



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

National School Categorisation System

Guidance document for schools, local authorities and
regional consortia

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Guidance

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National School Categorisation System

Audience	Primary schools; middle schools; secondary schools; governing bodies of maintained schools; local authorities; diocesan authorities; regional consortia; challenge advisers; Estyn; teaching unions; national bodies with an interest in education; and members of the public.
Overview	This guidance document for schools, local authorities and regional consortia explains in detail the three steps of the National School Categorisation System – performance and standards; self-evaluation and capacity to self-improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning; and categorisation and level of support, challenge and intervention.
Action required	Challenge advisers are required to fully understand the framework for evaluating current school performance and the capacity to improve performance in the future so that they can apply the framework when evaluating schools.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Schools Management and Effectiveness Division Department for Education and Skills Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ Tel: 029 2082 6014 e-mail: IMS@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills



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Introduction

The Minister for Education and Skills announced the introduction of the National School Categorisation System in September 2014. This new system, covering both primary schools and secondary schools, brings together the Programme for Government commitment to introduce a primary school banding system and builds on the improvements already achieved by secondary school banding. Both secondary school banding and the commitment to introduce primary school banding have now been superseded by the new National School Categorisation System.

We know that using performance data to drive school improvement has made positive strides for many schools and learners. Since banding was introduced we have seen secondary schools in bands 4 and 5 make real progress year-on-year. Band 5 secondary schools in 2012 saw the overall percentage of learners achieving the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics increase from 35.0 per cent in 2012 to 45.0 per cent in 2013. Similarly band 4 secondary schools went from 45.8 per cent in 2012 to 49.5 per cent in 2013.

Robert Hill's report *The future delivery of education services in Wales* (2013) noted that regional consortia should achieve a common understanding of how to apply a four-level categorisation to measure schools' performance. As part of the agreed National Model for Regional Working, the Welsh Government, local government, regional consortia and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) have worked together to ensure a national approach to the categorisation of schools.

We have listened to the feedback received since the introduction of secondary school banding and we have built on this when developing a model for primary schools and when amending the secondary school measures. We have also worked closely with schools, local authorities and regional consortia to ensure that we develop a system-wide approach to support and challenge schools.

This new system is not purely data-driven but also takes into account the quality of leadership and teaching and learning in our schools.

The new system evaluates and assesses schools and places them in a support category using the following information:

- a range of performance measures provided by the Welsh Government
- robust self-evaluation by the school on its capacity to improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning
- assessment of the school's self-evaluation by challenge advisers in the regional consortia, agreed with the local authority.

After the performance data and self-evaluation have been analysed a draft support category is generated for each school. This category is discussed with the school by regional consortia and then agreed with the local authority. The outcomes are moderated by a regional moderation board to ensure consistency within and across regional consortia, generating a final support category for each school. This process will be overseen by a quality and standardisation group which will include regional consortia and local authority representatives and the Welsh Government who will have observer status.

This guidance document for schools, local authorities and regional consortia explains in detail the three steps of the National School Categorisation System – performance and standards; self-evaluation and capacity to self-improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning; and categorisation and level of support, challenge and intervention. A guidance document for parents/carers is available separately. Schools are encouraged to make parents/carers aware of this guide and to include it on any school websites.

Step one: Performance and standards

Step one generates a judgement based on a school's performance and standards. Schools are placed into one of four standards groups, numbered 1 to 4, which identify how well they are performing against a set of agreed measures. Standards group 1 is the highest group and standards group 4 is the lowest. The performance measures for primary schools and secondary schools are different.

Step one is based on an 'absolute model', i.e. a school can demonstrate improvement without having an impact on another school's standards group. This is achieved by allocating a score to each school based on benchmark boundaries calculated at the start of a three-year period. For example, for the period 2014–16, the benchmark boundaries have been calculated and fixed as at 2014. The benchmark boundaries will be fixed for three years so it will be possible for any improving school to move to a higher standards group over time irrespective of the performance of other schools. Following a period of three years, the benchmark boundaries will be recalculated and schools will subsequently be placed into benchmark quarters based on the new boundaries.

Primary schools

The performance measures used in step one for primary schools are measured against four groups of data, based on teacher assessment and attendance data:

- Overall achievement
- Language
- Mathematics
- Attendance.

For the Foundation Phase the measures used relate to performance in language and mathematics at the expected outcome (Foundation Phase Outcome 5) or above, and one outcome higher than the expected outcome (Foundation Phase Outcome 6) or above. For Key Stage 2 the measures used relate to performance in language and mathematics at the expected level (National Curriculum Level 4) or above and one level higher than the expected level (National Curriculum Level 5) or above.

Performance measures

There are six performance measures in total for primary schools which are split into the following categories.

Overall achievement

- Percentage of learners achieving the Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) at the end of the Foundation Phase and the core subject indicator (CSI) at the end of Key Stage 2.

Language

- Percentage of learners achieving the expected outcome or above in Language, Literacy and Communication Skills (English or Welsh) at the end of the Foundation Phase and the expected level or above in English or Welsh first language at the end of Key Stage 2 (where a learner has been assessed in both English and Welsh first language at the end of Key Stage 2, the highest of the two is counted).
- Percentage of learners achieving the expected outcome plus one or above in Language, Literacy and Communication Skills (English or Welsh) at the end of the Foundation Phase and the expected level plus one or above in English or Welsh first language at the end of Key Stage 2 (where a learner has been assessed in both English and Welsh first language at the end of Key Stage 2, the highest of the two is counted).

Mathematics

- Percentage of learners achieving the expected outcome or above in Mathematical Development at the end of the Foundation Phase and the expected level or above in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Percentage of learners achieving the expected outcome plus one or above in Mathematical Development at the end of the Foundation Phase and the expected level plus one or above in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.

Attendance

- Percentage of half-day sessions attended.

How the performance measures are calculated

For each of the attainment measures, the measures are calculated by adding together the number of learners achieving the measure over the most recent three years in both the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 and dividing by the total number of learners over the most recent three years at the end of both the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 to calculate a percentage. This is done using a weighted three-year average, where the most recent year is attributed a weighting of 3, the previous year a weighting of 2 and the year prior to that a weighting of 1. This can be seen in the following examples.

Example 1

Learners achieving the FPI at the end of the Foundation Phase and the CSI at the end of Key Stage 2

	2012	2013	2014
Foundation Phase cohort	27	25	20
Achieving FPI	20	19	18
Key Stage 2 cohort	23	26	28
Achieving CSI	21	23	25
Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 cohort	27 + 23 = 50	25 + 26 = 51	20 + 28 = 48
Achieving FPI and CSI	20 + 21 = 41	19 + 23 = 42	18 + 25 = 43

Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 cohort 2012–14 = $(1 \times 50) + (2 \times 51) + (3 \times 48) = 296$

Achieving FPI/CSI 2012–14 = $(1 \times 41) + (2 \times 42) + (3 \times 43) = 254$

Percentage achieving FPI/CSI 2012–14 = $(254 \div 296) \times 100 = 85.8$ per cent

Each of the measures is then placed into benchmark quarters based on their free school meal (FSM) group. The five FSM groups used are the same groups as those used in all school performance outputs for primary schools:

- schools with up to 8 per cent eligible for FSM
- schools with over 8 per cent and up to 16 per cent eligible for FSM
- schools with over 16 per cent and up to 24 per cent eligible for FSM
- schools with over 24 per cent and up to 32 per cent eligible for FSM
- schools with over 32 per cent eligible for FSM.

