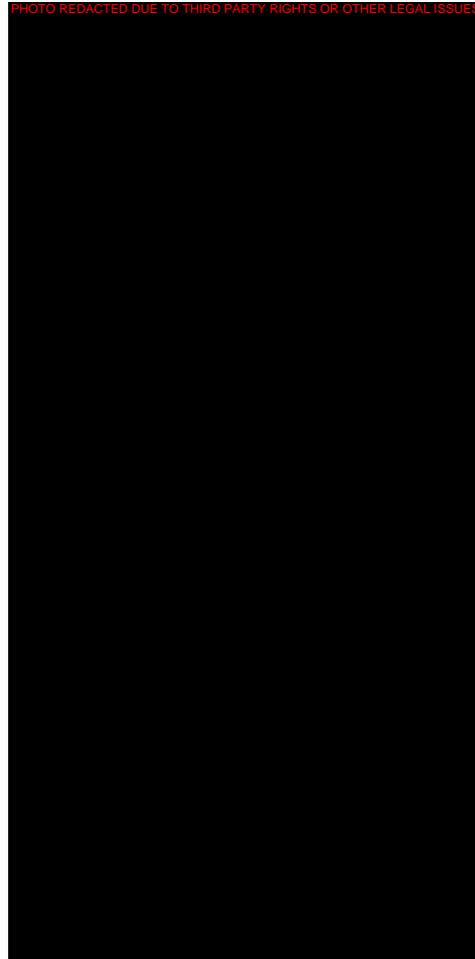
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Leadership and management

Three of the four consortia have effective leadership and governance arrangements. These consortia have clear visions, structures and strategies that are understood by schools and local authorities. The South Wales consortium (CSC) has a clear and well-articulated vision for their self-improving schools model. The vision has been communicated effectively through regular reports, newsletters, face-to-face briefings and its website. This has led to a high level of 'buy-in' by all stakeholders.

All four consortia have medium-term plans in place, which draw from fair and largely helpful self-evaluation processes. However, the quality of annual plans is variable, with actions not being focused enough to meet the specific needs of schools in the region and suitable evaluation criteria not being identified at the planning stage. As a result, the evaluation of school improvement services remains a key area for improvement. Only one consortium has made good progress in how it evaluates the value for money of its services.

The consortia have all improved links with other education services in local authorities, such as services to support social inclusion and additional learning needs. For example, there is a cohesive approach to co-ordinating services for pupils who are looked after by the local authorities in north Wales, which has improved arrangements for pupils as they move between schools.

The consortia have developed useful partnerships with higher education institutions to support the professional development of teachers and school leaders, although much of this work is recent. For example, the South West and Mid Wales consortium (ERW) has worked well with a local higher education institute to design an innovative, accredited course for suitably qualified teachers to retrain to become secondary mathematics teachers, as schools in its region have difficulties in recruiting mathematics teachers.

In January 2016, we introduced a provider perception survey for all headteachers and chairs of governing bodies across Wales. This was to inform our inspection work with regional consortia and local authorities. Findings from the survey show that most headteachers agree that they are challenged robustly about their performance by their consortium. Many headteachers consider that their challenge adviser knows their school well and a majority believe that their consortium is effective in helping them plan for improvement in their school. However, less than half of headteachers think that their consortium takes good account of their views. Overall, chairs of governing bodies were a little less positive than headteachers in their responses.

Evaluating the impact of school improvement services

The **Education Achievement Service** (EAS) is using a model called 'FADE' to improve the quality of self-evaluation of its school improvement services. The capital letters stand for Focus, Analyse, Do, Evaluate. FADE offers a valuable tool to evaluate activities or themes from the business plan at interim points throughout the year focusing on the impact and progress of the work.

The model requires those leading on school improvement work to be clear beforehand about the intended impact of their planned work. These leaders are explicit about the specific issue they are addressing with a school, or group of schools, and what actions they think will improve performance. They are then required to monitor progress and reflect on whether or not the intended impact is being achieved. As a result, schools have a better understanding of the purpose of support or intervention that they receive and clearer expectations of the anticipated improvements.

The FADE model provides a systematic approach to accountability. Senior leaders hold the school improvement leaders to account at planned points through the year for the impact of their actions and not just the delivery of actions. Using this approach allows EAS to modify support or intervention with schools in a more responsive way. The approach is contributing to the development of a culture of continuous improvement in the whole organisation.

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Other inspection activity involving local authorities

This year, we responded to 51 school reorganisation proposals from 20 local authorities. Of the 51 proposals, we concluded that two were likely to improve outcomes and provision for learners and that another 45 were likely to at least maintain the current outcomes and provision for learners. These 47 proposals were supported by strong evidence and firm plans. Two proposals did not provide us with enough information to come to a view. We concluded that two other proposals were unlikely to improve the outcomes and provision for learners. Weaker proposals lack detail and contain assertions that are not supported by firm plans, which lead us to conclude that they are unlikely to improve outcomes and provision for the pupils affected.

Estyn link inspectors have regular meetings with senior leaders and managers of each local authority and challenge the authority about the performance of its education services and how well it plans for improvement. Link inspectors liaise with other inspectorates and regulators to share information relevant to the wider leadership and governance of local authorities.

Estyn's thematic survey work considers the work of local authorities in specific areas. These surveys reports inform national policy and support improvement in education services. Once reports are published, link inspectors challenge local authorities to ensure that the main findings are considered and to check that authorities are addressing the recommendations. For example,

link inspectors are currently challenging local authorities about the main messages in Estyn's reports on EOTAS (Education other than at school; Estyn, 2016d) and WESPs (Welsh in Education Strategic Plans; Estyn 2016i). In particular, link inspectors will challenge authorities about how well they monitor the quality of all alternative provision provided or commissioned for pupils in their local authority. They will also check that authorities evaluate their Welsh-medium additional learning needs provision to identify any gaps.

Estyn is developing plans for a new cycle of inspections of local authorities from autumn 2018, with pilot inspections starting in late 2017. We will consult with our key stakeholders during 2017 to inform these plans and take account of any reform of local government that the Welsh Government may introduce. As part of the development work, Estyn is piloting the use of 'improvement conferences' during 2016-2017. An improvement conference, facilitated by Estyn, will bring together senior leaders and managers from a local authority to consider any concerns about current performance in education services and to strengthen plans to address these concerns. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this approach at the end of the pilots. We will then consider whether to build on this pilot work when designing our support for any local authorities that are identified as a cause for concern in the new inspection cycle.

A charter for Welsh language

Gwynedd County Council's 'Welsh Language Charter' is a framework that is used to promote the use of Welsh by pupils in social contexts. The Charter emphasises the importance of involving the whole school community, including parents and governors, in identifying, agreeing and mapping out the development steps and the strategies to increase the use of Welsh by the pupils in different contexts.

The framework was initially developed about three years ago and has since been implemented in Welsh-medium primary schools across all the local authorities in North Wales. This year, the framework is being introduced in local authorities across Wales through regional consortia.

The initial process involves Year 3-6 pupils completing an on-line questionnaire giving details about their use of Welsh within the classroom, on the playground and out of school. The questionnaire also seeks pupils' views about their attitudes towards the Welsh language. The data provides a baseline that enables schools to identify the aspects they need to focus on, which are then developed into priorities for their action plans. Pupils repeat the questionnaire about a year later, enabling the school to evaluate progress.

Nearly all schools involved in using the Charter are successful in increasing pupils' use of Welsh in a range of social contexts. This year, 35 primary school inspection reports recognised that the process is contributing to improving the standards achieved by pupils in their oral skills.

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Figure 2.32:
Map of regional consortia and the percentage
share of maintained schools and statutory
school age pupils in Wales for each consortium, 2016

● **GwE**

1 Anglesey
2 Gwynedd
3 Conwy
4 Denbighshire
5 Flintshire
6 Wrexham

Number of maintained schools: 432
Percentage of maintained schools: 27%

Number of pupils: 101,600
Percentage of pupils: 22%

● **ERW**

7 Ceredigion
8 Powys
9 Pembrokeshire
10 Carmarthenshire
11 Swansea
12 Neath Port Talbot

Number of maintained schools: 504
Percentage of maintained schools: 32%

Number of pupils: 129,000
Percentage of pupils: 28%

● **EAS**

18 Caerphilly
19 Blaenau Gwent
20 Torfaen
21 Newport
22 Monmouthshire

Number of maintained schools: 242
Percentage of maintained schools: 15%

Number of pupils: 89,600
Percentage of pupils: 19%

● **CSC**

13 Bridgend
14 Vale of Glamorgan
15 Rhondda Cynon Taf
16 Merthyr Tydfil
17 Cardiff

Number of maintained schools: 396
Percentage of maintained schools: 25%

Number of pupils: 146,500
Percentage of pupils: 31%

Sources: Welsh Government, 2016l, 2016m

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Figure 2.33:
Judgements awarded to regional consortia

Support for school improvement
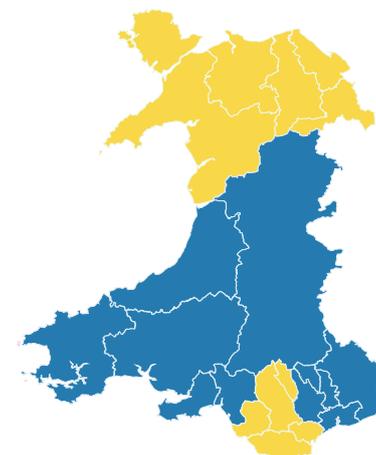
Leadership
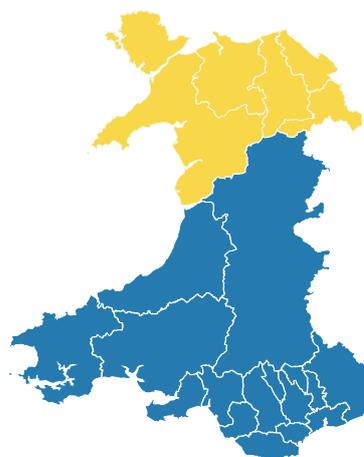
Improving quality
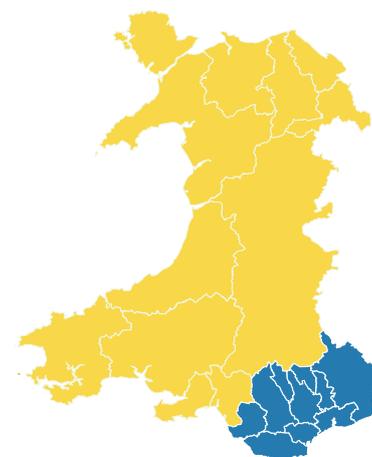
Partnership working
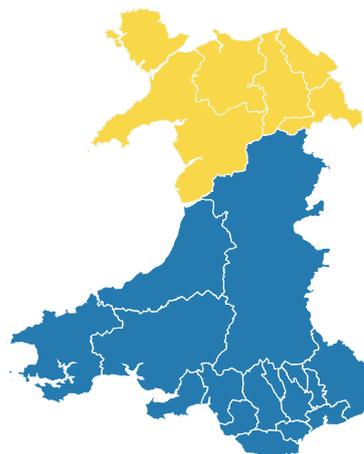
Resource management
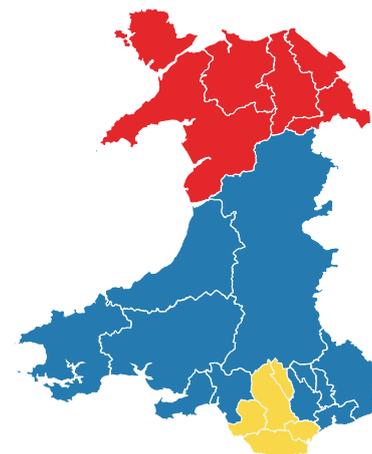
- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Unsatisfactory

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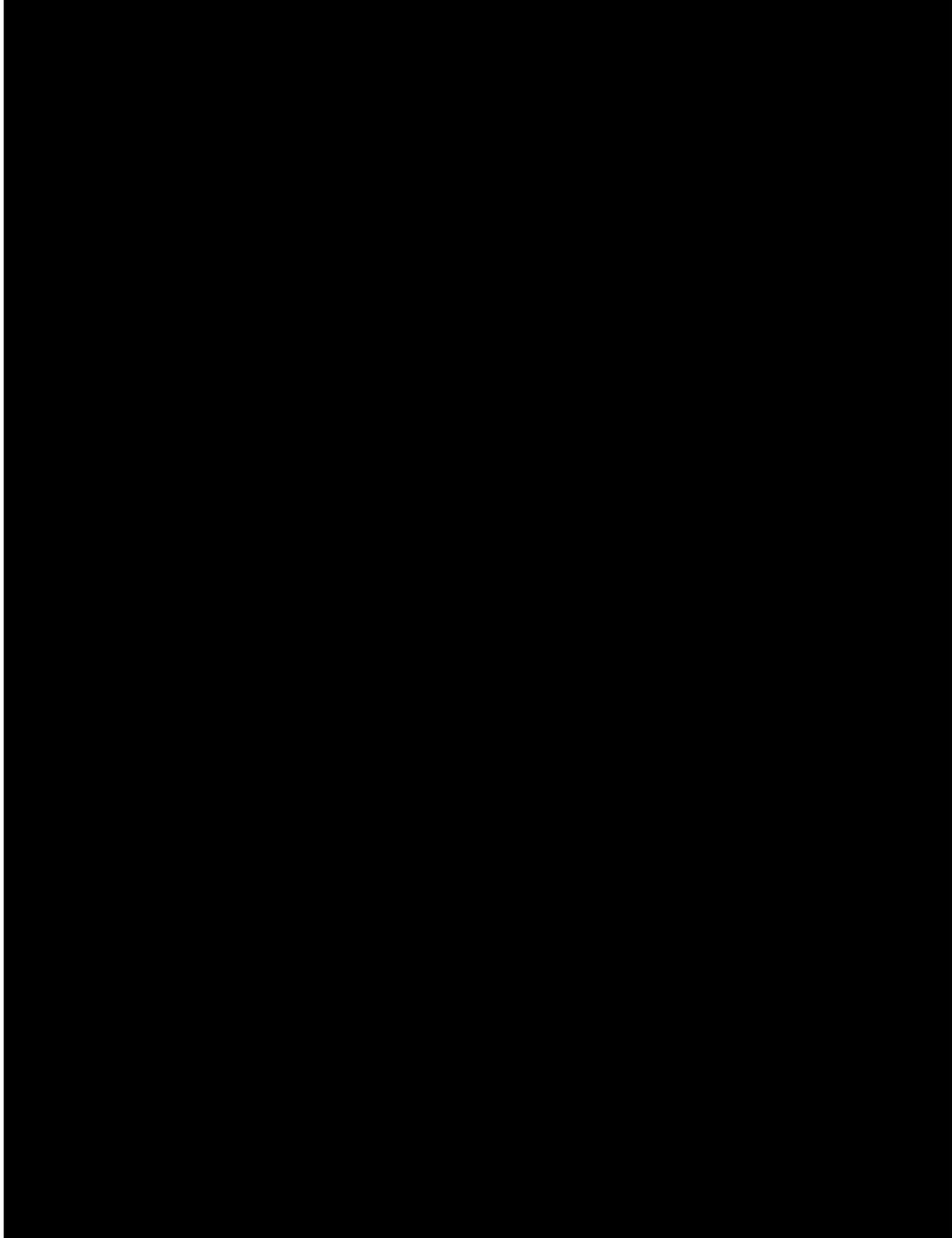
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Sector report
Further education colleges

There are 13 further education colleges in Wales. Last year, the latest for which figures are available, there was a total of 167,325 enrolments on educational and training courses at these colleges. Across Wales, further education colleges differ significantly from each other in terms of the courses and programmes they provide and they serve communities of different social, economic and linguistic contexts.

This year, we inspected two further education colleges. In addition, inspectors made formal visits to each college to monitor progress.

For more information about the two colleges inspected, please read the inspection reports:

Bridgend College

Coleg Cambria

Summary:
Further education colleges

Both of the colleges inspected this year were identified as having excellent practice. Common areas of excellence include strong strategic vision and leadership, effective communications, constructive partnership working, and valuable support for learners.

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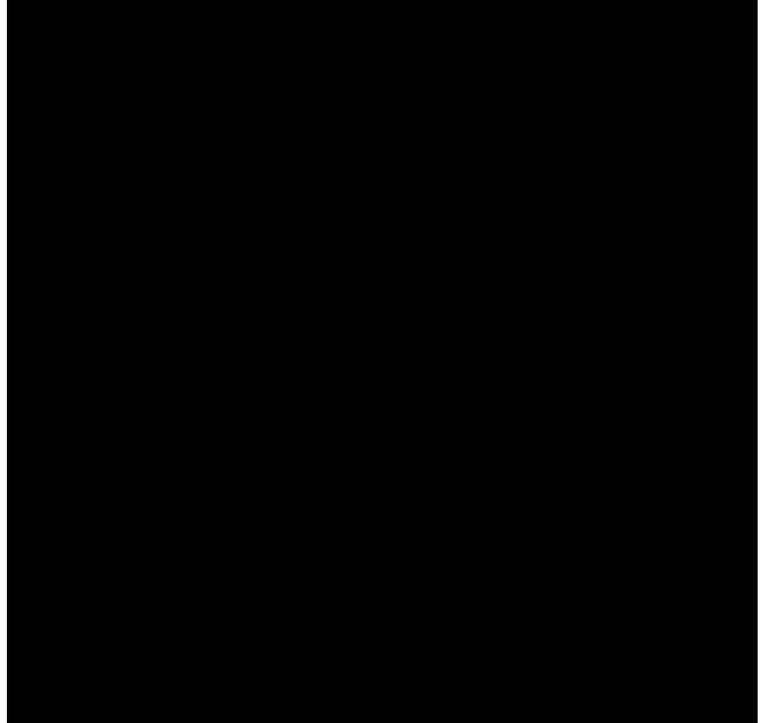
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Outcomes:
Further education colleges

Standards

Standards are good in both of the colleges we inspected.