The FSM data is based on the latest three-year average from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (again, consistent with the data used in all other school performance outputs for primary schools).

Placing schools into benchmark quarters based on their FSM group means that schools' results are compared only against schools that are most similar in terms of their FSM eligibility. For example, a school that has 10.2 per cent FSM eligibility is placed in the 'Schools with over 8 per cent and up to 16 per cent eligible for FSM' group and is placed into quarters based on the quartile boundaries for this group.

Example 2

Benchmark boundaries for schools with over 8 per cent and up to 16 per cent eligible for FSM

	Number of schools	Minimum		Lower quartile		Median		Upper quartile	Maximum
FPI/CSI	340	51		84	86	88		91	100
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills (in English or Welsh)/ English or Welsh first language – expected outcome/level	340	60		87		91	92	93	100
Language, Literacy and Communication Skills (in English or Welsh)/ English or Welsh first language – expected outcome/level plus one	340	13	28	30		35		42	74
Mathematical Development/ mathematics – expected outcome/level	340	64		88	90	91		94	100
Mathematical Development/ mathematics – expected outcome/level plus one	340	0	18	29		34		40	62

For example, for the FPI/CSI, the school is placed in the third quarter (i.e. between the lower quartile and the median) therefore for this measure it would receive a score of 3.

The attendance data is also placed into a benchmark quarter, based on the latest single year of data available at the time of categorisation – the attendance data has not been recalculated on any other basis (e.g. it is not a three-year average like the attainment data) for the purpose of categorisation.

How the measures are weighted

Each benchmark quarter for a school is then added together to give an overall score for the school. This score is then used to place a school into one of four standards groups (1–4).

All of the attainment data is weighted equally, with a weighting of 1. The attendance data is weighted at half of all other measures, with a weighting of 0.5. This means that the total weighting is 5.5 (i.e. one each for the five attainment measures, and 0.5 for the attendance measure).

How the standards group boundaries are set

The best score a school is able to get is 5.5 (i.e. being in quarter 1 for each measure), and the worst score is 22.0 (i.e. being in quarter 4 for each measure).

The standards group boundaries are fixed and have been set so that there is roughly a normal distribution of schools between the standards groups in the first year. The standards group boundaries are then calculated as follows.

- **Standards group 1** – [5.5, 7.5]
- **Standards group 2** – [8.0, 13.5]
- **Standards group 3** – [14.0, 19.5]
- **Standards group 4** – [20.0, 22.0]

The distribution of schools between the categories is expected to vary annually as the model is based on an absolute model.

Schools included in the model

Not all primary schools are included in the system. Only schools with performance data for the latest three years are included. For example, a new school that would only have one year's worth of data at the end of the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 would not be included in the system.

Schools that have opened as a result of mergers with other schools, however, are included in the system in the same way that they are included in all other school performance outputs. Their separate historic data is merged into one set of data for the new school, and included in the system. The schools that have closed as a result of the mergers are therefore excluded from the system.

Data timeliness

Teacher assessment data is published annually in August while attendance data is published annually in December. This means that the attainment and attendance data used for placing primary schools in a standards group is not reflective of performance in the same academic year – the attendance data will always reflect the attendance data of the previous academic year.

Secondary schools

The performance measures used in step one for secondary schools are measured against four groups of data, based on examination results and attendance data, as follows.

- Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics.
- Capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics.
- 5+ A*–A or equivalent.
- Attendance.

Two of these performance measures have been developed and calculated specifically for inclusion in the National School Categorisation System – the capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics, and 5+ A*–A or equivalent. These new indicators are summarised below.

- Capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics – this is calculated in a similar way to the existing capped points score, except that a learner's best result in English language/literature or Welsh first language/literature and their best result in mathematics are automatically included, plus the remaining best six qualifications. The remaining best six can include any of the English/Welsh or mathematics qualifications that have not been counted as the learner's best in those subjects. If a learner does not have a qualification in English/Welsh or mathematics then they score zero points for that qualification within the calculation of the points score.
- 5+ A*–A or equivalent – this is similar to the Level 2 threshold measure, but to achieve this indicator a learner must achieve at least five GCSE grades A*–A or equivalent. For non-GCSE qualifications, we calculate an equivalence based on the value of an A grade at GCSE.

Annex A provides a more detailed description of how both indicators are calculated.

Performance measures

There are 14 performance measures in total for secondary schools which are divided into the following four groups.

Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics

- Overall performance during the previous three years.
- Performance of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM learners) during the previous three years.
- Relative progress (based on overall performance).
- Performance set against FSM level of the school.

Capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics (new measure)

- Overall performance during the previous three years.
- eFSM learners' performance during the previous three years.
- Relative progress (based on overall performance).
- Performance set against FSM level of the school.

5+ A*–A or equivalent (new measure)

- Overall performance during the previous three years.
- eFSM learners' performance during the previous three years.
- Relative progress (based on overall performance).
- Performance set against FSM level of the school.

Attendance

- Current absence set against FSM level of the school.
- Persistent absentees set against FSM level of the school.

Persistent absentees are learners who were absent for at least 20 per cent of the mode number of half-day sessions that schools were open to learners (which does not include INSET days).

How the performance measures are calculated

For each measure (except the absence measures) we calculate a three-year weighted average by adding together the number of learners achieving the measure over the most recent three years and dividing by the total number of learners over the most recent three years to calculate a percentage.

The data for each individual year is weighted so that the current year is given a weighting of 3, the previous year a weighting of 2 and the year before that a weighting of 1. This can be seen in the following example.

Example 3

Learners achieving the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4

	2012	2013	2014	Weighted total (2012–14)
Learners aged 15	100	110	90	
Achieving Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics	50	55	50	
Weights	1	2	3	
Weighted learners	$100 \times 1 = 100$	$110 \times 2 = 220$	$90 \times 3 = 270$	$100 + 220 + 270 = 590$
Weighted achievement	$50 \times 1 = 50$	$55 \times 2 = 110$	$50 \times 3 = 150$	$50 + 110 + 150 = 310$

Percentage achieving Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics 2012–14 = $(310 \div 590) \times 100 = 52.5$ per cent

As in the primary school model, data for absence is based on a single year only.

Calculating measures set against FSM (residuals)

To calculate a residual we first plot the weighted averages from above for all schools against their level of FSM eligibility (the level of FSM is a three-year average, in the same way as that for primary schools). This allows us to then plot a line that describes the relationship between a school's results and its level of FSM eligibility. In general, there is a negative relationship between FSM and performance – as the level of FSM eligibility increases, the level of achievement decreases. A school's residual is then calculated as being the percentage point difference (or actual points difference when looking at the capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics) between their actual results and their 'expected' results, as shown by the line of best fit. If their results for a particular measure are better than expected, they have a positive residual, and if they are worse than expected they have a negative residual. Further information can be found in this statistical bulletin (www.wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-free-school-meals/?lang=en#/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-free-school-meals/?lang=en).

The following worked example explains the process.

Example 4

Take the following three schools' results, regarding the percentage of learners achieving the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics.