In colleges across Wales, success rates based on attainment and completion rates are generally above 80%, although rates vary across learning areas. From 2012 to 2016, success rates changed very little and the gaps between colleges' performance are narrow. Generally, learners taking academic qualifications succeed at a slightly lower rate than those taking vocational qualifications. Success rates are lowest in engineering, ICT, social sciences, business administration and law.

Standards are good or better in a majority of the learning areas of the two colleges inspected. Many learners make strong progress in their technical skills and show a good standard of work in their portfolios. In two learning areas inspected, hair and beauty and art, design and performing arts, standards are excellent. Most learners make very strong progress, developing exceptional professional skills in their practical work. Their communication skills are highly effective.

In a minority of learning areas, standards are judged as adequate. Common shortcomings in these areas include success rates that are below national comparators, a minority of learners who do not make enough progress in lessons, and more able learners who do not develop their writing skills well enough.

In both colleges inspected, most learners achieve well, enjoy their learning and are able to progress into work, or into higher levels of learning, including higher education. Learners from different ethnic minority backgrounds, those with a declared disability, and learners from the most deprived areas, successfully achieve their qualifications at a rate equal to or greater than that of their peers. A few more able learners do not make the progress that they are capable of achieving.

Nearly all learners participate well in setting their own targets for learning and use information from diagnostic assessments to identify their strengths and weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. In a few cases, targets are not specific enough and, as a result, learners are not able to track and monitor their progress or address their weaknesses and improve their skills.

Most learners speak clearly and with confidence. Learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally accurate and most develop their literacy skills well in skills development programmes, often from low starting points. Many learners carry out numerical calculations competently. They practise and develop their numeracy skills well in a range of contexts and situations. In one college, learners in a few learning areas do not develop their numeracy skills through their vocational classes well enough.

Learners make satisfactory progress only in developing their Welsh skills in the two colleges inspected. In both colleges, only a few learners choose to take a very few qualifications through the medium of Welsh.

Figure 2.34:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: Standards

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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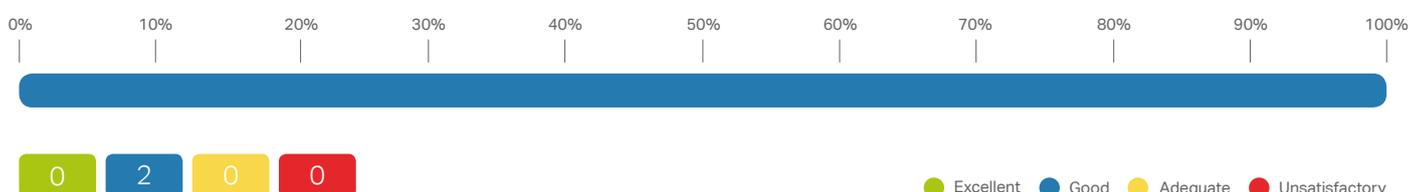
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Wellbeing

In both colleges inspected, standards of wellbeing are excellent. Most learners, from all backgrounds, attend, behave and participate exceptionally well. They feel safe and value their college greatly. The positive attitudes of most learners in both colleges contribute to their progress in developing social skills and confidence. They understand the need to achieve well in college to follow their chosen career.

Many learners take part in a wide range of sport and enrichment activities and engage in community activities. For example, in one college, entry-level learners make craft products to sell at Christmas markets. In the other college, a group of media students work with a local charity to establish a clothes bank for disadvantaged teenagers.

Learners participate actively in decision-making at high levels within the college management structures. They discuss matters of concern, including feedback on aspects of teaching and learning, and work constructively with college staff to make improvements to the college environment, to their learning experiences, and to support systems for learners.

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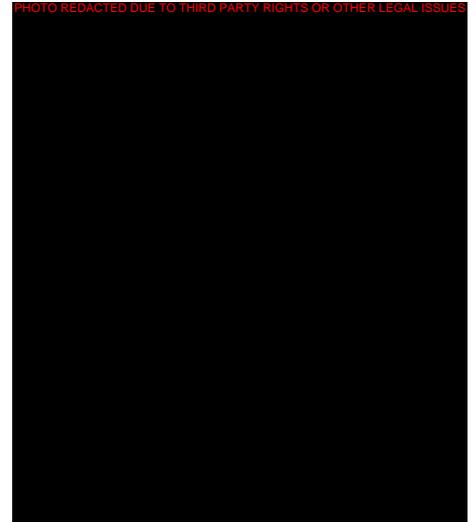
Figure 2.35:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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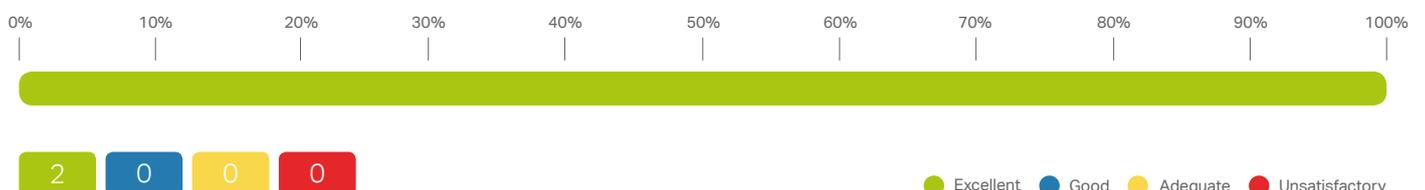
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Provision:
## Further education colleges

Provision is excellent in both of the colleges inspected this year. Both colleges plan the curriculum well and offer learners courses from entry level to level 6.

The colleges inspected make good use of local labour market information to identify the skills needs of employers. This enables each college to be responsive to its community and both have adapted their curriculum to meet learners' needs. In one college, an outstanding feature is the local art facility that offers vulnerable learners opportunities to develop skills and stay engaged with education and training. In the other college, very good links with employers lead to high-quality and relevant work experience, including industrial experiences in Europe and prestigious sporting events for hospitality and catering learners.

Both colleges have developed clear strategies to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills. They offer a broad range of provision including Essential Skills Wales qualifications, GCSEs and other skills development programmes. In one college, technology is used innovatively to ensure that learners develop their ICT skills exceptionally well in vocational and academic classes. The opportunity for learners to develop high-level ICT skills is embedded in all aspects of the curriculum. This includes, for example, creating learner blogs to record their skills and building digital portfolios to illustrate how their ideas progress during study. Routine use is made of classroom 'application tools' to share resources and enable learners to submit assignments and the use of cloud technology supports collaboration.

Teaching is good in the two colleges inspected. Most teachers demonstrate secure subject and technical knowledge. Nearly all teachers and learning support assistants develop good working relationships and a sound rapport with their learners. In many classes, teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning strategies and high-quality resources that engage and challenge learners. In a few classes, where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning is too slow and teachers' expectations are not high enough. In these classes, learners are not fully engaged in their learning, and more able learners are not challenged enough.

Figure 2.36:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

2	0	0	0

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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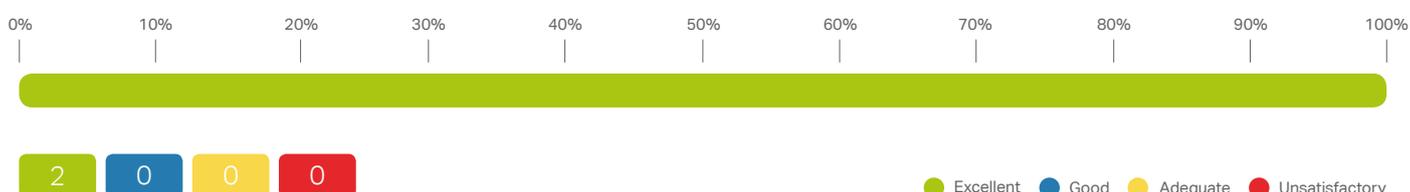
Many teachers plan lessons well and use a suitable range of questions to assess learners' knowledge and understanding. They give useful verbal feedback with advice on learners' progress and how to improve further. In a few lessons, teachers do not use questioning well enough to draw out expanded answers, test learners' understanding, or develop their thinking skills.

Provision is good or better in a majority of learning areas inspected. In these areas, teachers plan sessions well using high-quality resources and sometimes with innovative teaching approaches. In a minority of learning areas, provision is judged as adequate because a minority of teachers do not plan to challenge learners or provide clear advice on what needs to improve when assessing work.

Care, support and guidance in both colleges are highly effective. For example, one college makes outstanding provision for learner support, particularly for those with additional learning needs. The other college provides valuable guidance and advice to learners using a wide range of online-based curriculum materials on a range of issues.

The learning environment is excellent in the two colleges inspected. Leaders in both colleges have established a very positive ethos and culture that enables learners and staff to feel safe and well supported. Both colleges provide learners with access to industry-standard equipment that gives learners the chance to experience a realistic working environment, preparing them well for future employment.

A holistic approach to supporting college learners

Bridgend College has invested in wellbeing officers, learning coaches and skills coaches to support learners. These staff are part of the wellbeing and support team that is linked to curriculum areas and supports learners in all aspects of their learning and wellbeing. This support has helped learners to achieve improved results in nearly all learning areas.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

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Sector summaries:

Leadership and management
Further education colleges

Leadership and management are excellent in both of the colleges inspected this year. Although they serve very different economic and demographic areas, senior staff in both colleges have embedded a culture based on strong vision and values across all areas of provision. This culture helps to motivate staff and learners. In both colleges, the governing body brings a high level of expertise and a robust challenge to academic and commercial activities. Both colleges have excellent, strategic partnerships with a range of local and regional businesses, agencies and universities. These links enrich the learning opportunities and experiences for college learners and staff.

In both colleges, senior managers provide clear strategic direction and work well as a team. The principals and senior leaders have worked quickly, during a period of transformation, to develop the colleges, while maintaining a clear focus on improving outcomes for learners. Each college has developed communications strategies to ensure that staff and stakeholders share a common understanding of the college's expectations and how they contribute to the success of the college. For example, in one college, teachers share lesson materials with learners through interactive classrooms and exchange ideas and information with other teachers and support staff through setting up online communities.

One college has effective self-evaluation processes that monitor and improve the quality of its provision, including using information from listening to learners to inform improvement planning. Staff across the college make excellent use of data from a range of sources to review their performance against national benchmarks and college targets. In the other college, systems for self-evaluation and improvement planning are good and senior staff use management information well to plan improvements in existing provision and in teaching. In a few areas in both colleges, self-assessment does not focus sharply enough on learners' progress and achievement in lessons.

Leadership is good or better in a majority of learning areas inspected. In two learning areas, leaders set clear direction and promote high standards. In the learning areas with good leadership, managers communicate well and the college's quality assurance cycle is used to review performance. The self-assessment reports are generally accurate and self-critical, although a few are overly positive. Many learning areas have successful relationships with local employers.

In a minority of learning areas, leadership has important shortcomings. In these learning areas, there is no accurate assessment of learners' needs and meetings do not focus on improving standards and the progress of learners. Self-assessment reports show limited use of first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and learning and are not sufficiently evaluative. Links with partners to provide work experience opportunities are not well developed.

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

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

● Excellent　● Good　● Adequate　● Unsatisfactory

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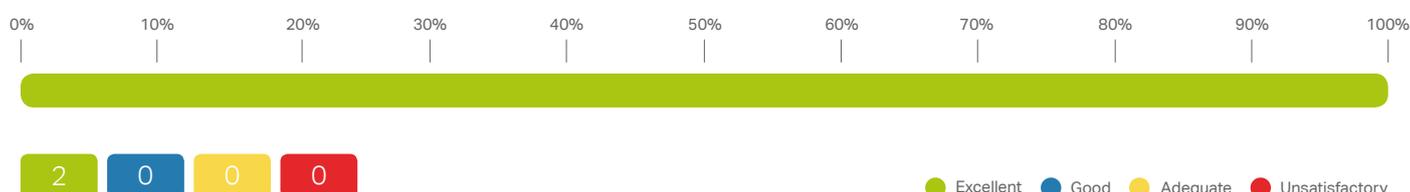
The two colleges inspected manage resources very well and have sophisticated financial planning. Both colleges have recently undergone extensive management and staffing reviews and have improved efficiency by reducing costs while maintaining or improving learners' outcomes. Both colleges make innovative use of their building stock and resources to improve the learner experience. For example, one college transformed older buildings into a theatre and the other college used its investments to create an advanced, modern farm for its agriculture students.

The colleges inspected have also invested well in staff development, particularly in developing teaching skills. Managers have good access to training to develop their leadership and management skills.

Building a new identity

Coleg Cambria was formed in August 2013 following the merger of Deeside College and Yale College to become one of the largest colleges in the UK, serving three local authority areas. Strong leadership and effective governance helped to create a successful and robust new identity for the newly formed Coleg Cambria. A shared ethos and culture underpin the college's excellent current performance and prospects for improvement.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

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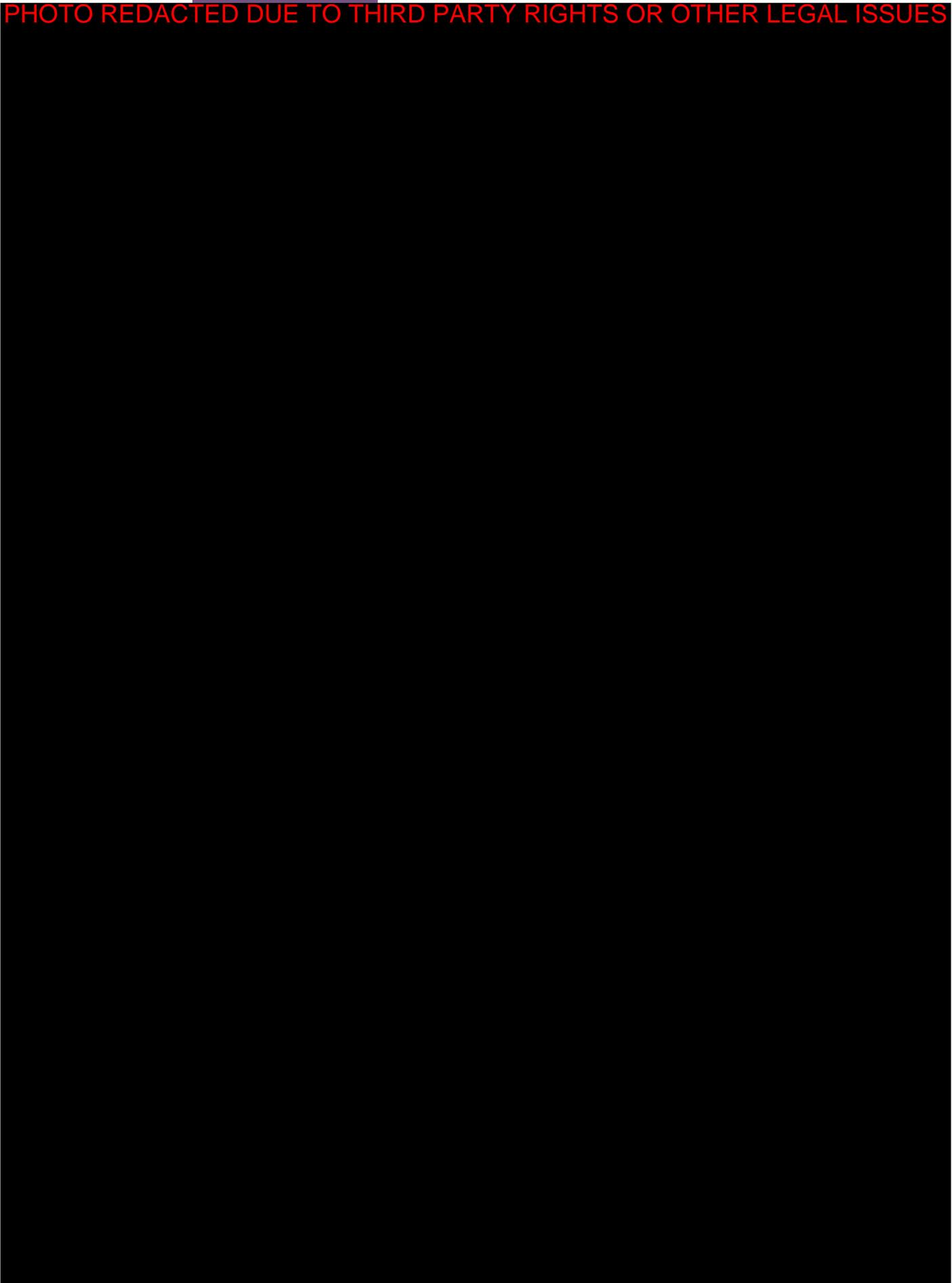
Sector report
Work-based learning

At the start of this academic year, there were 20 providers delivering work-based learning. During the year, this number reduced to 19 providers. The majority of these providers work in consortia or with sub-contractor training providers. The latest available learner numbers for 2014-2015, indicate that there were 57,100 learners undertaking work-based learning programmes. Of these, 25,035 were undertaking level 3 and 4 apprenticeships, 19,030 were undertaking level 2 foundation apprenticeships, and 13,035 were undertaking other training.

This year, we inspected three providers.

For more information about the three providers we inspected, please read the inspection reports:

Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)

Swansea Bay Skills Partnership

Vocational Skills Partnership

Summary:
Work-based learning

This year, two of the three providers inspected have excellent practice. In the providers with excellent practice, nearly all learners make strong progress towards completing their training frameworks. The senior management teams in these providers are particularly effective in setting a clear strategic direction for the delivery of their work-based learning contract.

One provider was identified as requiring Estyn monitoring, largely because the quality of training and support is not consistently of a good standard across the provider. As a result, outcomes for learners are below the national average for the sector.