School	FSM%	Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics	'Expected' Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics	Residual
A	34.3	36.8	31.2	$36.8 - 31.2 = 5.6$
B	20.1	68.2	58.2	10.0
C	12.0	57.9	60.4	-2.5

As you can see in the table above, the lower the percentage of learners within the school eligible for FSM, the higher their 'expected' results. Therefore, even though School A's actual results are lower than that of School C, their residual is higher because we have taken into account their higher levels of FSM eligibility. School C has a negative residual because they did not achieve the results we would expect given their level of FSM.

Calculating progress measures

Progress measures are calculated using the overall performance results for each of the last four years (the higher the score the better). We use four years here instead of three (as is the case for the other measures) so that we can calculate year-on-year changes at three different points in time.

We have designed the progress measure to achieve the following.

- Schools that make positive progress year-on-year achieve a higher score than those who do not.
- Schools that make positive progress from a high base score higher than schools that make positive progress but from a lower base. For example, a school progressing from 50 per cent to 55 per cent achieves a higher score than a school progressing from 30 per cent to 35 per cent even though both improvements are of the same size.
- Schools with a high level of performance whose performance falls achieve a higher score than a school with a lower level of performance that also falls. For example, a school falling from 70 per cent to 65 per cent gets a higher score than a school that falls from 50 per cent to 45 per cent, even though both falls are of the same size.
- Schools whose performance consistently deteriorates year-on-year achieve lower scores.

Annex A provides a more detailed description of how the progress measures are calculated.

Calculating quartiles

Once the weighted averages have been calculated, we place each school's performance in a quarter. The quartiles are calculated using all schools and do not take into account the school's level of FSM (so a school may be in a different quarter when being placed in a standards group than they will be under the benchmarking tables that schools will be familiar with in other school performance outputs).

Example 5

Benchmark boundaries for the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics measures

	Number of schools	Minimum		Lower quartile		Median		Upper quartile		Maximum
Overall performance during the previous three years	218	21		41	50	54		62		81
eFSM learners' performance during the previous three years	218	0	15	20		26		34		60
Relative progress (based on overall performance)	218	-11		-2		1		5	10	18
Performance set against FSM level of the school	218	-18		-3		0	2	4		15

For example, this school is placed in the third quarter for Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics overall performance during the previous three years (i.e. between the lower quartile and the median) so for this measure it would receive a score of 3. For relative progress the school is placed in the first quarter (i.e. between the upper quartile and the maximum) and so receives a score of one. When calculating these scores, a lower score is better than a higher score.

The absence data, based on performance for a single year, is also placed into a benchmark quarter.

How the measures are weighted

Each quarter for a school is then added together to give an overall score for the school. This score is then used to place a school into one of four standards groups (1–4).

Both the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics and capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics carry the most weighting, with a weighting of 2. This is to reflect the focus on the need to strengthen levels of literacy and numeracy and to reflect that these are currently the key performance measures for secondary schools. The 5+ A*–A or equivalent measure carries a weighting of 1 and absence carries the least weighting at 0.5. This means that the total weighting of all the measures combined is 21.0.

How the standards group boundaries are set

The best score a school is able to get is 21.0 (i.e. being in quarter 1 for each measure), and the worst score is 84.0 (i.e. being in quarter 4 for each measure).

The difference between the best and worst score is calculated ($84.0 - 21.0 = 63.0$) and then split into four even categories ($63.0 \div 4 = 15.75$). The standards groups boundaries are then calculated as follows:

- **Standards group 1** – [21.0, 36.5]
- **Standards group 2** – [37.0, 52.5]
- **Standards group 3** – [53.0, 68.0]
- **Standards group 4** – [68.5, 84.0].

For example, a school with a total score of 43.0 would find itself in standards group 2.

Schools included in the model

In the same way as for primary schools, not all secondary schools are included in the model. Only schools with performance data for the latest four years are included. For example, a new school that would only have one year's worth of data at the end of Key Stage 4 is not included in the system.

Schools that have opened as a result of mergers with other schools, however, are included in the system in the same way that they are included in all school performance outputs. Their separate historic data is merged into one set of data for the new school, and included in the system. The schools that have closed as a result of the mergers are therefore excluded from the system.

Step two: Self-evaluation and capacity to self-improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning

Having made the first objective data-driven judgement on a school's performance, step two consists of a judgement (A–D) based on the school's ability to self-evaluate and capacity to self-improve. Schools with an improvement capacity of A show the greatest capacity to improve and those with an improvement capacity of D the least.

The process of coming to a judgement on the school's capacity to bring about self-improvement begins with the school's self-evaluation. This is discussed transparently by the regional consortium's challenge adviser with the school's leaders and governors. The judgement should reflect the considered view of the headteacher, governors and the challenge adviser and be supported by evidence. Learners' performance and the judgement about the capacity to improve should be closely aligned.

This judgement indicates the degree of confidence in the school's capacity to drive forward its own improvement. As such, it is a key element in the decision about the level of support the school will require. The national system is based upon strengthening schools' capacity to bring about improvement within individual schools and contributing to system-wide improvement.

Framework for self-evaluation and capacity to self-improve

To ensure consistency of approach both within and across regional consortia, a framework has been developed for challenge advisers to guide the judgement on a school's capacity to self-improve. The framework relates to the use of criteria for leadership and teaching and learning, reflects the Estyn inspection framework and is used to inform headteacher performance management. The framework for step two is the same for both primary and secondary schools. Regional consortia may choose to add specific information, for example from that provided by the local authority, to help with the judgement and to take proper account of any relevant risk factors. However, use of the leadership and teaching and learning criteria should predominate.

The judgement is to do with the school's capacity to drive its own improvement in the future. The system is based upon strengthening schools' capacity to support themselves and each other. In coming to a judgement about the school's capacity to self-improve, school leaders and school improvement professionals must consider the extent to which a school has:

- the capacity and capability to lead and bring about improvement and implement plans
- the contribution of external support
- a successful track record in managing change, addressing underperformance and responding to recommendations from inspection and from the regional consortium
- a clear vision, priorities, plans and challenging targets for improvement
- appropriate systems to review progress, monitor areas for improvement and take effective action to remedy them
- high-quality teaching and learning

- teaching and learning strategies which impact on improving standards and are used consistently and effectively
- effective systems for tracking learners' progress which enable school leaders to identify the underperformance of specific groups of learners and target support effectively.

Leadership and teaching and learning

Challenge advisers use a set of agreed indicators when making a judgement based on a school's leadership and teaching and learning. The criteria for leadership and teaching and learning should be used to support professional judgement as part of an evidence-based approach to making a judgement about the school's capacity to improve that fits the current position most closely.

Challenge advisers look specifically at the direct influence of leadership on outcomes in a school. Effective leadership at all levels drives effective schools and improved performance by all learners. Where governors, headteachers, middle leaders, subject leaders and classroom teachers underperform, the challenge adviser should expect that the school's leadership team has clear plans and arrangements to bring about improvement. Where the overall performance of learners is declining, the school's leadership team needs to be clear that intervention will be required.

When making a judgement about the quality of leadership, a key determining factor is the quality, frequency and impact of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. In addition, the involvement of key stakeholders in the self-evaluation process influences the judgement on how well leadership is developed within the school.

Another key element of the framework is the teaching and learning in the school. Challenge advisers need to be assured that all staff have well defined roles and understand their responsibilities. Clear performance management arrangements with focused development priorities should be the norm for all teachers. Those aiming for excellence should be guided to improve and excel. Those underperforming should be clearly identified, and targeted for support and improvement within a clear timescale. Where teachers' performance is affecting the performance of learners and the whole school, challenge advisers should expect to see clear, effective implementation of capability policies and procedures.

Ineffective self-evaluation means that schools cannot judge well enough the areas where improvement is necessary. In such circumstances, the judgement about a school's improvement capacity should normally not be better than C. Schools must have clear systems for ensuring accountability for performance, which are robust and contribute to continuous improvement in teaching and learning, and in learners' outcomes. Schools should be able to demonstrate effective strategies for improving quality, which impact positively on teaching and learning.

The framework and criteria relating to leadership and teaching and learning can be found at Annex B.

The relationship between step one and step two

The outcomes of step one and step two should generally align – if standards are not good or not improving, leadership cannot be judged as wholly effective. Challenge advisers should be assured that all school leaders use performance data robustly as part of effective school management and improvement. This includes governors, headteachers, middle leaders and subject leaders. There must be evidence of the effective and timely use of accurate data at individual learner, class, group, cohort, subject and whole-school level.

Challenge advisers will discuss and consider with the school the performance of all learners and groups of learners in step two of the categorisation process. The performance of all groups of vulnerable learners will be reviewed and a judgement made within the school's context. In particular, the performance of eFSM learners will be analysed to determine whether a school is making progress to break the link between disadvantage and educational attainment. If the performance or progress of eFSM learners doesn't compare favourably to national performance or the performance of learners not eligible for free school meals (nFSM learners) then this will have an impact on the judgement about improvement capacity. Socio-economic disadvantage should not be used as an excuse for poor performance.

In secondary schools, where less than the latest weighted three-year average for all schools (which will be revised and updated annually) of eFSM learners achieve the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics, the judgement about the school's improvement capacity will normally be no better than C.

In primary schools, where the progress of eFSM learners year-on-year is less than the progress of nFSM learners then the judgement on the school's improvement capacity should normally be no better than C.

Where eFSM cohorts are very small (five learners or fewer) or where there is a high proportion of eFSM learners with additional learning needs (ALN) or special educational needs (SEN), the challenge adviser will discuss and consider this with the school when making a professional judgement. The outcome will need to have a clear rationale and be based upon evidence.

Step three: Categorisation and level of support, challenge and intervention

The outcomes of step one and step two will be combined to determine the school's support category (step three). The final categorisation will be based on a colour coding system and will need to be agreed with the school and with the local authority. The categorisation colour indicates the level of support a school requires – green, yellow, amber or red (with the schools in the green category needing the least support and those in the red category needing the most intensive support). Every school's category will be published in January on the My Local School website (<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk>), and they will each receive a tailored programme of support, challenge and intervention based on this category.

Green support category

These are highly effective schools which:

- have a track record in sustaining a high level of learner outcomes
- know themselves well and identify and implement their own priorities for improvement successfully
- demonstrate resilience at all levels
- are rewarded with greater autonomy
- will be challenged to move towards or sustain excellence
- have the capacity to lead others effectively and to contribute to school-to-school support.

Yellow support category

These are effective schools which:

- have secured good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators
- know, understand and take action to address most of the areas in need of improvement
- have many aspects of their performance which are self-improving
- seek tailored challenge and support and deploy this according to need.

Amber support category

These are schools in need of improvement which:

- do not know and understand all the areas in need of improvement
- have many aspects of their performance which are not improving quickly enough
- will receive tailored challenge and intervention which will be deployed according to need
- will have their self-evaluation and school improvement plan approved by the challenge adviser
- will be expected to require amber support for only the short-term
- will receive time-limited, focused challenge and intervention and be at the risk of dropping to a red level of support where there is evidence of insufficient progress.

Red support category

These are schools in need of greatest improvement which:

- are experiencing a decline in key aspects of their performance
- will receive intensive support
- will automatically receive a letter from their local authority and, where appropriate, statutory powers may be used by the local authority
- will be subject to intervention involving collaboration between the local authority and regional consortium
- will have a more directed approach by the local authority and regional consortium.

Attached at Annex C are a number of examples/scenarios in relation to the final categorisation.

Annex A: Methodology for calculating secondary school performance measures

This annex provides further detail on how some of the performance measures for secondary schools are calculated, including the calculation of the capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics, 5+ A*–A or equivalent and the progress measures.

Capped points score including English/Welsh and mathematics (new measure)

The capped points score for 15-year-olds includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales. A learner's best result in English language/literature or Welsh language/literature and their best result in mathematics is included, plus the other best six qualifications to make a total of eight. Learners who do not achieve a pass in these subjects receive a score of zero for that subject.

Step one

Qualifications are compared to the size of a GCSE to determine a volume indicator (i.e. how many GCSEs a qualification is worth). For example, a vocational double award GCSE is twice the size of a GCSE so would have a volume indicator of 2, a short course GCSE would be 0.5.

Learner results

Qualification	Grade	Volume indicator	Total points
GCSE Mathematics	A*	1	58
GCSE English Language	E	1	28
GCSE Welsh Language	C	1	40
GCSE short course	A	0.5	26
Vocational double award GCSE	BB	2	92
Level 2 Certificate in Vehicle Fitting Operations	Pass	5	230
Total		10.5	474

Step two

The best qualification in English/Welsh and their best qualification in mathematics is identified and taken out of the calculation temporarily. In this example the grade A* in mathematics and grade C in Welsh language (highlighted in green above) are taken out. This leaves the following qualifications.

Learner results

Qualification	Grade	Volume indicator	Total points
GCSE English Language	E	1	28
GCSE short course	A	0.5	26
Vocational double award GCSE	BB	2	92
Level 2 Certificate in Vehicle Fitting Operations	Pass	5	230
Total		8.5	376

Step three

For the remaining qualifications, the total points for each qualification is divided by the volume indicator to produce a **standardised points score**. For example, a vocational double award GCSE at grade BB has 92 points. To calculate the standardised points score, we would divide 92 points by the vocational double award GCSE volume indicator of 2 (i.e. 92 divided by 2 = 46). The standardised points score is 46.

Qualifications are then sorted in descending order based on their standardised point scores.

Learner results in descending order

Qualification	Grade	Volume indicator	Total points	Standardised points
GCSE short course	A	0.5	26	52
Level 2 Certificate in Vehicle Fitting Operations	Pass	5	230	46
Vocational double award GCSE	BB	2	92	46
GCSE English Language	E	1	28	28
Total		8.5	376	172

Step four

Once qualifications are ranked, the volume indicators should be summed until a cap of **six** is reached (it is six and not eight because we have temporarily removed the best qualifications in English/Welsh and mathematics). The total points for qualifications included in the cap should then be summed to produce the capped points score.

Note that the process allows for fractions of qualifications to be included in the cap should a particular qualification extend beyond the cap.

Learner results capped at six

Qualification	Grade	Volume indicator	Cumulative volume	Total points
GCSE short course	A	0.5	0.5	26
Level 2 Certificate in Vehicle Fitting Operations	Pass	5	$0.5 + 5 = 5.5$	230
Vocational double award GCSE	BB	2	$5.5 + 2 = 7.5$	25% of 92 = 23 ¹
GCSE English Language	E	1	$7.5 + 1 = 8.5$	
Total (capped)		8.5		279

¹ Only an additional 0.5 is needed to reach the cap of 6 (i.e. 25 per cent of this qualification is required as the volume indicator is 2). Therefore only 25 per cent of the points for that qualification will be included in the capped points score.