Figure 2.38:
Numbers of work-based learning providers in levels of follow-up

2 **Excellent practice**
(2 providers)

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

2   1

● Not in follow-up   ● Link inspector monitoring

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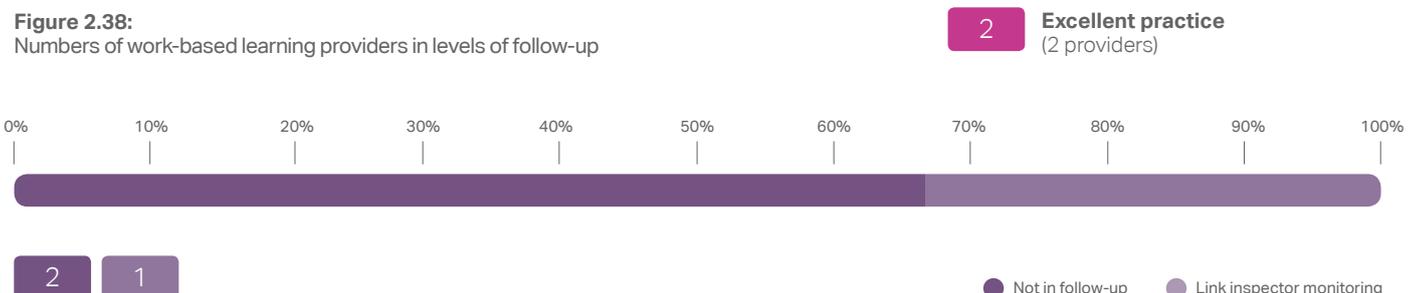
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Outcomes:
Work-based learning

Standards

This year, standards are good in two providers and adequate in the other provider.

In two of the three providers, the rates for apprenticeship framework completion are close to or above national comparators. Most learners complete their frameworks on time. They develop high levels of practical skills in the workplace, enabling them to gain and sustain employment in their chosen industry. In the other provider, learners achieve their training frameworks and other qualifications at rates significantly below national comparators and a minority of learners take longer than expected to complete their training programme.

Learners generally complete their Essential Skills Wales qualifications at the level required in their training frameworks. Where appropriate, a few learners complete qualifications at a higher level. The majority of learners develop their literacy skills well. Although there are increased opportunities for learners to undertake examinations or written assessments in Welsh, few choose to do so.

Many learners are highly motivated and engage fully in their training programmes. They enjoy their training and work well with their tutors, assessors and employers.

Figure 2.39:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

0	2	1	0

Excellent   Good   Adequate   Unsatisfactory

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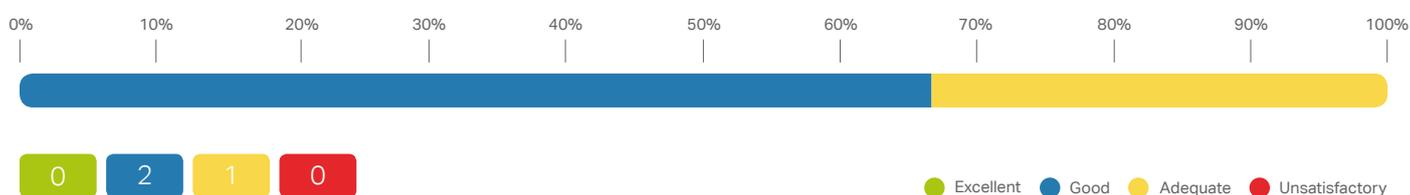
Wellbeing

Wellbeing is good in all three providers inspected. Most learners are enthusiastic about their training and motivated to achieve their training framework. Many learners are eager to progress to the next level of training and they engage well in community, national and international projects. These include charity fund raising and undertaking repair and development projects, such as making furniture for a local community centre garden and assisting in the renovation of community buildings.

Nearly all learners have a very good understanding of working life and communicate well with their employers, trainers, clients and peers. They generally develop a wide range of employability skills that enable them to sustain employment.

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Figure 2.40:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing

0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

0	3	0	0

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate   ● Unsatisfactory

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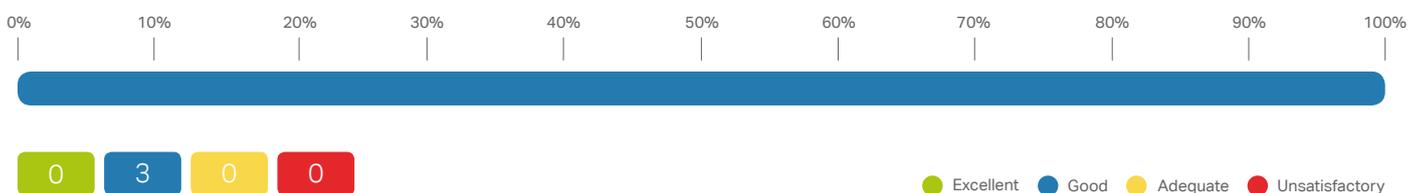
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Provision:
Work-based learning

The quality of training and assessment is good in two providers and adequate in the other.

Generally, providers deliver a wide range of training programmes that meet the needs of learners and employers. Training is delivered in a variety of learning areas that result in learners developing a range of valuable skills to sustain employment in their chosen learning area. Training programmes are usually delivered from level 1 through to level 5 and many learners have good opportunities to progress to the next level. Many providers offer aspects of training and assessment through the medium of Welsh, but the number of learners undertaking written assessments in Welsh remains low.

All three providers have clear literacy and numeracy strategies. This year, we found that tutors and assessors are using these strategies more consistently. In two of the three providers, this consistency is starting to have a positive impact on improving the standard of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. However, overall, there is still too much variation in the quality of literacy and numeracy support that learners receive. In the adequate provider, learners are not being stretched or supported well enough to achieve high-level literacy and numeracy skills.

The majority of trainers and assessors have up-to-date vocational knowledge and provide valuable personal support to learners. This has a positive impact on learners staying on their training programmes and achieving their training frameworks. In a few cases, trainers and assessors do not challenge learners well enough to develop higher-level practical competence and theory knowledge.

Most tutors and assessors have high expectations of their learners, and assessors plan assessment activities well. As a result, learners understand how they will be assessed and what is expected of them.

The providers have comprehensive procedures in place to ensure that learners receive good levels of care, support and guidance. Many learners receive strong support from employers and workplace mentors. Providers offer a wide-ranging induction to their training programmes that has a clear focus on wellbeing and on health and safety. This helps learners to develop a secure understanding of expected practices in their workplaces and many quickly become valued members of staff. Providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. They deploy staff well to support learners who have additional learning needs.

The providers inspected have developed and use a wide range of policies and procedures to support their aim of raising learners' understanding of inclusivity, equality and diversity.

Improving learner retention and success through progress monitoring

The **Construction Industry Training Board** has developed a high-quality information system to track learners' progress and monitor the performance of their college sub-contractors. The system is used particularly well to identify and track the support provided for learners who are at risk of under-achieving or leaving their training programme. As a result, learner retention and success rates have improved.

For more information, please read our **case study**.

Figure 2.41:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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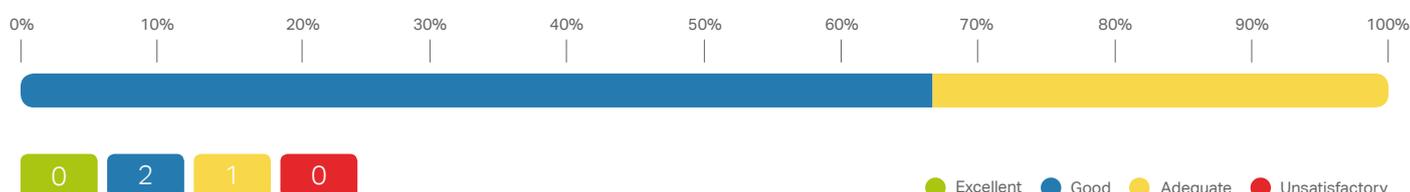
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Leadership and management
Work-based learning

Leadership and management are excellent in two of the providers inspected and adequate in the other. In the providers judged excellent, leadership is of a very high standard and focuses well on the needs of learners and the quality of the learning experience. Well-established values, aims and strategic goals underpin the delivery of their training programmes. In these providers, managers and staff have developed effective working relationships with consortium partners, sub-contractors, employers and schools. Communication across the providers and with key partners is clear. They have detailed strategies for reviewing and improving the performance of all staff. In the one provider where leadership is judged as adequate, senior leaders do not communicate the strategic aims and direction of the consortium well enough. As a result, staff who do not hold leadership roles and sub-contractors are not clear about these aims.

Quality improvement arrangements are excellent in one provider, good in one, and adequate in the other. In the best practice, self-assessment reports are comprehensive and contain a broad range of first-hand evidence.

The reports are used well as a key tool to monitor and drive forward quality improvement. Where there are shortcomings, providers' quality improvement systems do not focus enough on improving learner standards. Often, this is because quality systems are not applied consistently across the lead provider and its sub-contractor partners.

Two providers have developed excellent partnership working arrangements with a wide range of key partners, and the other provider has good partnership working practices. These partnerships include effective working relationships with consortium members, sub-contractors, employers, schools, and industry, and make a positive contribution to improving the quality and consistency of training programmes.

Resource management is good in two of the providers inspected and adequate in the other. All three providers inspected make sure that appropriate, and often high-quality, resources are available for training and assessment. They support their staff with training and professional development opportunities.

Figure 2.42:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
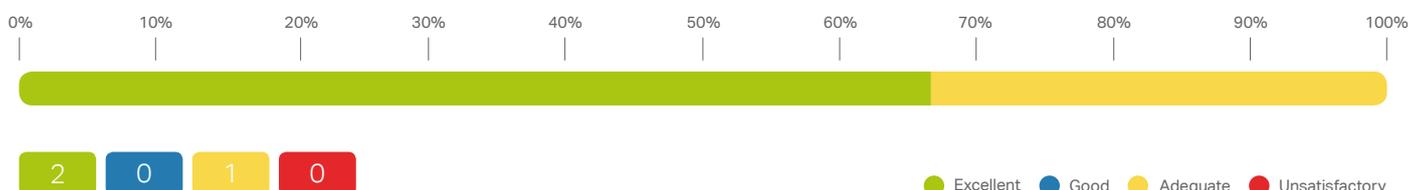
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● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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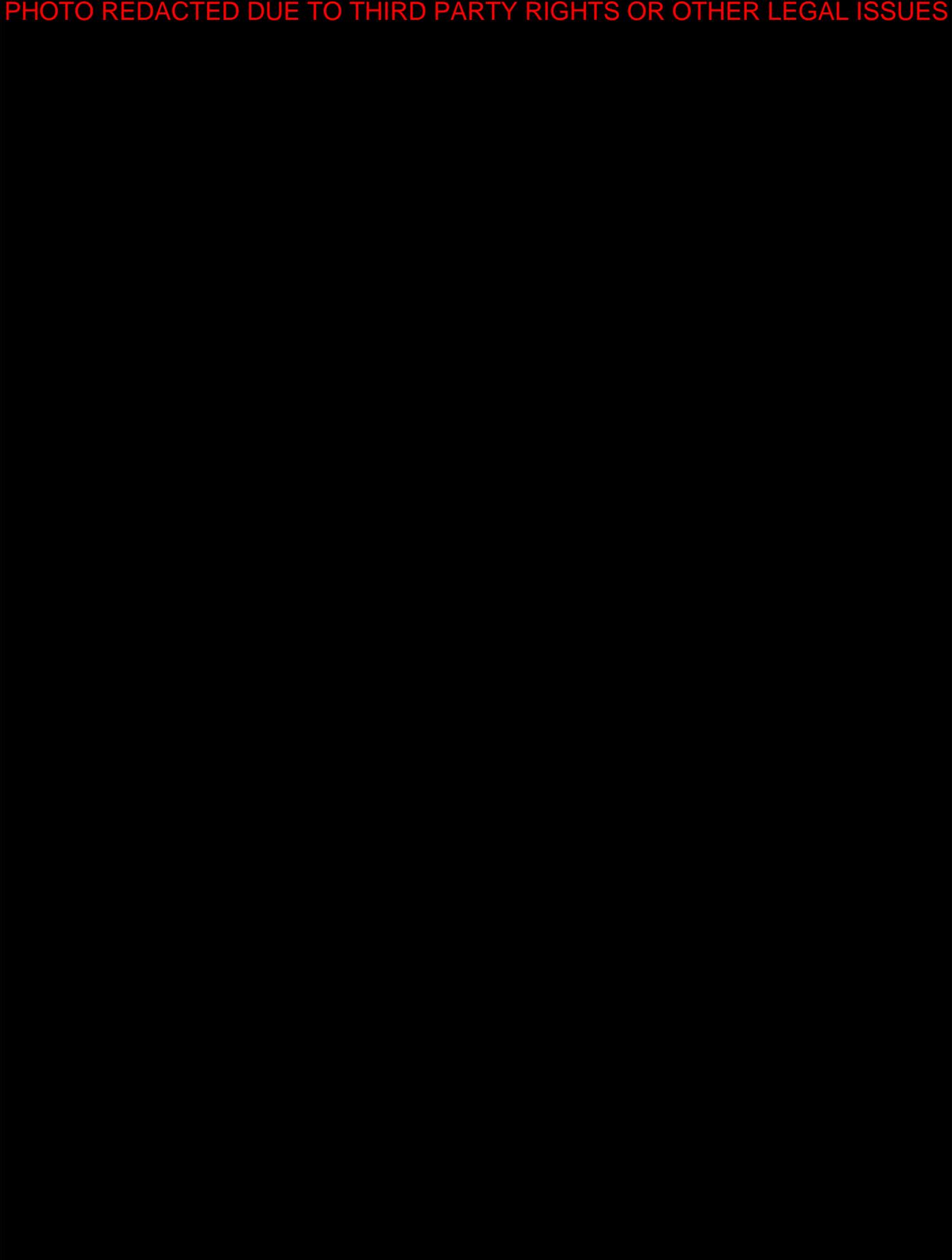
Sector report
Adult community learning

Adult community learning provides government-funded courses in adult basic education, English as a second language, and ICT, aimed at supporting adults who need to update their skills in these areas. It also provides a range of 'leisure' courses, such as cookery, art, languages and up-cycling furniture, aimed at adults wanting to develop their own businesses, take up a new hobby, or keep active. The sector delivers the courses through 15 local adult community learning partnerships. In addition, the Workers Education Association Cymru and the YMCA Wales Community College have joined together to produce an organisation delivering adult community learning across Wales.

Our thematic report **Adult Community Learning in Wales** provides more information about findings in this sector.

This year, Estyn undertook a thematic survey of the sector (Estyn, 2016j). The main findings from the thematic survey show that, in adult basic education, ICT, and English for speakers of other languages, over the last few years, completion rates ranged between 92% and 95% of learners. However, success rates remain around 10% lower than completion rates. This is because adult learners often have other commitments in their lives, such as shift work and caring for a family, which mean that they do not complete the qualification within the academic year of study.

In most adult community learning partnerships, financial reductions have had a significant impact on provision and staffing levels. Nonetheless, adult community learning partnerships maintain a strong commitment to providing learning for all adults and, in particular, for hard-to-reach and vulnerable learners.

Nearly all adult community learning partnerships are committed to providing 'leisure' or wellbeing courses, often on a full-cost recovery basis. However, this arrangement leads to reduced opportunities for those learners who are less affluent, because most courses are no longer subsidised.

Adult community learning partnerships have continued to apply quality assurance procedures to maintain the quality of teaching and learning. However, wider financial cuts in local authorities mean that many senior leaders in the adult community learning sector have moved jobs or left the service, resulting in fewer experienced staff to assure the quality of teaching and learning.

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Sector report
Initial teacher training

There are currently three regional centres of initial teacher training in Wales, which, together with the Graduate Teacher Programme and the Additional Graduate Training Programme, provide routes to become a qualified teacher. In 2014-2015, across the three regional centres, around 625 primary and nursery school trainees and around 685 secondary school trainees were awarded initial teacher training qualifications (Welsh Government, 2016b).

In May 2015, Estyn completed the current cycle of initial teacher training. The North and Mid Wales Centre of Teacher Education remains in the re-inspection category of follow-up. We will re-inspect the centre in 2016-2017.

This year, Estyn worked closely with the Welsh Government to contribute to the reform of initial teacher education (ITE) in Wales. In particular, as a member of the Teacher Education Accreditation Group, Estyn has helped to develop new arrangements for accrediting ITE programmes in Wales. Under these proposals, Estyn will inspect the newly accredited programmes from September 2019. In the interim, Estyn will continue to monitor the existing provision for initial teacher training, and will carry out thematic survey work to gather evidence in specific areas of teacher education.

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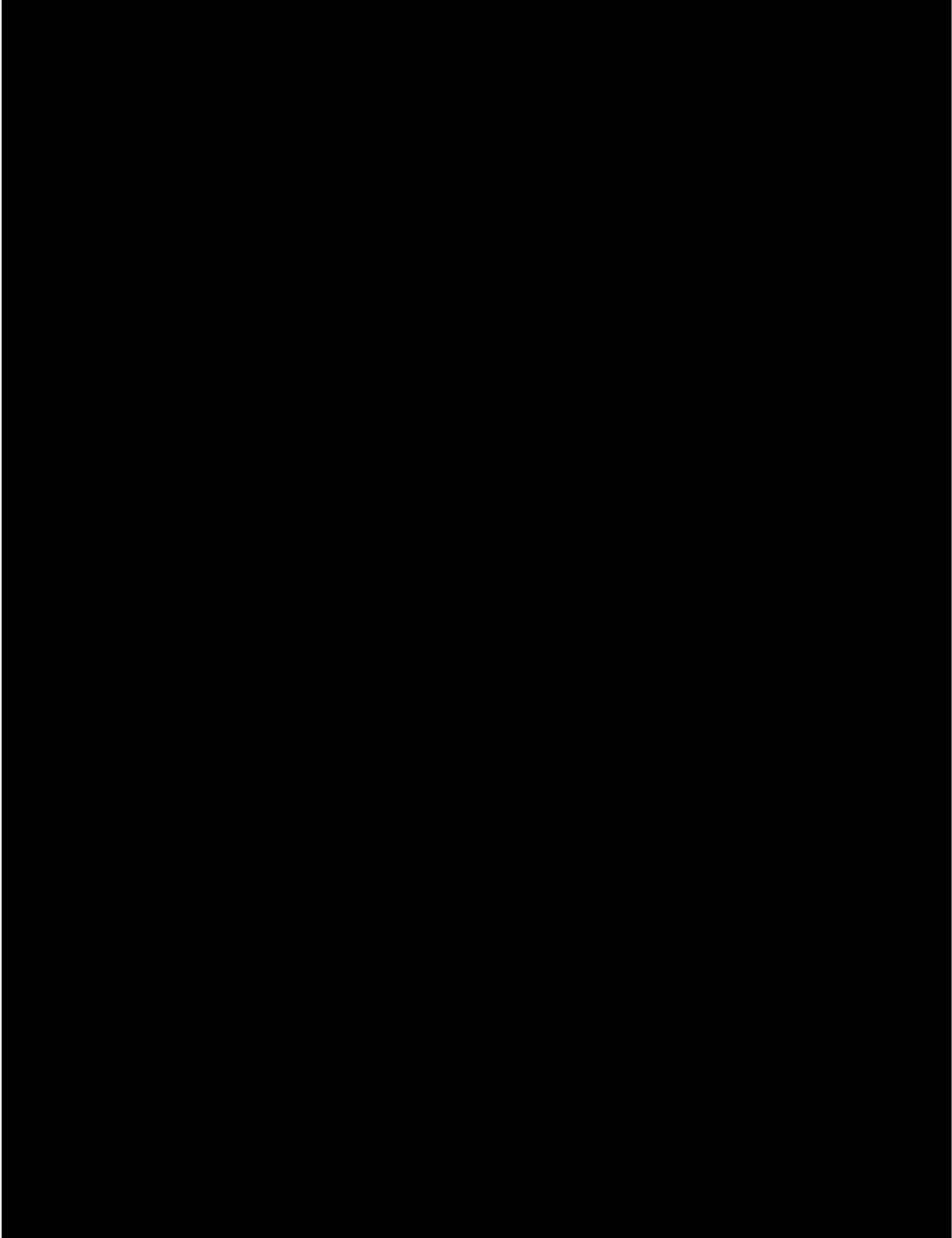
Sector report
Welsh for Adults

The National Centre for Learning Welsh (Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol) was established by the Welsh Government in 2015 as the body responsible for providing strategic leadership to the Welsh for Adults sector and for all aspects of the Welsh for Adults education programme. In August 2016, full responsibility for the sector was transferred to the National Centre and it restructured the Welsh for Adults provision across Wales, replacing the previous six Welsh for Adults regional centres with 11 new Welsh for Adults providers.