The capped points score based on the best six becomes $(26 + 230 + 23) = 279$.

We now add in the points for the best English/Welsh and mathematics qualification to get the total capped points score for the learner. In this example the total is $279 + 58 + 40 = 377$.

5+ A*–A or equivalent

This is similar to the Level 2 threshold measure, but to achieve this indicator a learner must achieve at least five GCSE grades A*–A or equivalent. For non-GCSE qualifications, we calculate an equivalence based on 52 points (the value of an A grade at GCSE). So, for example, a vocational qualification worth 208 points would be counted as equivalent to four A grades at GCSE.

The key data items in calculating this item are the Level 2 threshold contribution (as listed on the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW)) and the points for the qualification.

Learner results

Qualification	Grade	Level 2 threshold contribution	Total points
GCSE	A*	20	58
GCSE	E	20	28
GCSE	A	20	52
GCSE short course	A	10	26
GCSE short course	A*	10	29
Vocational double award GCSE	AA	40	104
Entry level qualification	E1	0	10
BTEC	Pass	80	160
Total		200	

To calculate this indicator we split the qualifications into three groups.

Group 1: For qualifications where the Level 2 threshold contribution is greater than or equal to 20

Step 1a

Divide the Level 2 threshold contribution for that qualification by 20 in order to calculate the GCSE equivalence of each qualification.

Qualification	Grade	(a)	(b) = (a) ÷ 20
		Level 2 threshold contribution	GCSE equivalence
GCSE	A*	20	1
GCSE	E	20	1
GCSE	A	20	1
Vocational double award GCSE	AA	40	2
BTEC	Pass	80	4

Step 1b

Divide the points for each qualification by the GCSE equivalence calculated in step 1a, to calculate a GCSE points equivalence.

Qualification	Grade	(b) GCSE equivalence	(c) Total points	(d) = (c) ÷ (b) GCSE points equivalence
GCSE	A*	1	58	58
GCSE	E	1	28	28
GCSE	A	1	52	52
Vocational double award GCSE	AA	2	104	52
BTEC	Pass	4	160	40

Step 1c

Divide the GCSE points equivalence by 52 (the value of a grade A at GCSE) to calculate a points equivalence in A*–A terms.

Qualification	Grade	(b) GCSE equivalence	(c) Total points	(d) GCSE points equivalence	(e) = (d) ÷ 52 GCSE A*–A points equivalence
GCSE	A*	1	58	58	1.1
GCSE	E	1	28	28	0.5
GCSE	A	1	52	52	1
Vocational double award GCSE	AA	2	104	52	1
BTEC	Pass	4	160	40	0.8

Step 1d

Round the result of step 1c (the GCSE A*–A points equivalence) **down to the nearest whole number**. This ensures that qualifications worth less than a grade A cannot count towards this measure. In our example, we would not want the grade E at GCSE to count 0.5 towards the overall indicator.

Qualification	Grade	(b) GCSE equivalence	(c) Total points	(d) GCSE points equivalence	(e) GCSE A*–A points equivalence	(f) = (e) rounded down to nearest whole number
GCSE	A*	1	58	58	1.1	1
GCSE	E	1	28	28	0.5	0
GCSE	A	1	52	52	1	1
Vocational double award GCSE	AA	2	104	52	1	1
BTEC	Pass	4	160	40	0.8	0

Step 1e

Multiply the result of step 1d (column f) by the GCSE equivalence (column b) to calculate the contribution of each qualification to the 5+ A*–A or equivalent indicator.

Qualification	Grade	(b) GCSE equivalence	(c) Total points	(d) GCSE points equivalence	(e) GCSE A*–A points equivalence	(f)	(g) = (f) x (b) 5+ A*–A contribution
GCSE	A*	1	58	58	1.1	1	1
GCSE	E	1	28	28	0.5	0	0
GCSE	A	1	52	52	1	1	1
Vocational double award GCSE	AA	2	104	52	1	1	2
BTEC	Pass	4	160	40	0.8	0	0
Total							4

From this stage of the calculation, the learner has achieved the equivalent of four GCSE grades A*–A.

Group 2: All qualifications where the Level 2 threshold contribution is greater than 0 but less than 20

Qualification	Grade	Level 2 threshold contribution	Total points
GCSE short course	A	10	26
GCSE short course	A*	10	29
Total		20	

This group of qualifications needs to be treated differently to ensure that grades A*–A at GCSE short course can contribute to the 5+ A*–A or equivalent indicator.

Step 2a

Divide the points for the qualification by 52 (the value of a grade A at GCSE) to calculate a GCSE points equivalence for each qualification.

Qualification	Grade	Level 2 threshold contribution	(a)	(b) = (a) ÷ 52
			Total points	GCSE points equivalence
GCSE short course	A	10	26	0.5
GCSE short course	A*	10	29	0.6

Step 2b

The result of step 2a will be a fraction between 0 and 1. If the fraction is greater than or equal to 0.5, set to 0.5. Otherwise set to 0.

Qualification	Grade	Level 2 threshold contribution	(a)	(b) = (a) ÷ 52	(c)
			Total points	GCSE points equivalence	5+ A*–A or equivalent contribution
GCSE short course	A	10	26	0.5	0.5
GCSE short course	A*	10	29	0.6	0.5
Total					1

Group 3: All qualifications where the Level 2 threshold contribution is equal to 0

For all such qualifications, set the 5+ A*–A or equivalent contribution equivalence to 0.

Qualification	Grade	Level 2 threshold contribution	Total points	5+ A*–A or equivalent contribution
Entry level qualification	E1	0	10	0
Total				0

Calculating the 5+ A*–A or equivalent indicator

Once the above three steps have been completed, we sum the 5+ A*–A or equivalent contribution from each step. If the result of this calculation is 5 or more, then the learner will have achieved 5+ A*–A or equivalent. In our example, Step 1 = 4, Step 2 = 1 and Step 3 = 0 for a total of 5, so this learner has achieved the indicator.

Progress measures

Take the following schools' results for the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Year	School A	School B
2011	50	25
2012	55	22
2013	52	29
2014	60	30

Step 1: Calculate year-on-year differences for each school

Year	School A	School B
2011–12	$55 - 50 = 5$	$22 - 25 = -3$
2012–13	$52 - 55 = -3$	$29 - 22 = 7$
2013–14	$60 - 52 = 8$	$30 - 29 = 1$

Step 2: Calculate an adjustment factor

The progress made year-on-year in step 1 is adjusted to reflect how far away the school is from the maximum possible score (100 per cent in this example for Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics) and whether the progress made has been positive or negative.

If a school makes positive progress then the adjustment factor is calculated as follows.

$X_{2012} \div 100$ (where 2012 denotes the last year in the calculation)

The closer the school is to the maximum score of 100, the higher the adjustment factor will be (as in School A). Conversely, the closer the school is to 0, the lower the adjustment factor will be (as in School B).

If a school makes negative progress then the adjustment factor is as follows.

$(100 - X_{2012}) \div 100$

Schools who make negative progress but from a high base (as in School A) will get a lower adjustment factor than schools who make negative progress from a lower base (as in School B). This ensures that performance that deteriorates from a high base is not overly penalised.