During 2016-2017, Estyn is undertaking a thematic survey on the effectiveness of these new arrangements on the quality of provision for Welsh learners. We will review the progress made by the National Centre in relation to achieving the aims in its strategic plan. These include raising the sector's profile, increasing the numbers who start and continue to learn Welsh, and establishing a new curriculum and courses that make full use of the latest technology. The National Centre's aims also include schemes that provide opportunities for learners to use their language skills in different contexts, and seeing greater consistency across providers through more effective training, quality assurance and data management processes. The survey will focus on the specific role of the National Centre and how successful it is in influencing, leading and managing developments in the sector following the national re-organisation.

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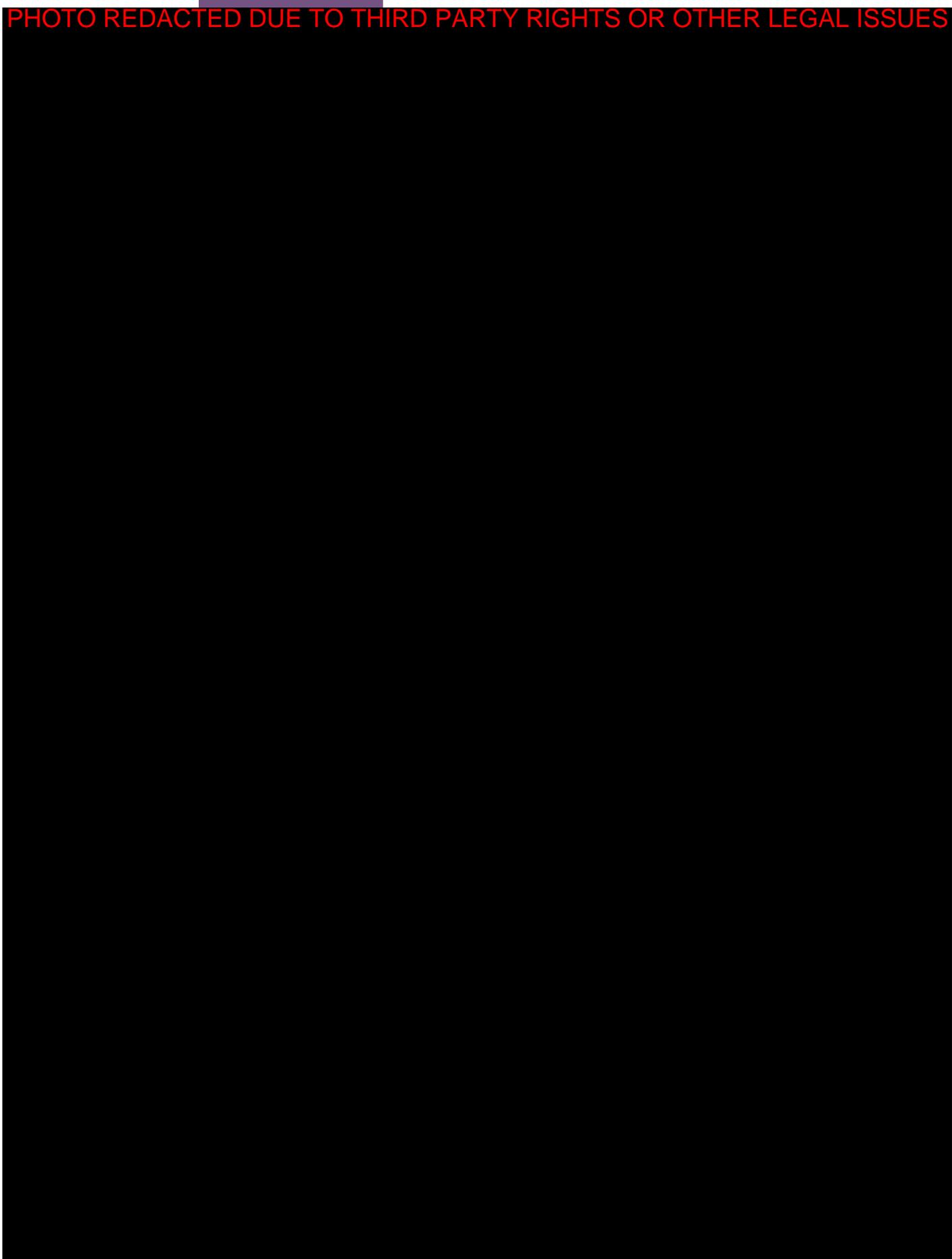
Sector report
Learning in the justice sector

There are four prisons in Wales, with one housing a young offenders' institution. A minority of adults and young people from Wales serve their sentences in secure settings in England.

In Wales, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation leads inspections of youth offending teams, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons leads on inspections of prisons, including the young offenders' institution, and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) leads on inspections of the secure children's home. Estyn joins these teams to inspect the quality of education and training.

This year, there were two major reviews that will have an impact on the way learning in the justice sector is planned and delivered in the future. In May 2016, Dame Sally Coates published her review of education in prisons in England and Wales. Her report includes recommendations relating to:

- the current accountability framework for delivering education within prisons
- the capacity of the workforce
- the learning needs of different types of prisoners
- the ability of prisoners to access higher level learning
- the potential for ICT to support education
- services available to support prisoners to get employment and/or continue their education on release

During 2016, Charlie Taylor carried out a review of the youth justice system in England and Wales. An interim report was published in February 2016, and the final report was published in December 2016 (Ministry of Justice, 2016).

This year, Estyn worked with partners to inspect adult provision in Her Majesty's Prison Parc and Her Majesty's Prison Cardiff. Both are adult prisons. Estyn also worked with partners to inspect the young offenders' institution in Her Majesty's Prison Parc.

There is one secure children's centre in Wales. Estyn worked with CSSIW to follow up the progress Hillside Secure Centre has made since its inspection in 2014.

Estyn joined the inspections of two Youth Offending Services in Cardiff and in Newport.

Find out more about this year's inspections of adult provision by reading the reports online: **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons**.

Find out more about this year's inspections of Youth Offending Services by reading the reports online: **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation**.

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Outcomes:
Learning in the justice sector

In the two adult prisons and the young offender institution inspected, many learners improve their confidence and self-esteem. Most learners engage well with the education, training and employment activities provided and their behaviour during these activities is good overall. A minority of learners develop their skills in coaching and supporting others through formal peer mentoring schemes.

In the two adult prisons, learners develop a range of work-related skills. In the young offender institution, most learners develop skills to help them prepare for future employment, but have very limited opportunities for work experience.

Across all providers, there is not enough information or analysis about how successful learners' transitions are into education, employment or training. This means that the providers do not know the full impact of their work with learners. For example, Careers Wales have identified that two thirds of learners in one youth offending team (YOT) drop out of the education, employment or training opportunities identified for them. This increases the risk that they will reoffend.

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Provision:
Learning in the justice sector

All the providers work well with a range of partners to improve the breadth of learning opportunities and support. For example, the prisons have good links to professional sports clubs to deliver football coaching qualifications, and this provides learners with increased motivation. Nearly all providers have good links with Careers Wales. The guidance and support provided by careers advisers help learners to understand their options for transition into further education and training after release from custody. However, in one YOT only half of the learners choose to receive careers advice.

The prisons and the secure children's home inspected carry out detailed initial assessments of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Most learners receive good quality teaching to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. A few more vulnerable learners do not have equal access to this support to develop their skills. For a few more able learners, staff do not set suitably challenging targets to help them further improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

In the YOTs, there is no clear strategy to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Staff do not routinely assess learners' skills on entry or provide tailored support for literacy and numeracy. The YOTs do not do enough to support Welsh speakers or to promote the language and culture of Wales.

Leadership and management:
Learning in the justice sector

Overall, the providers inspected make good progress against the recommendations from previous visits.

The prisons and the secure children's home inspected have useful management information systems in place. Leaders and managers use this data well to inform their self-evaluation and plan improvements. Leaders and managers in these providers regularly observe teaching as part of their ongoing quality assurance.

In the YOTs, self-evaluation and planning for improvement are underdeveloped. In both YOTs, there was inadequate oversight of some aspects of their work. In one YOT, there had been a useful review of education and training provision, but clear plans were not in place to address the gaps identified.

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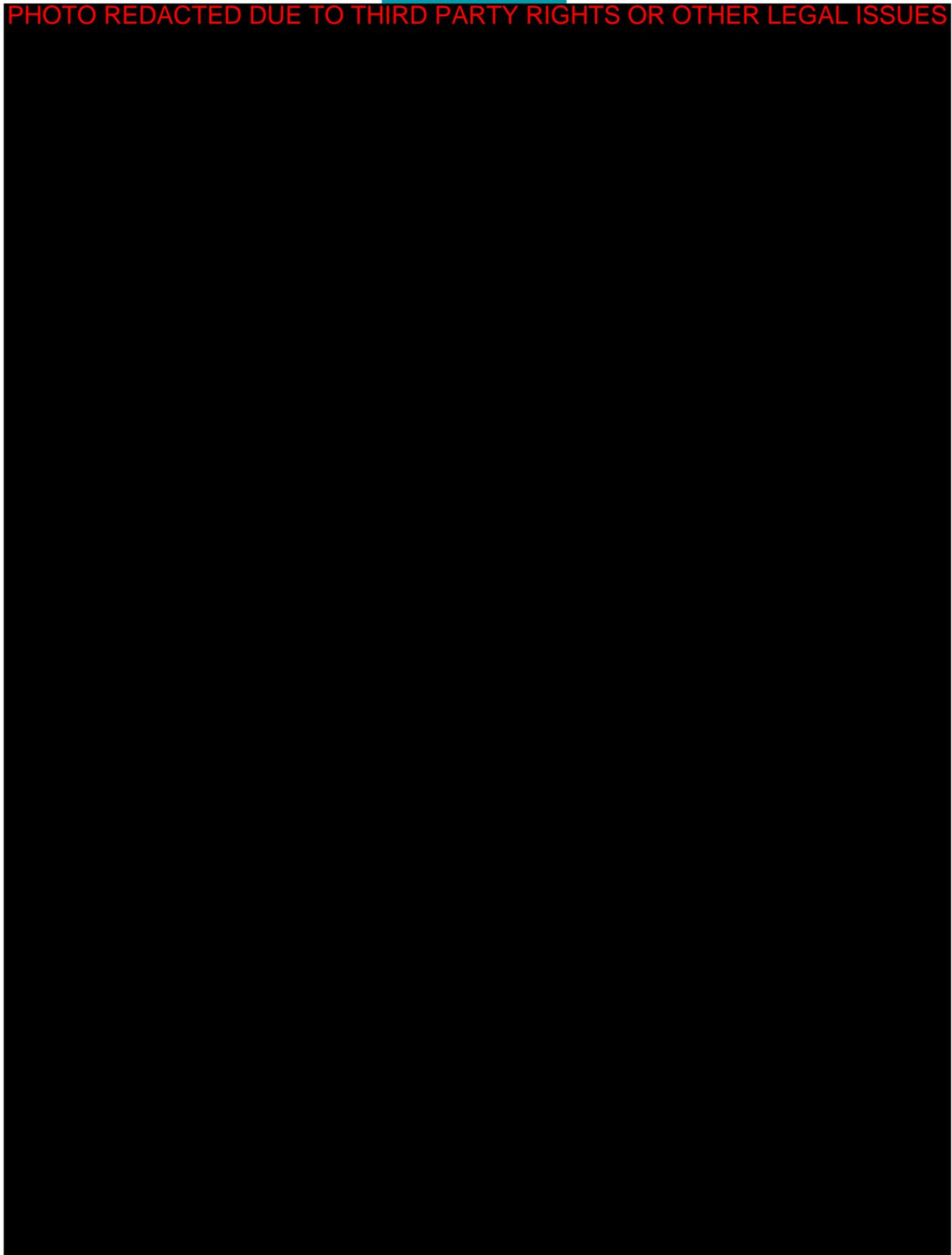
Section 3:
Commentary on performance

The performance of pupils in the Foundation Phase

Pupils are expected to attain Foundation Phase outcome 5 by the end of the Foundation Phase with the most able reaching outcome 6 or higher.

Figure 3.1:
Foundation Phase – Percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome (outcome 5) or the expected outcome plus one (outcome 6), 2012 to 2016

● Achieving outcome 5+
● Achieving outcome 6+
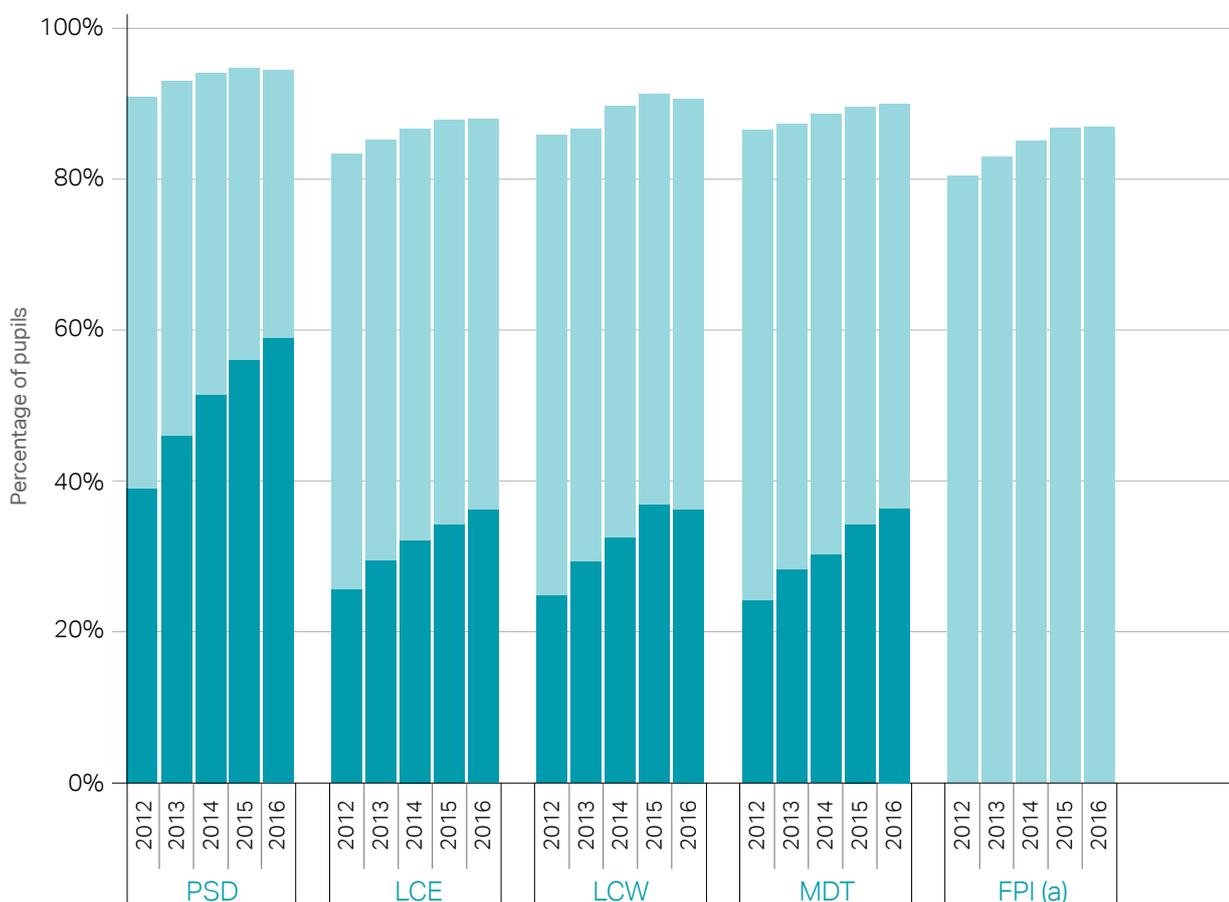
Sources: Welsh Government, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015c, 2016c

PSD:
Personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity

LCE:
Language, literacy and communication skills – English

LCW:
Language, literacy and communication skills – Welsh

MDT:
Mathematical development

FPI (a):
Foundation Phase indicator

(a) The Foundation Phase indicator represents the percentage of pupils attaining outcome 5 or above in PSD, LCE/LCW and MDT in combination.

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The proportion of pupils achieving the expected outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2016 is broadly similar to outcomes in 2015. All changes in the areas of learning and the Foundation Phase indicator are less than 1%.

On average, six in every seven pupils achieved the Foundation Phase indicator.

Pupils continue to perform best in the personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity area of learning. They perform the weakest in language, literacy and communication skills – English (LCE), although the difference with the other areas of learning is small.

The proportion of pupils attaining the higher outcomes continues to improve in all areas of learning other than language, literacy and communication skills – Welsh (LCW). Over a half of pupils achieve outcome 6 or higher in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity and just over a third of pupils achieve outcome 6 or higher in English (LCE), Welsh (LCW) or mathematics.

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Performance of pupils at key stage 2

When assessed by their teachers in the core National Curriculum subjects (English, Welsh in Welsh-medium schools, mathematics and science) pupils are expected to achieve level 4 by the end of key stage 2, when they are 11 years old. Pupils who are more able are expected to achieve level 5 or higher.

Figure 3.2:
Key stage 2 – Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) and the expected level plus one (level 5), 2012-2016

● Achieving L4
● Achieving L5+
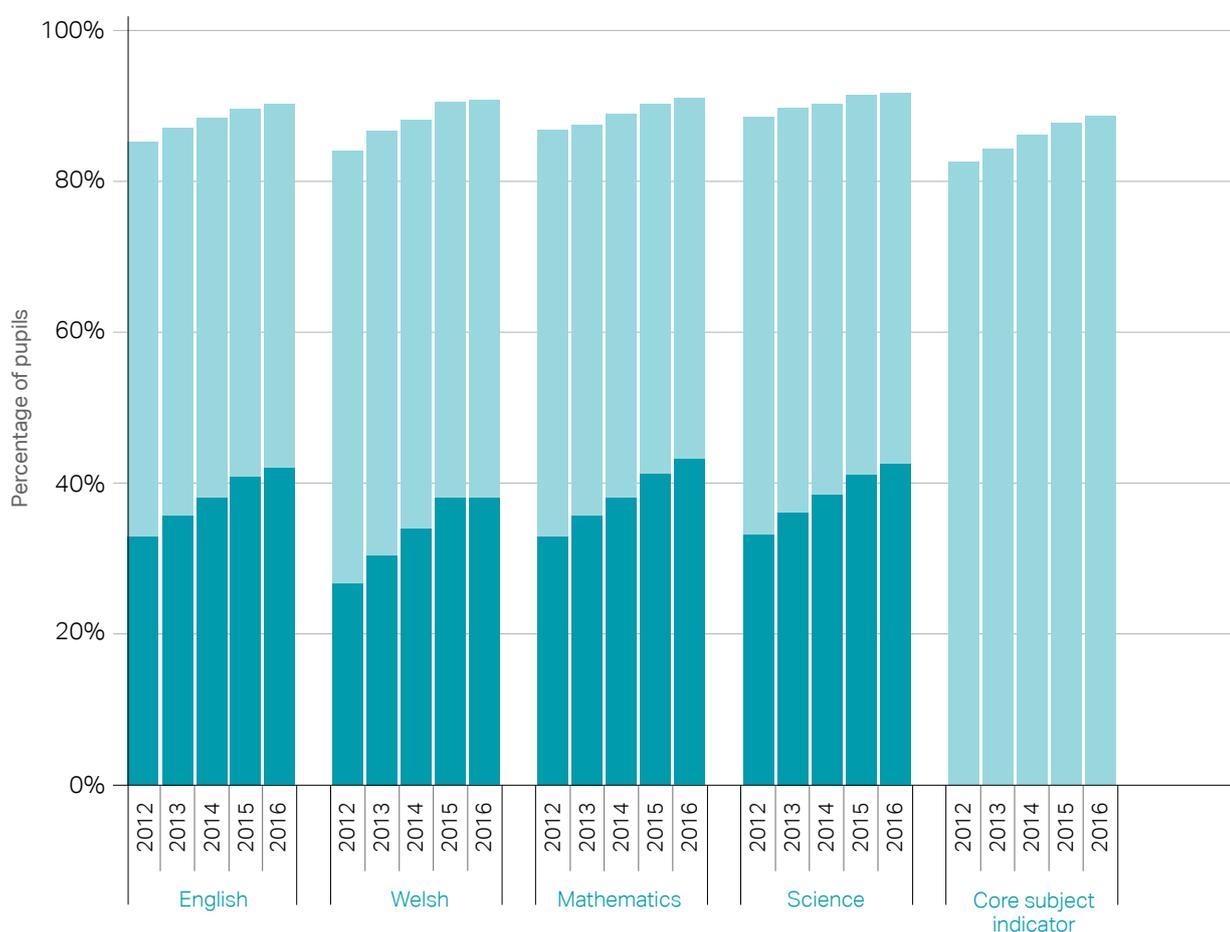
Sources: Welsh Government, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015c, 2016c

At key stage 2, in 2016, outcomes improved across all core subjects. Science remains the subject where pupils' performance is the highest, although the gap between the outcomes with the other core subjects has reduced. The proportion of pupils who attain the expected level in all three core subjects, known as the core subject indicator or CSI, has improved consistently over the last five years.

In 2016, nearly nine in every ten pupils achieved this measure. This is around 15 percentage points higher than in 2007 when pupils' outcomes started to be assessed by teacher assessments only.

In 2016, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 and above improved at a faster rate across all subjects compared to the rate of improvement at the level 4 and

above in these areas. Around two in every five pupils now reach this level in each subject. This is around 12 percentage points higher than at the time when teacher assessments only were introduced. Most of the increases have been over the last five years. Since 2012, performance at the higher level has increased by around 10 percentage points in each subject.

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Performance of pupils at key stage 3

Pupils at the end of key stage 3, when they are 14 years old, are expected to reach level 5. More able pupils are expected to achieve level 7 or above.

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in the core subject indicator improved in 2016 by around two percentage points. Over the last five years, the core subject indicator has continued to increase rapidly. In 2016, it was around 30 percentage points higher than in 2007 when pupils' outcomes began to be assessed by teacher assessments only. Attainment in all the core subjects at level 5 and above increased by one percentage point or more between 2015 and 2016.

The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels continues to improve quickly. Over half of pupils in each subject area continue to achieve at least level 6. In 2016, there were large increases of between three and four percentage points in those achieving the higher level in English, mathematics and science.

Figure 3.3:
Key stage 3 – Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 5), the expected level plus one (level 6) and the expected level plus two (level 7), 2012-2016

Achieving L5+
Achieving L6+
Achieving L7+

Sources: Welsh Government, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015c, 2016c

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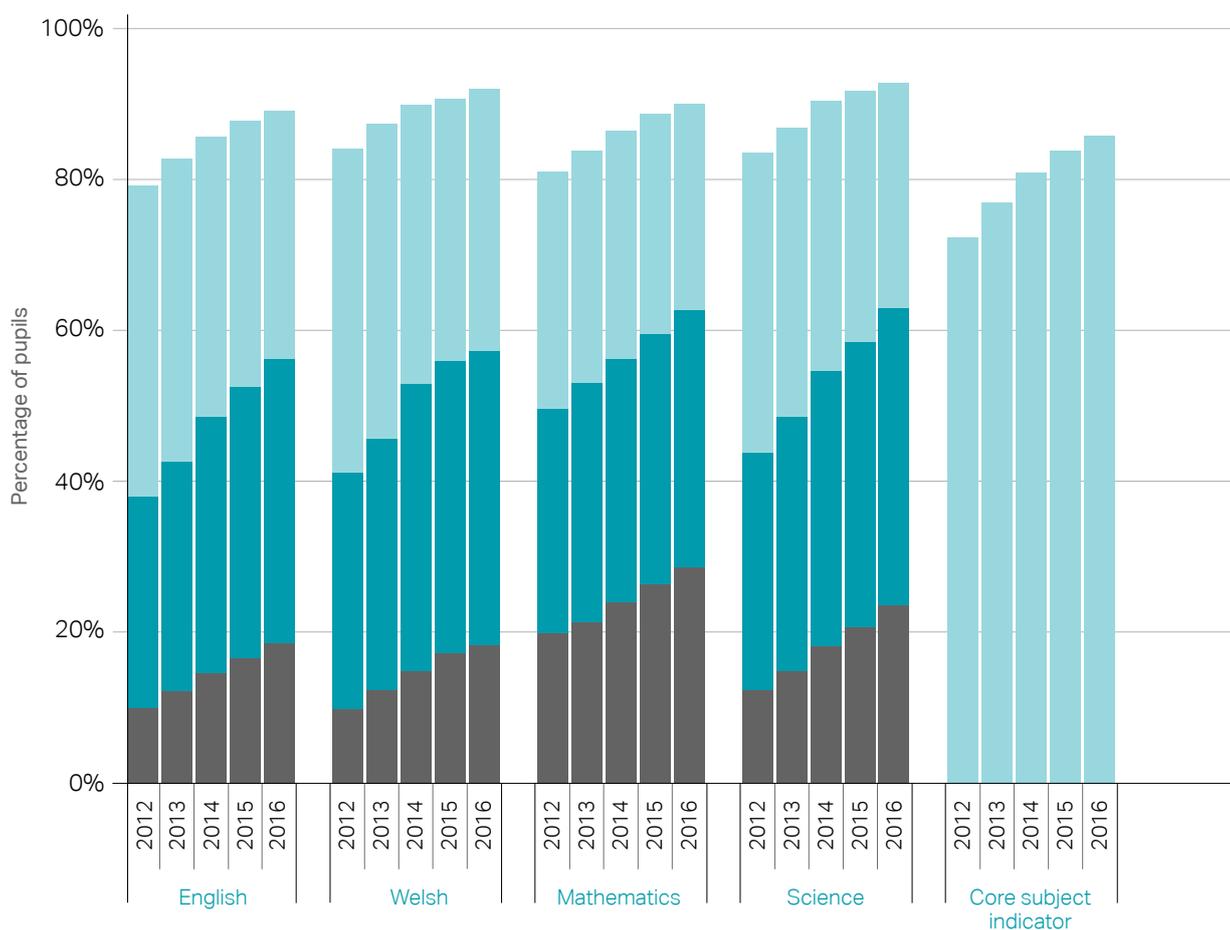
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Summary of teacher assessment

The data from this year's teacher assessments illustrates that the rate of improvement of pupils' outcomes is beginning to slow as the headline indicators across each phase approach 90%. This is particularly the case in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. Yet pupils' outcomes at the higher levels generally continue to increase at a steady to fast rate. Overall, since teacher assessment only was introduced, pupils' outcomes have increased at around three times the rate they had previously. These large increases in pupils' outcomes continue to raise questions about the reliability and validity of teacher assessments, particularly whether there is too much emphasis on teacher assessments for accountability purposes rather than accurate assessment to improve learning.

Examinations at key stage 4

The 2016 performance in external examinations at the end of key stage 4 is based on the pupils who were in Year 11 rather than pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year. For detail about changes to the production of these statistics, please refer to the Welsh Government's Statistical First Release (2016d).

Figure 3.4:
Headline indicators at key stage 4, 2012-2016

	Previous basis				New basis
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold with English or Welsh first language and mathematics	51.1%	52.7%	55.4%	57.9%	60.3%
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold	72.6%	77.8%	82.3%	84.1%	84.0%
Percentage points difference between these two indicators	21.5	25.0	26.9	26.2	23.8
Percentage achieving the level 1 threshold	91.8%	93.2%	94.0%	94.4%	95.3%
Average capped points score	323.5	333.1	340.8	343.5	344.6
Percentage achieving five A*-A GCSEs (or equivalent)	17.1%	16.7%	17.3%	16.6%	15.9%

Source: Welsh Government, 2016d

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In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics increased since 2015 by just under two and a half percentage points. This is similar to the increases seen in the last two previous years. Since 2012, performance in this indicator has increased by over nine percentage points.

The proportion of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold in 2016 largely remained the same as in the previous year. However, since 2012, performance in this indicator has increased by over 11 percentage points. The proportion of pupils achieving the level 1 threshold increased by around one percentage point in 2016. Performance in this measure has increased by approximately three and a half percentage points since 2012.

The capped points score, a measure of the average of the best eight GCSE or equivalent results, improved by just over one point. The rate of improvement in this indicator has slowed noticeably in the last two years. In addition, the proportion of pupils achieving five A*-A GCSEs or equivalent declined for the second consecutive year in 2016. Performance in this measure is just over one percentage point lower than in 2012. Both of these indicators illustrate that the rate of improvement for pupils achieving the highest grades has slowed or at best levelled off.

Core subjects

Figure 3.5:
Percentage of pupils achieving A*-C in the core subjects, 2012-2016

		Achieved A*-C in English/ Welsh	Achieved A*-C in English	Achieved A*-C in Welsh	Achieved A*-C in mathematics	Achieved A*-C (or equivalent) in science
Previous basis	2012	63.5%	62.2%	73.8%	58.4%	70.6%
	2013	64.0%	62.9%	73.5%	60.3%	74.8%
	2014	67.2%	66.2%	73.7%	61.7%	82.3%
	2015	69.7%	68.6%	75.2%	64.4%	84.0%
New basis	2016	70.4%	69.3%	75.1%	66.9%	82.4%

Source: Welsh Government, 2016d

Despite declining almost two percentage points in 2016, science remains the highest performing core subject in Wales. Performance in mathematics increased by the largest amount, rising by around two and a half percentage points. This improvement was notably larger than the increase in English, which increased by around seven-tenths of a percentage point. Performance in Welsh remained similar to that in 2015.

Since 2012, achievement in Welsh has generally remained stable. This is in contrast to performance in the other core subjects, which has increased at much faster rates.

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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. In each cycle of PISA a focus is given to one of these three domains. The focus for PISA 2015 was science, with reading and mathematics being the minor domains. All

of the sampled pupils selected sat assessments in science and around two-fifths of pupils took assessments in reading and mathematics. The last occasion science was the main domain was in 2006.

Seventy-one countries participated in this round of PISA. In Wales, 3,451 pupils from 140 secondary schools took the PISA tests. Around 10% of pupils took the tests through the medium of Welsh.

Computer-based assessments were available for the first time. These were used in Wales. Fifteen countries opted to use paper-based assessments.

Figure 3.6:
Mean scores attained in the 2015 PISA tests by pupils in the UK countries, compared to the OECD average

Source: PISA 2015 database, in Jerrim & Shure (2016)

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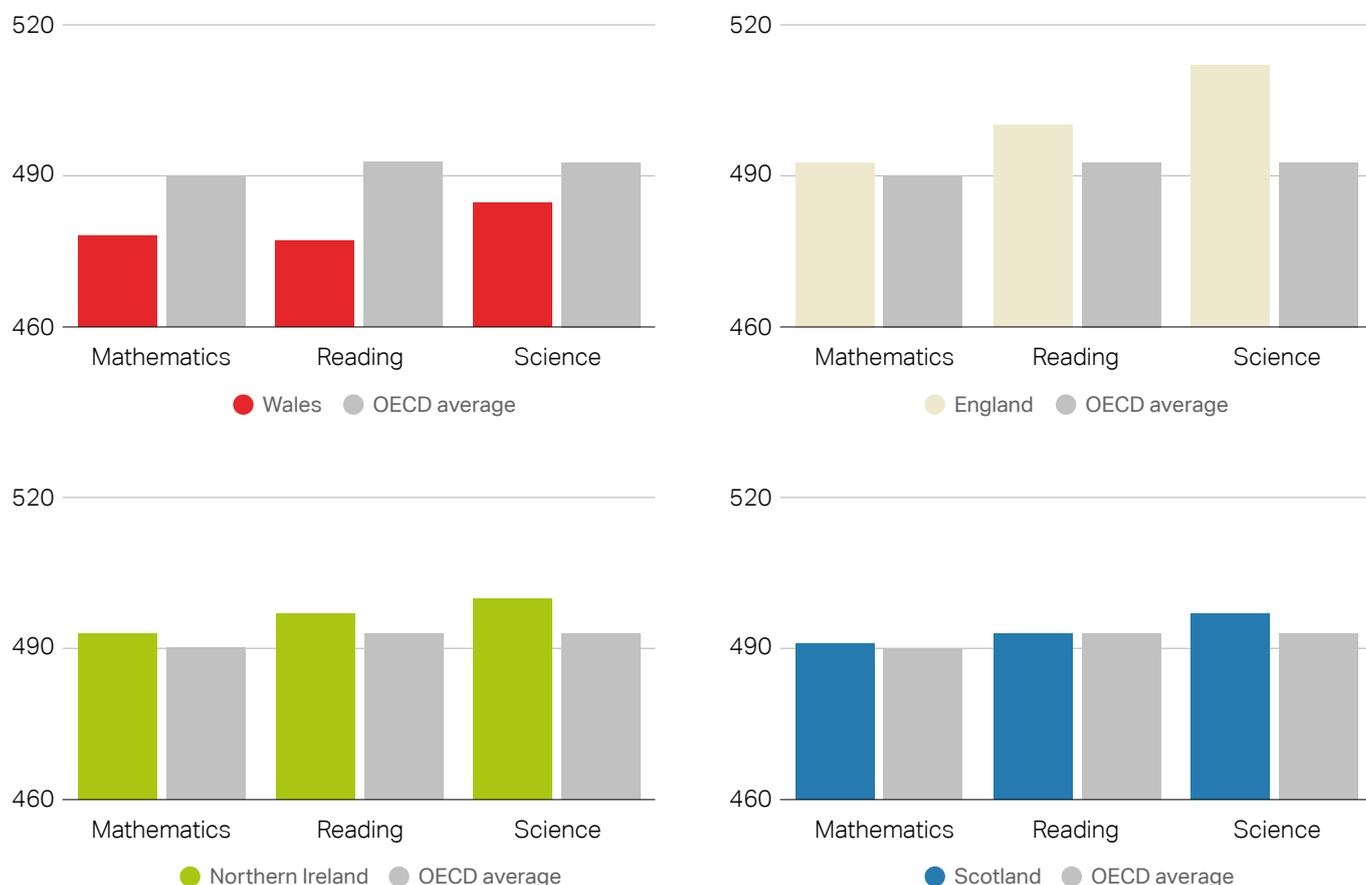
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Key findings

For PISA 2015, scores for Wales were significantly below those of the other countries of the United Kingdom in science, reading and mathematics. Around one-third of pupils in Wales lacked basic skills in at least one of the three PISA domains, compared to 29% in England and Scotland, and 25% in Northern Ireland.