Applying these adjustment factors to each of the progress scores calculated in step 1 gives the following.

Year	School A			School B		
	Raw performance in last year	Progress	Adjustment	Raw performance in last year	Progress	Adjustment
2011–12	55	5	$= (55 \div 100)$ $= 0.55$	22	-3	$= (100 - 22) \div 100$ $= 0.78$
2012–13	52	-3	$= (100 - 52) \div 100$ $= 0.48$	29	7	$= 29 \div 100$ $= 0.29$
2013–14	60	8	$= (60 \div 100)$ $= 0.6$	30	1	$= 30 \div 100$ $= 0.3$

Step 3: Calculate a score for every year

The progress score is then multiplied by the adjustment factor to calculate an overall score for the year that represents the progress made in that year. Summing these scores gives the overall progress score for the school over the whole period 2011 to 2014.

Year	School A			School B		
	Progress	Adjustment	Score	Progress	Adjustment	Score
2011–12	5	0.55	2.75	-3	0.78	-2.34
2012–13	-3	0.48	-1.44	7	0.29	2.03
2013–14	8	0.6	4.8	1	0.3	0.3
Total			6.11			-0.01

Annex B: Framework and criteria for self-evaluation and ability to self-improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning

Improvement capacity A

- School leaders know and understand their school's strengths and areas for development very well. Appropriate action is taken swiftly in response. Action has led to sustained improvement in outcomes on all main key indicators (including the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics, for secondary schools).
- Self-evaluation is robust across all performance indicators with a clear focus on outcomes for all groups of learners. Improvement planning and the use of resources are clearly aligned with the areas in need of most improvement and then used to greatest effect on the standards achieved by learners.
- Leaders use all available performance data robustly, including external examination and test results, as part of effective school management and improvement. They use accurate data at individual, class, group, cohort, subject and school level to monitor progress. The outcomes are used very well to set appropriately challenging targets. The performance of learners eligible for FSM, in particular, is reviewed and analysed effectively to inform teaching strategies. Policies are implemented consistently.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the school that inspires and motivates all staff to achieve good outcomes for all learners. Leadership capacity in the school is built effectively.
- Policies and initiatives to meet national and local priorities are implemented successfully by school leaders and managers resulting in improved standards. Leaders actively engage in sharing good practice outside the school. The impact of their support has contributed to an improvement in provision and standards in other schools. Governors use high-quality performance information to challenge and support the school to make improvements, some of which are exceptional.
- All staff have well-defined roles and responsibilities and exhibit high standards of professional competence. Line management and accountability for the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes are effective in achieving sustained improvements for learners. Leaders and managers effectively intervene where there is evidence of ineffective teaching and learning leading to underperformance by learners.
- The headteacher and leadership team are held to account effectively by the governing body. The governing body has an excellent knowledge of learners' and staff performance. The school development plan identifies outcome-based priorities and is used to monitor successes and challenges.
- School leaders have robust systems which work well to manage staff performance and deal quickly and effectively with underperformance or nurture teaching staff whose performance is consistently excellent.
- School leaders have robust systems which work well to secure the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy. Policies are implemented consistently and lead to improvements in learner outcomes.

Improvement capacity A

(Continued)

- Accountabilities and systems are robust and affect continuing improvement in teaching and learning and in learner standards and progress. The quality of teaching and learning and the progress of all learner groups are good or better. There are effective strategies for improving quality which impact positively on teaching and learning.
- All teaching and support staff have a clear and shared understanding of the characteristics of excellent and good teaching and learning and feedback to learners, which is reinforced through in-school moderation. There are robust systems to ensure the consistency of teacher assessment. There is a close and strong correlation between teacher assessments and standardised test scores or external examinations.
- There are clear policies and systems in place detailing high-quality processes and practices for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning with clear responsibilities set out for all staff. The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation are fed back regularly to the governing body and lead to an appropriate range of actions.
- Results of observation evaluations, feedback to staff and other evidence sources are analysed and used by leaders to maintain progress and secure further improvement. Underperformance is addressed robustly and swiftly.
- The school shares its good practice in-house and at cluster and regional level to a very positive effect.

Improvement capacity B

- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and respond appropriately in areas for development. There is impact on outcomes for many key indicators, including the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics, for secondary schools.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate across most indicators and focuses on outcomes.
- Leaders generally use performance data well. They use a range of accurate and reliable data, including external examination, assessments and standardised test results. The school sets challenging targets at most of the individual, class, targeted group, cohort, subject and school levels. The performance of learners eligible for FSM, in particular, is reviewed and analysed appropriately to inform teaching strategies.
- Leaders and staff share a common clear vision for the school, focused on achieving good outcomes for all learners. A few staff underperform but actions to manage performance and improve teaching are in place and there is evidence of improvement. Policies and initiatives to meet national and local priorities are implemented successfully.
- Governors use assessment and performance information well to secure an accurate view of the school's performance. They show determination in challenging and supporting the school in bringing about necessary improvements in many areas. Challenging decisions have been made to improve standards in the majority of areas.
- All staff have defined roles and responsibilities for the quality of teaching and learning and many staff deliver a good level of professional competence. Line management and accountability for outcomes are clear and contribute to the improvement in outcomes for learners. School leaders are required to report to the governing body on their responsibilities.
- Governors receive reports on learners' and staff performance. These support the governing body well in their monitoring role. The school development plan is linked to priorities accurately identified through rigorous self-evaluation.
- Governors show determination to challenge and support the school towards necessary improvements or make difficult decisions which raise standards for learners. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties.
- School leaders have good systems which are generally used well to manage staff performance.
- School leaders have good arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. However, there are a few inconsistencies in the way these arrangements are implemented at middle leadership level.

Improvement capacity B

(Continued)

- Accountabilities and systems are generally robust. Overall, they impact positively on the quality of teaching and learning and on learner standards and progress. Minor issues in variation of quality are identified and appropriate support is in place which leads to improvement. There are strategies for improving quality of teaching and learning which affect improvement.
- Most teaching staff and some support staff have a clear understanding of the characteristics of excellent and good teaching and learning and feedback to learners with some in-school moderation. There is a reasonable correlation between teacher assessment and standardised test scores or external examination.
- Policies, systems and processes are in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning with reference to leaders' responsibilities. The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation are fed back to the governing body but not systematically.
- There is regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning from a variety of sources but limited use of evaluation to inform future development.
- Results of most observation evaluations, feedback to staff and other evidence sources are used by leaders to monitor progress.
- The school shares a few areas of good practice in-house and at cluster and regional level to a positive effect.