In science, 31 countries significantly outperformed Wales compared to 25 in PISA 2012. Since 2006, there has been a significant decline in the average scores for science in Wales.

In mathematics, 33 countries significantly outperformed Wales compared to 38 in PISA 2012. Overall, there is little evidence of a sustained change in mathematics since 2006.

In reading, 33 countries significantly outperformed Wales, which was two higher than in PISA 2012. There has been no statistically significant change in the reading scores for Wales since 2006. The data suggests that the comparatively low reading skills of girls is an issue in Wales.

When compared to other countries in the United Kingdom, Wales had the lowest proportion of pupils across all subjects achieving the highest levels in PISA. This was also the case in PISA 2012.

Pupils from high socio-economic backgrounds in Wales achieve significantly lower PISA scores than similarly socio-economically advantaged pupils in other countries. Overall, family background has a smaller impact upon pupils' achievement in Wales than in most other countries.

In general, PISA scores vary more between pupils within the same school in Wales than they do between schools.

How good are standards in science?

'Scientific literacy' was the main focus of PISA 2015.

PISA draws a distinction between different systems in science. These systems are defined as:

- Physical system, which measures knowledge about matter, motion and forces
- Living system, which pertains to cells, organisms, humans
- Earth and space science system, which looks at earth's history, the earth in space, and the universe

PISA 2015 also examined pupils' skills in three core scientific competencies:

- Interpreting data and evidence scientifically
- Evaluating and designing scientific enquiry
- Explaining phenomena scientifically

The PISA tests also assess separate types of scientific knowledge. They are:

- Content knowledge
- Procedural and epistemic knowledge

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Key findings for science

The PISA results show that there has been a statistically significant decline in the PISA science scores in Wales since 2006. This was the last PISA cycle when science was the main domain assessed.

The skills of the lowest achieving pupils in science have broadly remained similar between 2006 and 2015. However, a key factor behind the overall weakening performance in science has been the decline in the performance of the highest achieving pupils. In 2015, only 5% of Welsh pupils are defined as top performers compared to 8% across participating countries and 12% in England.

There is no statistically significant difference in the performance between boys and girls in science. However, boys are slightly stronger than girls in aspects such as the physical scientific system and explaining phenomena scientifically.

Pupils who took the Welsh language version of the PISA 2015 science test achieved lower scores than their peers who completed the test in English.

Figure 3.7:
Mean performance in the PISA 2015 science domains, by UK country

England ● NI ● Scotland ● Wales
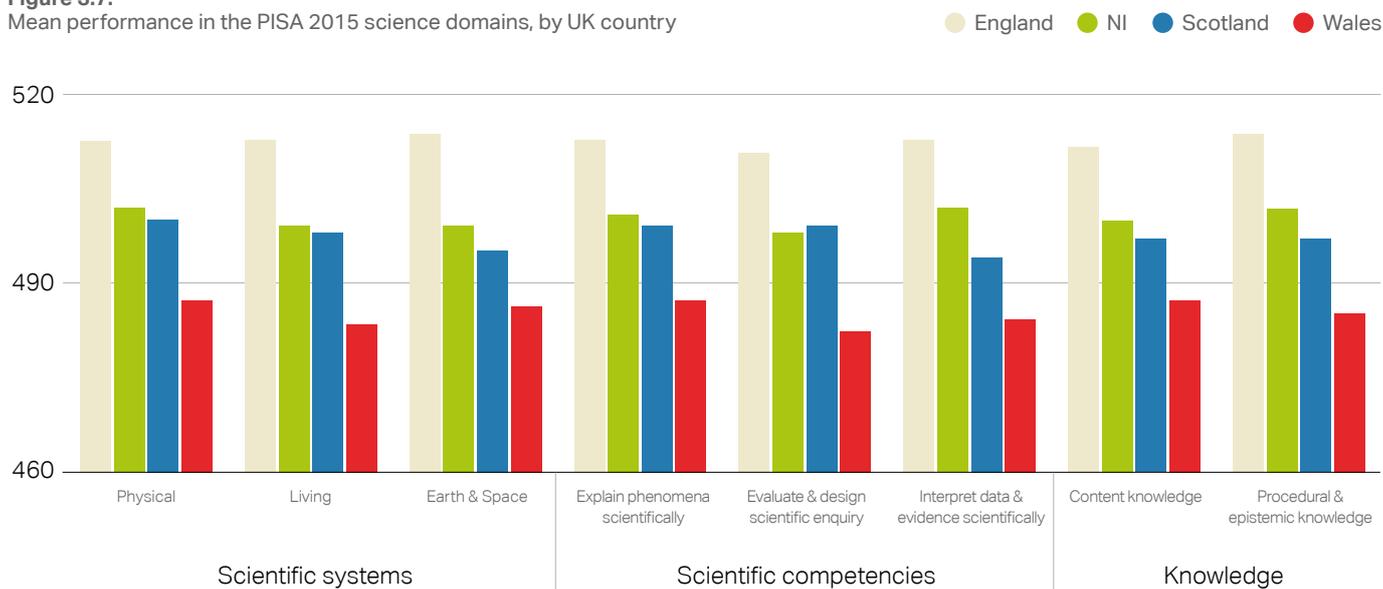
Source: PISA 2015 database, in Jerrim & Shure (2016)

Overall, pupils in Wales achieved similar scores across the three PISA scientific systems and the types of scientific knowledge. For scientific competencies, pupils in Wales are stronger at explaining phenomena scientifically than they are at evaluating and designing scientific enquiry.

Most pupils in Wales view school science as relevant to their future, irrespective of their gender, socio-economic status, and proficiency in this area. Pupils in Wales are more likely to aspire to a science career than pupils in the average OECD or average top performing country.

Pupils indicated that they spend 90 minutes more studying science in school per week than pupils do across the OECD countries on average. Pupils in Wales also report spending more time studying science outside of school than the average across OECD members and the average across high-performing countries.

Pupils report low-level disruption occurring more frequently in Welsh science classrooms than do pupils in many other OECD and high-performing countries.

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Headteachers in Wales are generally positive about the resources available to support science learning within their schools. However, headteachers in Wales are more likely to report staff absenteeism as a barrier to pupils learning than headteachers in the average OECD or high-performing country.

Higher levels of performance in PISA

PISA 2015 scores show that Wales' performance across all subjects at the higher levels of proficiency is lower than the OECD average and lower than that in the other countries in the United Kingdom. This was the case in PISA 2012.

Figure 3.8:
The percentage of students at the higher levels of proficiency (levels 5 and 6) by UK country, PISA 2015

England   NI   Scotland   Wales
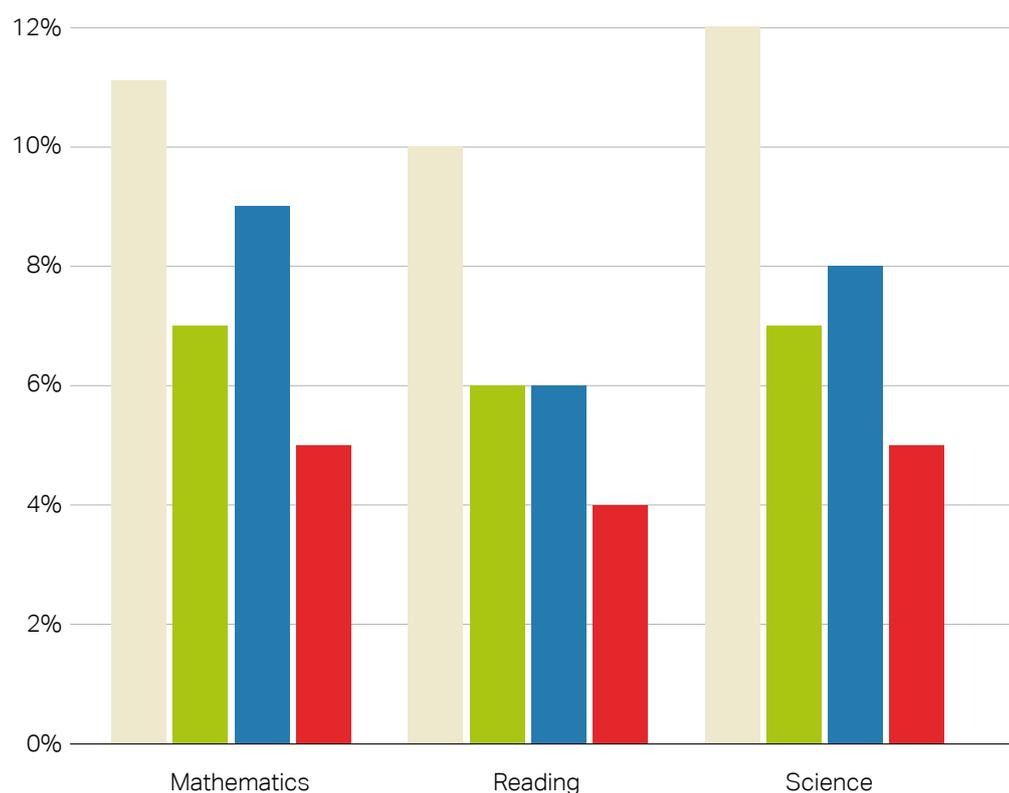
Source: PISA 2015 database, in Jerrim & Shure (2016)

Wales has fewer high achieving pupils in science than the average across members of the OECD, which is 8%. In only three OECD countries (Turkey, Mexico and Chile) is the mathematics performance of the highest achievers lower than in Wales.

There is a particularly pronounced gap in reading skills between the highest achieving pupils in Wales and the highest achieving pupils in other countries.

Outcomes from PISA 2015, suggest that there is a weaker association between socio-economic status and PISA science scores in Wales than in the rest of the UK. This is due to the most advantaged Welsh pupils not achieving as highly as similar pupils in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland do.

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Summary

Similar to previous PISA cycles, outcomes from PISA 2015 continue to highlight important weaknesses in Welsh education.

Overall, too many pupils lack basic skills in science, mathematics and reading, and too few pupils work at the highest levels in these subjects. From Foundation Phase through to key stage 4 and beyond, schools need to ensure that pupils develop strong foundations in these essential subjects. Importantly, teachers need to ensure that all pupils work at the highest levels that they are capable of.

Post-16 learners in school

Figure 3.9:
Headline indicators for pupils aged 17 at the start of the academic year, 2012-2016

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percentage of pupils entering the equivalent of two A levels or more achieving the level 3 threshold	96.9%	96.5%	97.1%	97.0%	98.0%
Average wider points score of pupils aged 17	772.9	806.6	804.1	799.7	823.2

Source: Welsh Government, 2016d

In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the level 3 threshold increased by one percentage point to 98%. This is just over one percentage point higher than in 2012. The average wider points score attained by these learners increased by around 24 points in 2016. This is the largest increase since 2013. Since 2012, the average wider points score has increased by around 50 points. This is equivalent to learners achieving, on average, around one and a half grades higher than in 2012.

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Difference in performance between boys and girls

Figure 3.10:
Comparison of the performance of boys and girls at each key stage, 2016

	Girls 2016	Boys 2016	Percentage points difference 2016	Percentage points difference 2015
Percentage gaining Foundation Phase indicator	91.2%	83.0%	8.2	7.7
Percentage gaining key stage 2 core subject indicator	91.3%	86.1%	5.2	5.8
Percentage gaining key stage 3 core subject indicator	89.7%	82.3%	7.4	7.4
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold with English or Welsh first language and mathematics	64.7%	56.1%	8.6	7.5

Sources: Welsh Government, 2015d, 2016c, 2016d

In 2016, across the Foundation Phase and all key stages, girls continued to outperform boys. The least difference between the performance of girls and boys is in key stage 2.

A higher proportion of girls attain the expected level in each area of learning in the Foundation Phase compared to boys. The pattern is broadly similar with those attaining outcome 6 or above in each of the learning areas, although the gap is reversed in mathematical development, where a marginally higher proportion of boys achieve the higher outcome. The difference between the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase indicator increased by around half a percentage point in 2016. This is due to an increase in the attainment of girls in all areas of learning, with the exception of personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSD), and a decrease in attainment by boys in all areas of learning.

In key stage 2, the difference in attainment between girls and boys decreased across all core subjects at most levels in 2016. In the core subject indicator, girls outperform boys by just over five percentage points. This is the smallest difference it has been.

In key stage 3, in 2016, there was an increase of two percentage points for both the proportion of girls and boys attaining the core subject indicator. The difference between them remained the same. Girls outperform boys in all core subjects at all levels, although the gap has generally narrowed at the expected level over the last five years.

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Figure 3.11:
Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 including English/Welsh and
mathematics at key stage 4 by gender
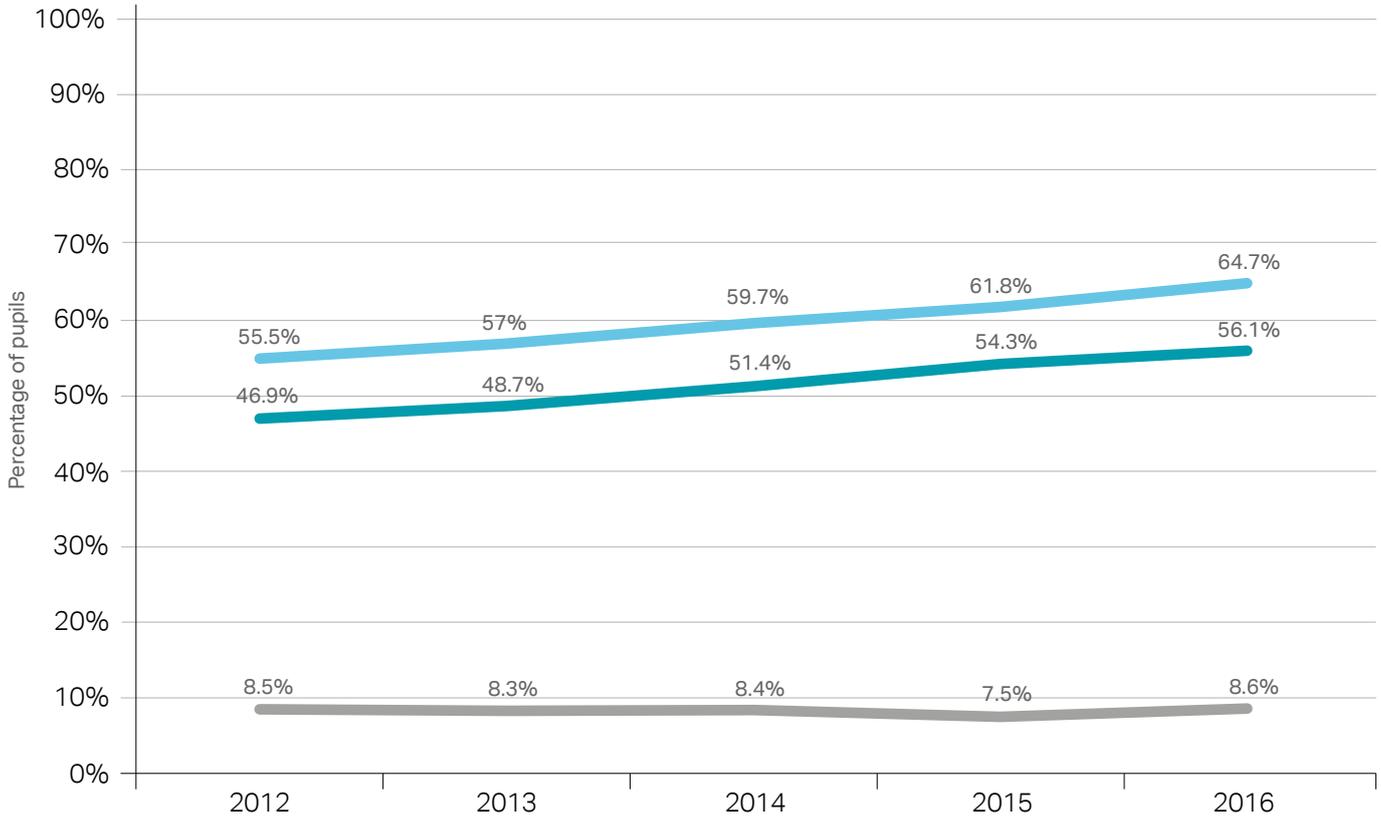
Source: Welsh Government, 2016d

In key stage 4, girls outperform boys in the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics by around eight and a half percentage points. In 2016, the gap between the performance of girls and boys increased by just over one percentage point from its lowest point in 2015. However, it has broadly remained around eight and a half percentage points over the last five years.

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# Performance of pupils eligible for free school meals

Figure 3.12:
Comparison of the performance of pupils by free-school-meal eligibility at each key stage, 2016

	Pupils not eligible for free school meals 2016	Pupils eligible for free school meals 2016	Percentage points difference 2016	Percentage points difference 2015
Percentage gaining Foundation Phase indicator	90.0%	75.7%	14.3	14.9
Percentage gaining key stage 2 core subject indicator	91.4%	77.1%	14.3	15.7
Percentage gaining key stage 3 core subject indicator	89.8%	69.4%	20.4	22.2
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold with English or Welsh first language and mathematics	66.8%	35.6%	31.3	32.4

Source: Welsh Government, 2016e

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Figure 3.13:
Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 including English/Welsh and mathematics at key stage 4 by free-school-meal eligibility
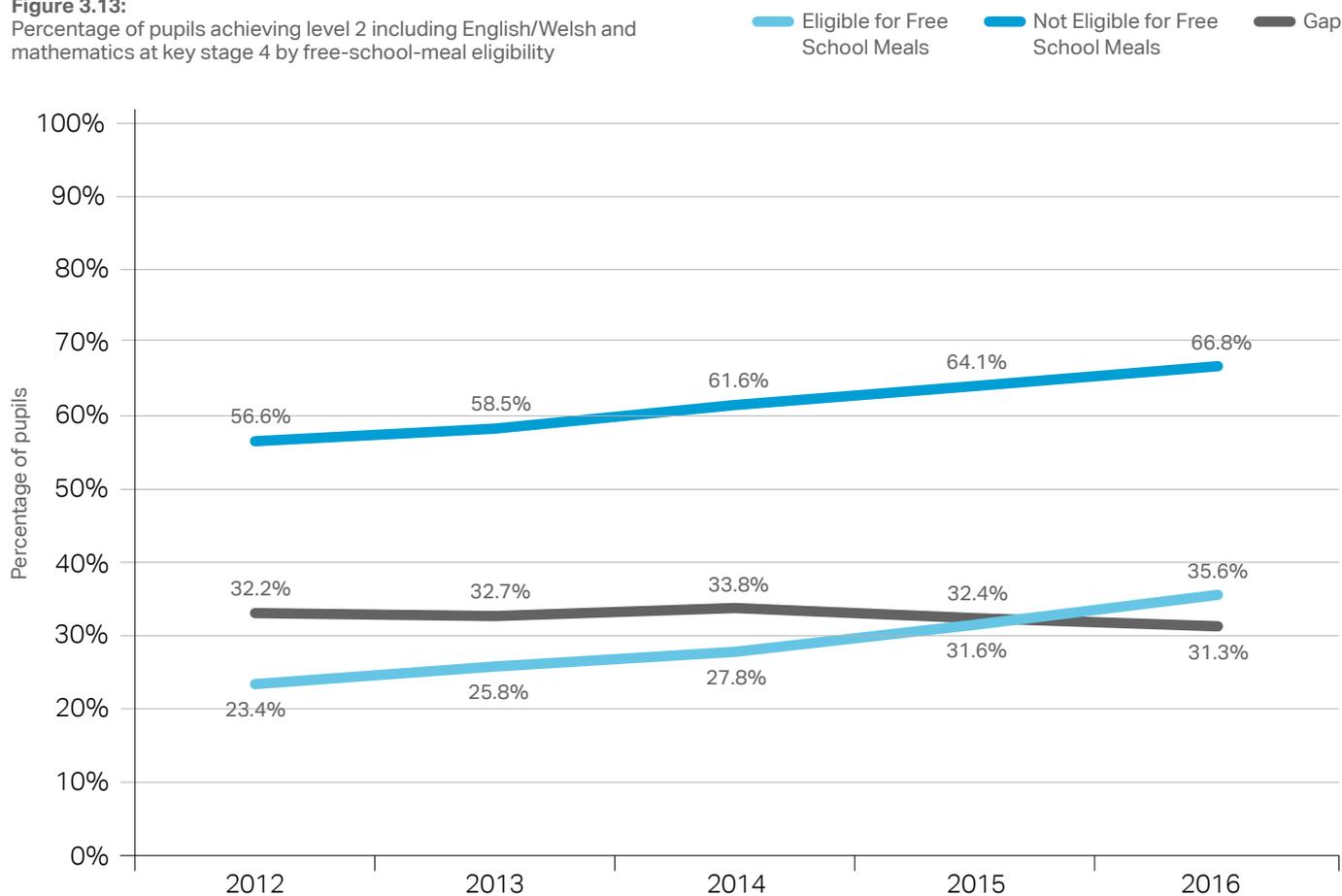
Source: Welsh Government, 2016e

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is considerably lower than the performance by pupils not eligible for free school meals across the Foundation Phase and all key stages. However, the performance by this group of pupils has improved in all phases. At key stage 4, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language has improved consistently since 2012. Furthermore, over the last two years, this measure has increased at a faster rate for pupils eligible for free school meals than for those pupils who are not. In 2016, the gap between these pupils is still large at just over 31 percentage points, but it is the smallest over the last 10 years.

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Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Figure 3.14:
Percentage of young people not in education, employment or training, 2011-2015

(p) SFR: Year end 2015 is provisional

Age	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
16-18	12.2%	11.0%	10.9%	10.8%	10.5% (p)
19-24	22.3%	23.0%	21.0%	20.4%	19.0% (p)

Source: Welsh Government, 2016f

At the end of 2015, 10.5% of 16 to 18 year olds were not in education, employment or training. This equates to about 11,500 teenagers, and shows a decrease of 500 young people from the 2014 figure. The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training in England is currently just under two percentage points lower than the equivalent rate for Wales.

In 2015, 2.8% of Year 11 leavers were known to be not in education, employment or training. This compares to 3.1% in 2014. Over the last five years, the proportion of Year 11 leavers known to be not in education, employment or training has decreased by 1.6 percentage points.

At the end of 2015, 19.0% of 19 to 24 year olds were not in education, employment or training. This is about 48,200 young people. This is a reduction from 2014 when 20.4% of 19 to 24 year olds were not in education, employment or training. Over the last five years, the proportion of 19 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training has remained fairly constant at approximately one in every five young people.

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Attendance

Figure 3.15:
Attendance of statutory school age pupils in primary and
secondary schools, 2012-2016

School phase	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Primary	93.9%	93.7%	94.8%	94.9%	94.9%
Secondary	92.1%	92.6%	93.6%	93.8%	94.1%
Percentage point difference*	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.8

* Difference between primary and secondary school attendance   Sources: Welsh Government, 2016g, 2016h

Attendance rates in primary schools have remained constant over the last three years, while the rate for secondary schools has improved year-on-year during this same period. Over the last five years, attendance has increased in primary and secondary schools by 1.1 percentage points and 2 percentage points respectively. These increases mean that primary and secondary age pupils attended school on average between approximately two and three days respectively more in 2015-2016 than they did in 2011-2012.

Persistent absentees is the term used for pupils whose attendance rates are 80% or lower. The percentage of persistent absentees has continued to decline in secondary schools from 4.5% of pupils in 2015 to 3.9% in 2016. However, the rate of persistent absenteeism in secondary schools is around two and a half times the rate in primary schools. In 2016, in secondary schools, pupils who are persistently absent accounted for just over a fifth of all absences. In primary schools they accounted for around 8% of absences. The proportion of pupils classified as persistent absentees in primary and secondary schools has almost halved since 2012.

Schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals have on average higher absenteeism rates.

The rate of unauthorised absenteeism has remained fairly constant in both primary and secondary schools for the last three years at 1.1% and 1.3% respectively.

In primary schools in 2016, around 64% of all absence was due to illness or medical appointments. Over 9% of absences were due to agreed family holidays and over 4% of absences were authorised by schools but not covered by the standard school absence codes. In secondary schools in 2016, just over two-thirds of all absence was due to illness or medical appointments. Just under 2% of absences were due to agreed family holidays and 1.6% of absences were due to pupils being excluded with no alternative provision provided. Over 6% of absences were authorised by schools but not covered by the standard school absence codes.

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Exclusions

For 2014-2015, this is the first year that pupil-level exclusions data have been collected from pupil referral units. For detail about changes to the production of these statistics, please refer to the Welsh Government's Statistical Release (2016i) .

Figure 3.16:
Number of permanent exclusions from maintained primary and secondary schools, 2011-2015
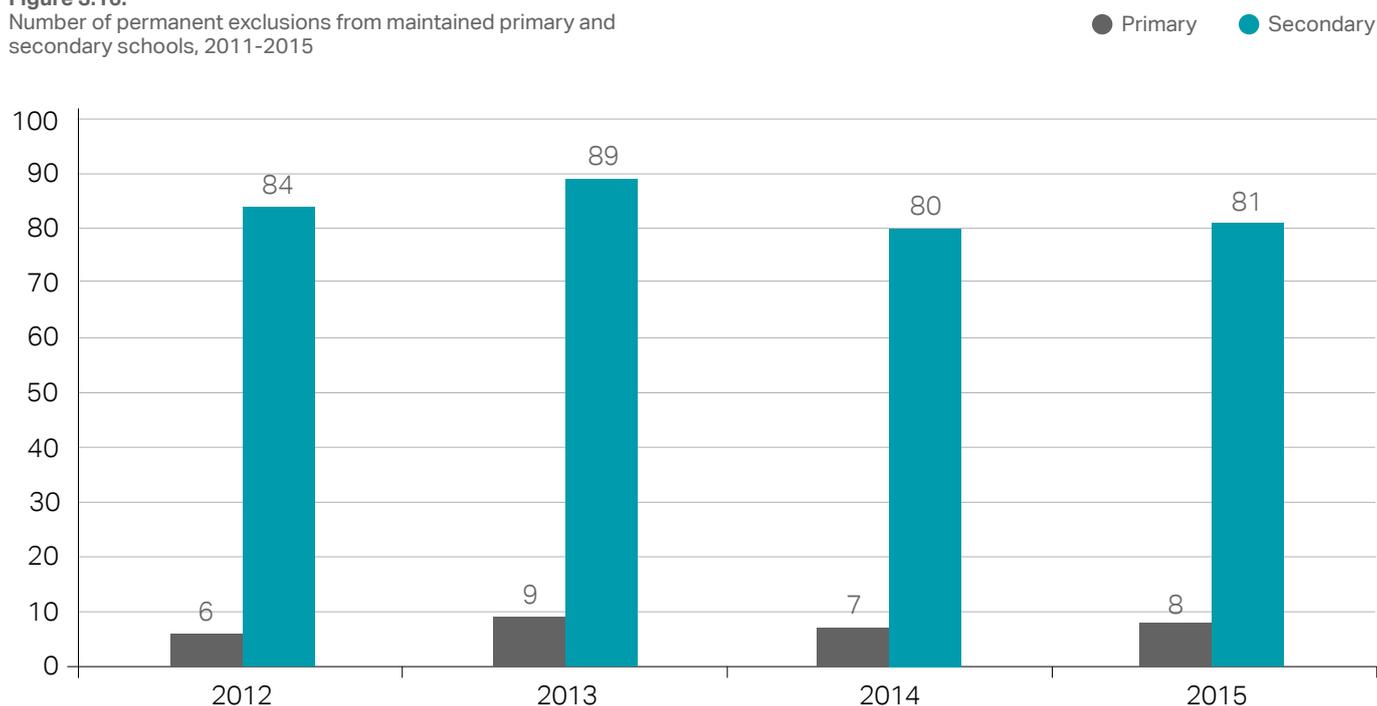
● Primary ● Secondary

Source: Welsh Government, 2016i

The numbers of permanent exclusions has generally remained constant over the last four years in Wales. In 2015, 89 pupils were permanently excluded from primary and secondary schools. Pupils eligible for free school meals are around five times more likely to be permanently excluded from school compared to pupils not eligible for free school meals. The most common reasons for pupils being permanently excluded in 2015 included persistent disruptive behaviour, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult and physical assault against a pupil or adult.

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Figure 3.17:
Number of fixed term exclusions of five days or less from
maintained primary, secondary and special schools, 2012-2015

● Primary ● Secondary ● Special
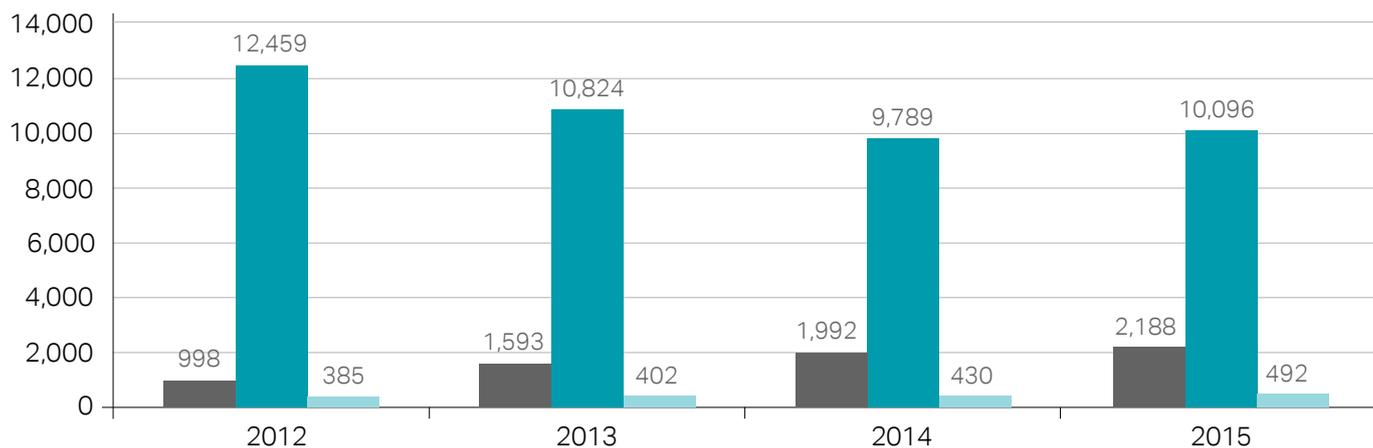
Source: Welsh Government, 2016i

Figure 3.18:
Number of fixed term exclusions for over five days from maintained
primary, secondary and special schools, 2012-2015

● Primary ● Secondary ● Special
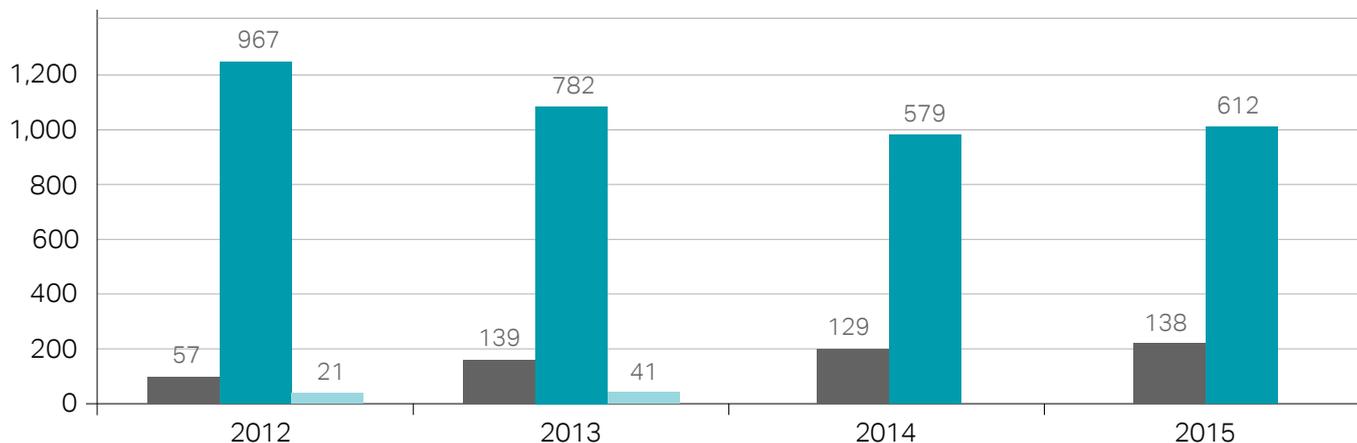
Source: Welsh Government, 2016i

In 2015, the total number of fixed-term exclusions increased when compared with 2014. In 2015, the most common reasons for pupils being excluded for six days or more or five days or less were because of persistent disruptive behaviour, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult and physical abuse against an adult or child.

In 2015, pupils with special educational needs accounted for seven in every ten of all exclusions, while pupils eligible for free school meals accounted for just under half of exclusions.

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# Skills, further education and lifelong learning

For 2015, there is a change to the definition of adults of working age. Working age adults now refers to males and females aged 18-64, rather than the previous 18-64 for males and 18-59 for females. This means that figures are not directly comparable with those from previous years. For detail about changes to the production of these statistics, please refer to the Welsh Government's Statistical Release (2016j).

Overall, in 2015, qualification levels in Wales showed little change when compared with those in 2014.

In 2015, slightly more than three-quarters of working age adults in Wales held at least level 2 qualifications and just over a third held qualifications at level 4 or above. About one-tenth of working age adults in Wales reported having no qualifications.

Figure 3.19:
Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, 2008-2015 (a)

● No qualifications   ● Qualified up to level 2   ● Qualified to level 2   ● Qualified to level 3
● Qualified to level 4 or above
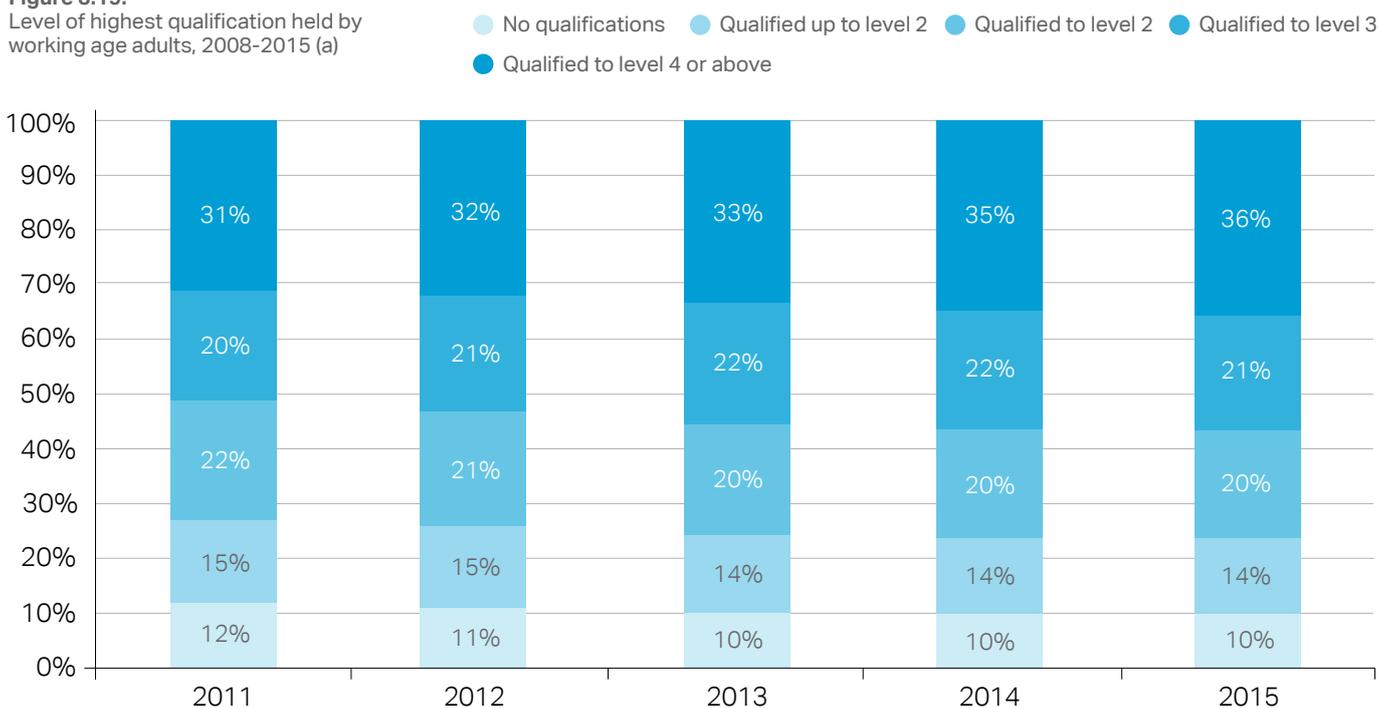
Source: Welsh Government, 2016j

(a) National Qualification Framework (NQF) level of the highest qualification held.