Improvement capacity C

- Too many areas for development are not fully appreciated and/or dealt with swiftly by school leaders. Leaders and managers can describe the school's development activities but do not evaluate or understand their impact.
- Self-evaluation is inconsistently applied and insufficiently embedded across the school and/or does not consistently focus on outcomes.
- Leaders make limited use of performance data as part of school management. They do not use a sufficient range of data, such as external examination, standardised tests and assessments and/or there is some inconsistency in how well data is used. The performance of learners eligible for FSM, in particular, is not reviewed and analysed effectively, and is not used to inform effective teaching strategies.
- Leaders have a limited vision for the school that aims to improve outcomes. This aim is not consistently understood or acted on by staff and cannot inspire improvement among staff or learners. As a result, staff do not focus on the most important areas for development. Policies and initiatives are being implemented to meet some of the national and local priorities. Key priorities such as literacy and numeracy are not delivered consistently well.
- Governors support the school but do not use assessment and performance information to systematically monitor, evaluate or challenge the school to make improvements. Governors have not supported or led difficult decisions to improve standards.
- Most roles and responsibilities are defined but line management and accountability for teaching and learning and outcomes are not consistently clear and/or understood. Too many teachers continue to deliver poor lessons. Senior staff fail to tackle underperformance. Staff are not held accountable for their responsibilities. Deadlines are missed.
- Governors receive limited or no information on the performance of learners and staff. The school development plan identifies some of the right priorities but it is not used to hold key staff to account where actions are not taken. Underperformance is not sufficiently identified and not addressed robustly and swiftly.
- The governing body does not fully understand its roles and responsibilities. There are limited systems in place to effectively manage staff performance.
- Accountabilities and systems are not embedded. They have limited impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Overall, the quality of teaching is insufficiently good, and/or there is concern about quality in a particular class or subject area.
- Strategies to improve teaching and learning are not fully embedded and have limited impact. Standards of achievement and/or progress are unsatisfactory.

Improvement capacity C

(Continued)

- Only some teaching staff have a clear understanding of the characteristics of excellent and good teaching and learning and feedback to learners. There is limited or no in-school moderation to support teachers' and support staff's understanding. There is a poor correlation between teacher assessment and standardised test scores or external examinations.
- There are policies and systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning but they lack clarity of detail and do not clearly set out staff responsibilities. There is limited reporting to governors on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Observation of teaching and learning is limited and is not consistent across the school. Evaluation of practice is very limited. Limited use is made of secondary sources of effective teaching and learning to feedback to staff or to monitor and evaluate individual teacher groups and the whole school.

Improvement capacity D

- School leaders do not understand the range or impact of areas for improvement on their school's poor performance. Underperformance is not dealt with effectively.
- Self-evaluation processes lack rigour. They do not focus enough on outcomes. Areas for improvement are not dealt with.
- There is insufficient and/or ineffective use of reliable data for school management and improvement.
- The performance of learners eligible for FSM, in particular, is not reviewed and analysed and is not used to inform teaching strategies.
- Leaders fail to provide clear direction. Their vision does not focus enough on improving outcomes and, as a result, they have been largely unsuccessful in making and sustaining improvements.
- Leaders and governors do not have enough relevant information and/or fail to use it to respond to national and local priorities. Policies and initiatives are not implemented consistently.
- Governors have too little impact on the direction and work of the school and/or do not challenge it to bring about improvement.
- Roles and responsibilities are unclear and/or not all staff are committed to school improvement priorities. Line management and accountability are blurred.
- Governors receive limited or no information on the performance of learners and staff. The school development plan identifies some of the right priorities but is not used to hold key staff to account where actions are not taken.
- The governing body does not fulfil its statutory responsibilities.
- Accountabilities and systems have little or no impact upon the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching has elements of critical concern, with little good practice evident and/or significant areas/classes where poor practice is evident. Standards of achievement are low and progress is unsatisfactory. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are limited and/or are ineffective.
- Very few teachers have a clear understanding of the characteristics of excellent and good teaching and learning and feedback to learners. There is no in-school moderation to support teachers' and support staff's understanding. There is a very poor or non-existent correlation between teacher assessment and standardised test scores or external examinations.

Improvement capacity D

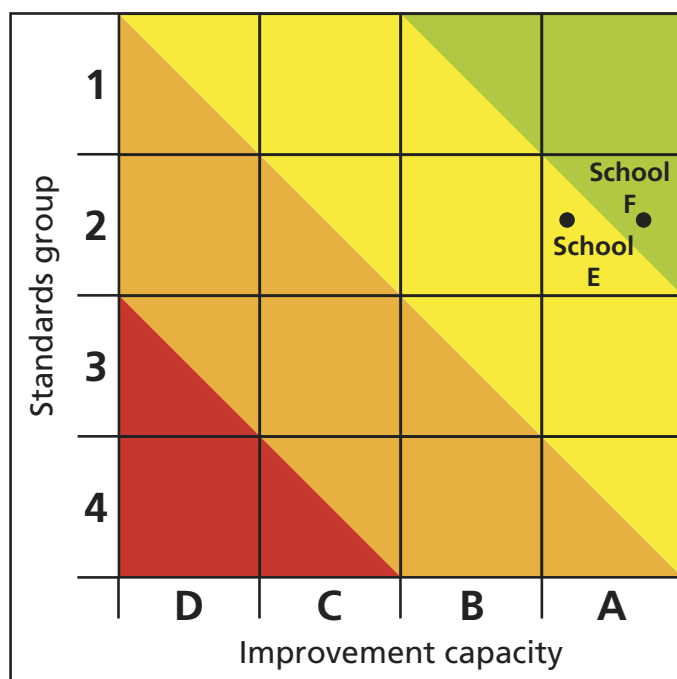
(Continued)

- There are no clear policies and systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum and pedagogy leaders have inadequate guidance on how to fulfil their roles. There is no reporting to governors on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Little or no monitoring or evaluation of teaching and learning takes place. Where it does, professional feedback does not take place effectively and there is no cross reference with secondary sources of effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Annex C: Illustration of how the final categorisation is applied

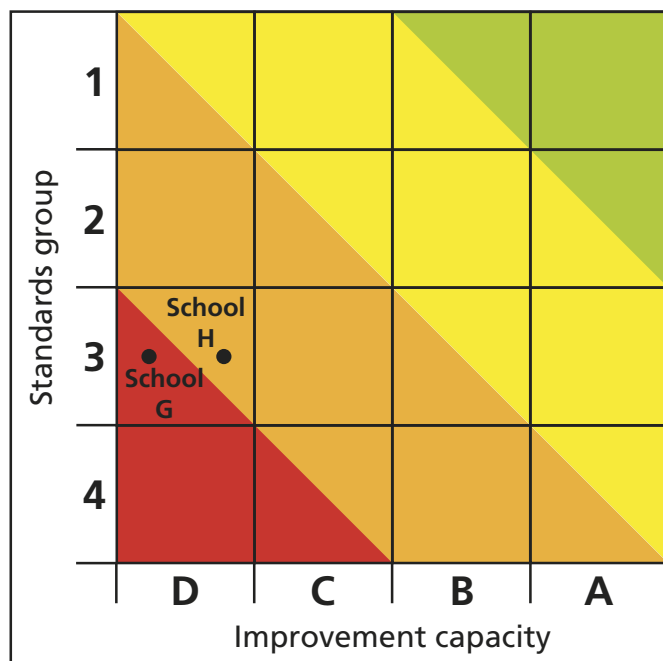
The examples in this section outline a number of scenarios that lead to the colour categorisation of schools at step three, ranging from the green support category for schools needing the least support to the red category for schools needing the most intensive support. These examples highlight the differences that may be seen between two schools with the same outcome for step one (standards group 1–4, with 1 being the highest group and 4 the lowest), and the reasoning behind placing them in different ability to improve categories based on the outcome of step two (improvement capacity A–D, with schools with an improvement capacity of A showing the greatest capacity to improve and those with an improvement capacity of D showing the least capacity to improve).

Example 1



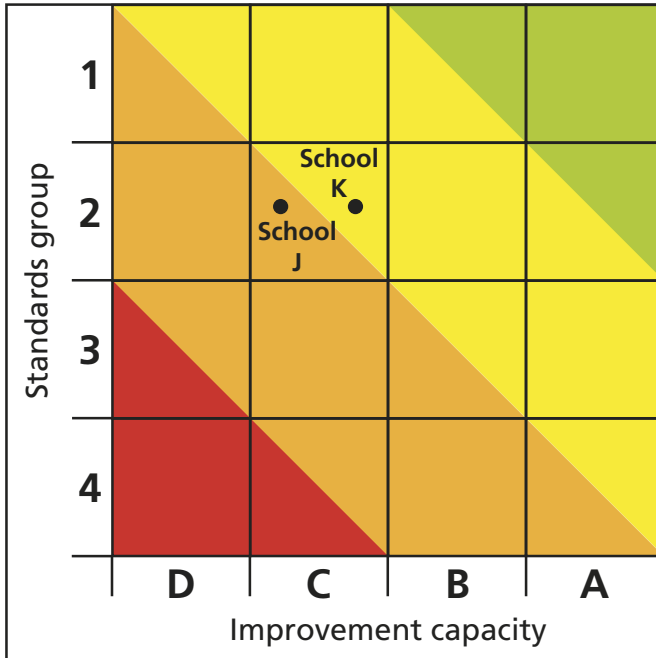
- Schools E and F have had good results for the past three years and have emerged with the same score for step one.
- Both schools have been judged to have excellent aspects of teaching by Estyn recently.
- The headteacher at School F has recently been sharing the impact of their innovative work in literacy development with other schools in Wales. The school is able to demonstrate not only the impact of their work in improving outcomes in their own school but also the impact of their support to bring about improvement in provision in other schools.

Example 2



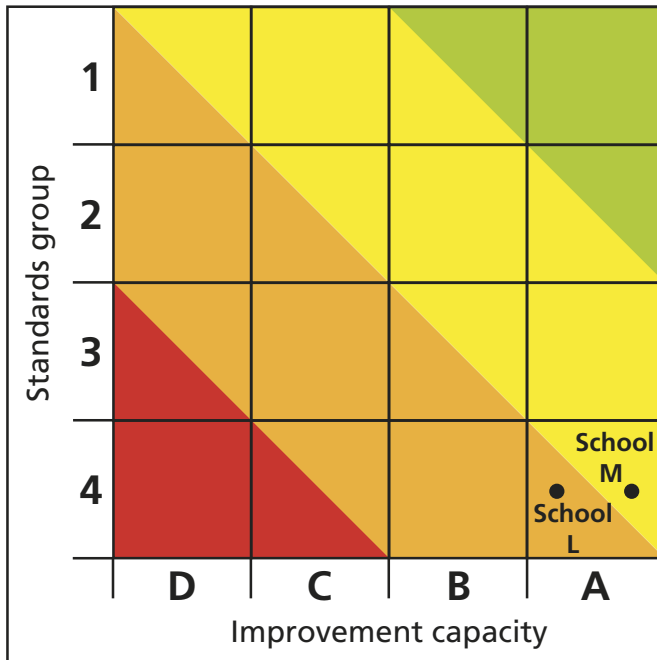
- Schools G and H have had relatively poor results for the past three years and have emerged with the same score for step one.
- In both schools the performance of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) is lower than the national average. As a result, in step two the ability to improve is judged to be the lowest category D.
- School G has a significant budget deficit. Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) funding has been used poorly to supplement the deficit budget and the school is unable to demonstrate the impact of the grant in terms of the improvement in performance of this group of learners.
- School H has a relatively healthy budget position and although the PDG spend is targeted appropriately there has not been a significant impact on standards. However the attendance of eFSM learners has increased significantly.

Example 3



- Schools J and K have had good results for the past three years and have emerged with the same score for step one.
- In both schools the performance of their eFSM learners is lower than the national average. As a result, in step two the ability to improve is judged to be in category C.
- School K had only four learners in its FSM cohort last year, with only one of them achieving the expected level. Further analysis provided by the school indicates that one has a statement and another joined the school at the start of Year 11.
- School J had 20 FSM learners (none with statements) and only five achieved the expected level (on paper both schools had a 25 per cent success rate for eFSM learners).

Example 4



- Schools L and M have had poor results over the past three years and emerged with the same score for step one.
- School M has specialist provision for learners who have significant special educational needs. The provision has been set up to cater for the needs of learners across the local authority.

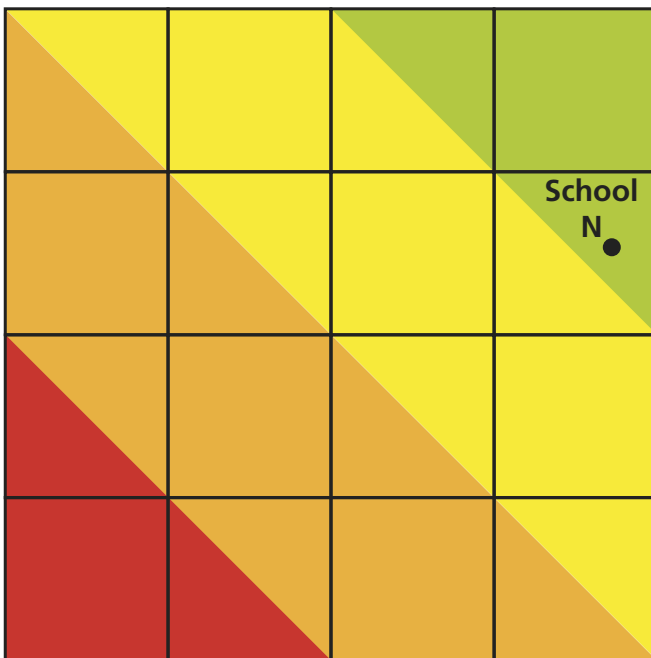
These learners make very good progress during their time at the school but because their needs are significant their overall results do not always match those of other learners in the school.

This means that the school's overall performance does not compare so well with that of other schools (that do not cater for learners with these needs). However, further analysis provided by the school shows that when the results of learners in the mainstream classes only are considered the school's performance compares very well. As a result the school's support category is judged to be yellow.

Exceptions

The outcome of step three, the support category, may not always align with the outcomes of step one, the standards group, and step two, the improvement capacity. However, these are rare exceptions and will be fully supported by evidence. Below is an example of a school that is in standards group 4 and improvement capacity A. The notional support category should be yellow or amber, but the challenge adviser and the school have agreed that the support category is green.

Example 5



- School N has had relatively poor results over the past three years.
- School N has a very high percentage of learners with English as an additional language (EAL), at 70 per cent. There is also a high degree of learner mobility.

Nearly all learners in School N make very good progress from their starting point during their time at the school. However, the overall results achieved by learners joining the school later do not always match those of learners who have been at the school from the start.

This means that School N's overall performance does not compare so well with that of other schools.

- However, School N is able to demonstrate that it has a very good track record in securing improvement over time. The quality of teaching and the impact of leadership on the outcomes achieved by learners are strong. Many aspects of its provision are excellent and the school has a very good capacity to support other schools.
- Given that the school's improvement capacity is judged to be A and there is strong evidence that nearly all learners make very good progress, the most appropriate support category is judged to be green.