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

Twenty-five per cent of those who are either unemployed or economically inactive reported having no qualifications. This compares to 6% for those in employment.

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Further education

In 2015, learners' main qualification courses were reported for the first time in the 2014-2015 data.

Overall, 82% of main qualifications were successfully completed.

Across all further education programmes in 2014-2015, 86% of all learning activities were successfully completed. This is the same figure as in 2014.

Figure 3.20:
Overall learning activity success rates in further education colleges, 2010-2011 to 2014-2015

● All qualifications   ● Main qualifications

Sources: Welsh Government, 2014b, 2015d, 2016k

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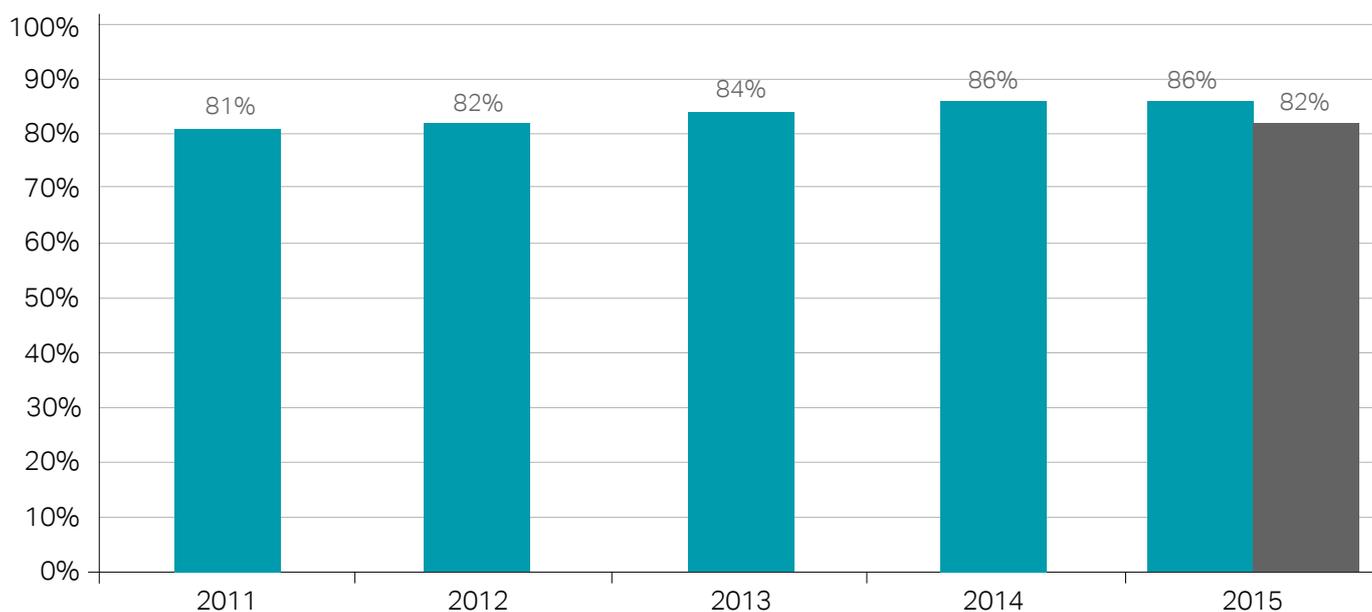
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Work-based learning

Learners on apprenticeship programmes have to achieve a range of qualifications in order to gain the full apprenticeship 'framework'. Around 50% of all apprenticeship programmes are at Foundation Apprenticeship, 40% are at Apprenticeship and 10% are at Higher Apprenticeship.

In 2015, work-based learning framework success rates in Foundation Apprenticeships showed a decrease of two percentage points to 82% when compared with 2014. Success rates in Apprenticeships remained unchanged at 85%.

This is the second year of reported data from Higher Apprenticeships. Success rates for these frameworks have increased from 67% in 2014 to 72% in 2015.

The combined framework success rate for Foundation Apprenticeships, Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships together was 82%.

Figure 3.21:
Framework success rates in Foundation Apprenticeships, Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships, 2010-2011 to 2014-2015

● Foundation Apprenticeships ● Apprenticeships
● Higher Apprenticeships
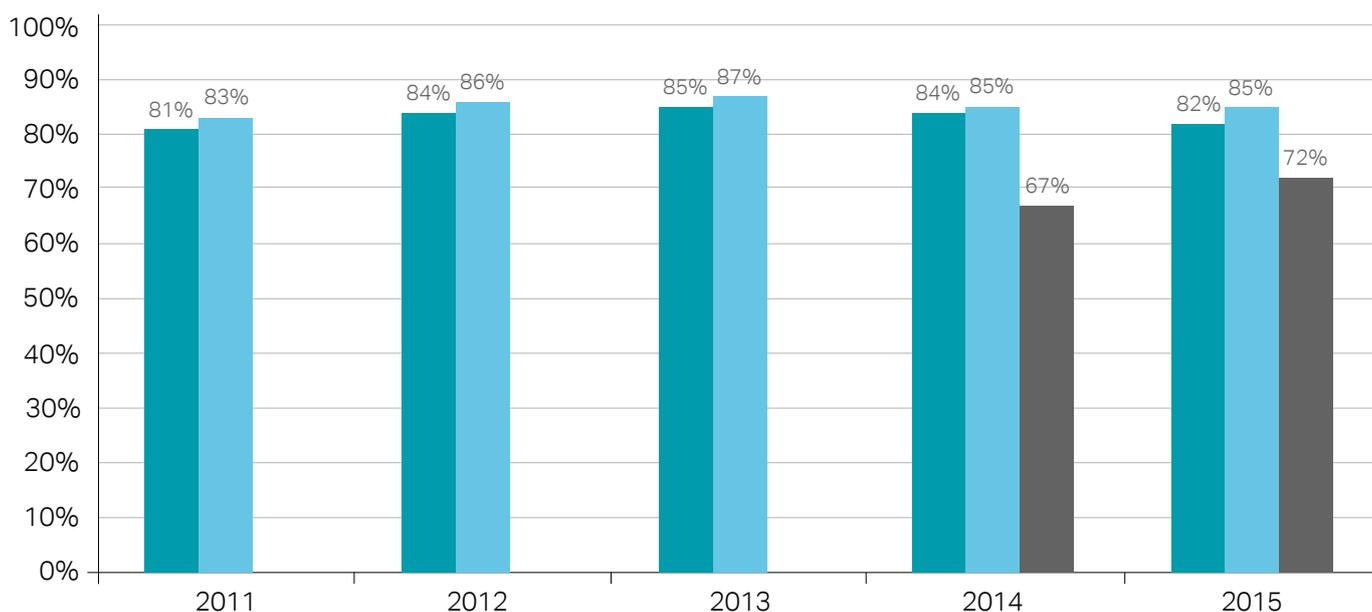
Sources: Welsh Government, 2014b, 2015d, 2016k

In Traineeships, overall learning activity success rates have increased by one percentage point from the previous year to 87% for Engagement programmes and by two percentage points to 81% for level 1 programmes.

In Adult Employability programmes in 2015, which include Steps to Employment and Work Ready programmes, overall learning activity success rates show a slight decline when compared with those in 2014. Work Focused Learning programmes decreased by two percentage points to 78%, and Routeways to Work by one

percentage point to 97%. In 2015, within three months of completing their Adult Employability programmes, 57% of leavers had progressed onto to employment or further learning. This is a two percentage points increase when compared with last year.

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The impact of inspection follow-up activity

Follow-up is a feature of our inspection arrangements.

The exercise of 'following up' on inspections means that, where schools or other providers have shortcomings in their provision, we do more than just leave them after an inspection with the report and a requirement to produce an action plan. At a later date, inspectors undertake monitoring activities to see how much progress has been made in relation to their recommendations for improvement, as published in the inspection report. If not enough progress has been made by the time of the first monitoring activity, the provider will continue to be monitored.

On being identified as 'no longer needing to be monitored', the school or other provider receives a published report indicating the progress that they have made. These reports are evidence of the impact of Estyn inspections in helping individual schools and providers to make progress.

Schools

Other than 'excellent practice', there are four categories of follow-up for maintained schools (primary, secondary, and special schools and pupil referral units). The most serious are those schools that require special measures or that are in need of significant improvement. These are statutory categories set out in legislation. In addition, there are two further categories of follow-up, which Estyn inspectors monitor. They are 'Estyn monitoring' and 'local authority monitoring'.

Below is a chart that shows the number of schools that have needed different categories of follow-up monitoring over the past six years.

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The number of schools needing follow-up

Figure 3.22:
Number of maintained schools that went into a follow-up
category at the time of their core inspection

Year	Special measures	In need of significant improvement	Estyn monitoring	LA monitoring	**Total in follow-up**	**Total number of inspections**
2010-2011	4	10	51	40	**105**	**279**
2011-2012	7	14	75	37	**133**	**266**
2012-2013	11	14	75	34	**134**	**265**
2013-2014	8	14	98	62	**182**	**279**
2014-2015	12	20	71	68	**171**	**274**
2015-2016	9	9	61	61	**140**	**223**

In 2015-2016, nearly two-thirds (140) of the schools we inspected were identified as requiring follow-up. The proportion of schools requiring significant improvement following their core inspection reduced slightly compared with 2014-2015, and the proportion of schools requiring special measures remained the same.

Schools coming out of follow-up

Schools no longer require follow-up when they are able to show that they have made suitable improvements against the recommendations from the core inspection. In these instances, leaders generally adapt and develop their skills quickly to strengthen management arrangements and improve outcomes and provision. Often, senior leaders are supported by peers from other schools or external advisers. They help leaders to make effective use of first-hand evidence such as lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work to inform accurate self-evaluation. As a result, leaders then identify and plan realistic school improvement priorities, including how to take timely action to improve the quality of teaching and learning, where needed.

The time taken for a school to have made enough progress to be removed from follow-up depends on the number and seriousness of the shortcomings identified at the time of the core inspection. Schools with a number of important shortcomings will be in a more serious category of follow-up and are likely to take longer to address inspection recommendations.

The chart below shows the number and proportion of schools that have been removed from follow-up for each year since 2010.

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Figure 3.23:
Number of maintained schools requiring follow-up activity at the time of their core inspection, and the numbers of these now out of category by 1 September 2016

Year	Number of maintained schools going into follow-up at core inspection	Number of these maintained schools out of follow-up, by 1 September 2016 (a)	
	Number	Number	Percentage
2010-2011	105	105	100%
2011-2012	133	130	98%
2012-2013	134	130	97%
2013-2014	182	159	87%
2014-2015	171	89	52%
2015-2016	140	0	0%

(a) This includes schools that may have closed or amalgamated with other schools as well as schools that have been removed from a follow-up category.

In most cases, schools make steady progress in relation to the recommendations published in inspection reports. Around two-thirds of schools are removed from follow-up after a year. After two or three years, the proportion of schools remaining in a follow-up category is low. The schools that remain in follow-up are mainly those that were originally placed in special measures, or were moved into a statutory category because they had not made enough progress in other categories of follow-up.

Schools in statutory categories of follow-up have a number of similarities. All have weaknesses in the quality of leadership and management. In most of these schools, inspectors make recommendations either to establish stable leadership, or to strengthen the quality and impact of leadership at all levels. Too often, the local authority or regional consortium does not identify these shortcomings and intervene promptly enough to improve weak leadership.

When schools require intensive follow-up for extended periods of time, this is largely because their leaders fail to address shortcomings in the quality of teaching and do not hold teachers robustly to account for pupils' progress and attainment. Although there are often pockets of good classroom practice within each of these schools, teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should. The sharing of good practice is not routine and this means that many staff do not have a clear understanding of what makes effective teaching and learning.

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Annex 1

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

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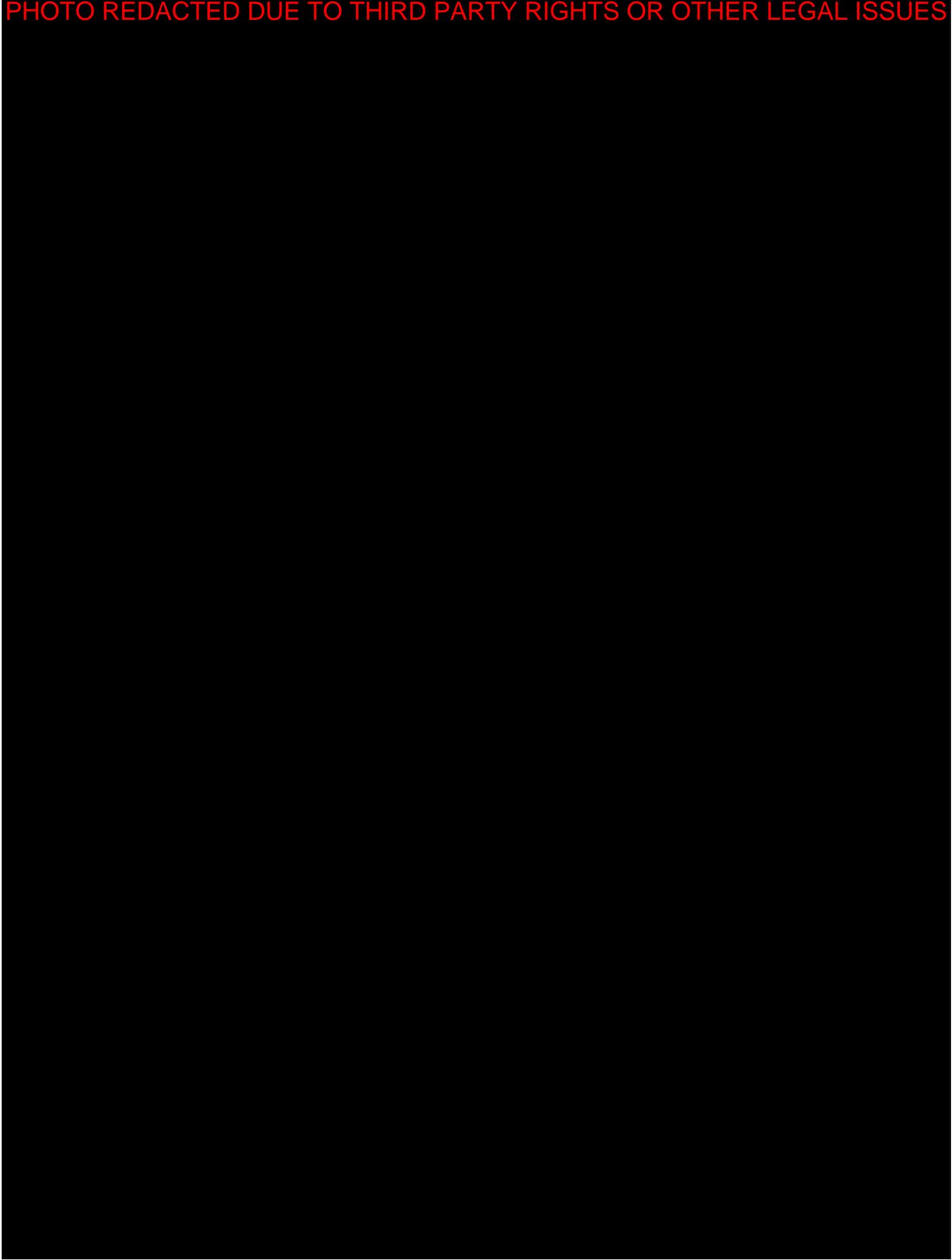
Overview

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

- 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.wales

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The Common Inspection Framework and judgement descriptors

When we inspect education and training in Wales, 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

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

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

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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					✓	✓

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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. If a monitoring visit is required, 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.
In need of 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.

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Annex 1:
Overview:

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

The data we show in charts or discuss within the text of this report is mostly from Estyn's database of inspection outcomes. Where appropriate, data from other sources is referenced in the report, and this is mainly derived from the Knowledge and Analytical Services departments of the Welsh Government. Figures in all charts are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Totals may therefore not be equal to 100%.

When analysing inspection outcomes, it is important to note that there can be difficulties in comparing trends in outcomes between years. Each year, we inspect a proportion of providers in each sector. For example, during 2015-2016 we inspected 178 (14%) primary schools and

33 (16%) secondary schools. There may appear to be large changes when comparing the inspection outcomes between years. However, since we introduced the current Common Inspection Framework in September 2010, no year-on-year changes have been statistically significant.

It is also important to note that considerable care needs to be taken when comparing inspection outcomes, and other data, between and within sectors when the number of providers is small.

We published our inspection outcomes for 2015-2016 as **official statistics** for the first time this year. The statistics were pre-announced and

published on the Estyn website and prepared according to the principles and protocols of the **Code of Practice for Official Statistics**.

Our **interactive data website** provides summaries of our inspection outcomes and questionnaire responses from pupils and parents. Users can apply filters to customise their data views and download the results. The website includes data for inspections carried out between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2016.

For more information about the inspection reports for individual providers, please visit: **estyn.gov. wales/inspection/search**

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Annex 2

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