National School Categorisation System

Guidance document for schools, local authorities and regional consortia

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Guidance

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Audience   Primary schools; middle schools; secondary schools; special 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 learning and teaching; 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:
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Additional copies   This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at www.gov.wales/educationandskills

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Introduction

The National School Categorisation System was introduced in September 2014. The system which covers both primary schools and secondary schools, brought 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 Both secondary school banding and the commitment to introduce primary school banding have now been superseded by the National School Categorisation System.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.

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

The 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 of its capacity to improve in relation to leadership and learning and teaching

- 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. There will also be a national verification process involving a quality and standards group which will include representatives from the four regional consortia and ADEW. Representatives from the Welsh Government and trade unions will attend in an observer capacity.

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 learning and teaching; and overall support category 2016/2017. 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 group that performs most strongly against the agreed measures. 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 remain unchanged from last year; these 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 made up of 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 – it should be noted, the basis of the calculation remains the same as published in January 2015.

	2014	2015	2016
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 2014–16 = (1 x 50) + (2 x 51) + (3 x 48) = **296**

Achieving FPI/CSI 2014–16 = (1 x 41) + (2 x 42) + (3 x 43) = **254**

Percentage achieving FPI/CSI 2014–16 = (254 ÷ 296) x 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 fixed and is based on the three-year average from the Pupil Level Annual School Census for 2014 to 2016.

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 – it should be noted, the basis of the calculation remains the same as published in previous years.

	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 (using the same quartile boundaries and FSM percentage as the previous year's model), 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 (i.e. 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 higher performing schools will be allocated the lowest scores with 5.5 being the lowest possible (i.e. being in quarter 1 for each measure), and the lower performing schools will be allocated the highest score with 22.0 being the highest score possible (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** – [>7.5, <=13.5]
- **Standards group 3** – [>13.5, <=19.5]
- **Standards group 4** – [>19.5, <=22.0]

The distribution of schools between the categories is expected to vary annually as the model is based on an absolute model. As a result, the model allows all schools the opportunity to move up (and down) between standards groups. We would expect over time to see an increase in the number of schools in standards group 1 and 2.

New and amalgamated schools

For new and amalgamated schools (where pupils have transferred in from other schools), step one data will be published along with step two and step three when two years worth of assessment data is available.

Where two years worth of assessment data is not available, step two and step three will be carried out by the regional consortia using step one to inform the process. In these cases, only step two and step three will be published.

For brand new schools (where pupils have not transferred from another school) with only one year of data, step one will not be calculated.

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

- 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

- 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.

It should be noted that:

• for 2014 and 2015 step one data, the cohort used in calculations was 'pupils aged 15-years-old at the start of the academic year'

• for 2016 step one data, the cohort used in calculations is 'the whole year 11 cohort'.

This change is consistent with the recommendations made by the *Review of qualifications for 14 – 19 year olds in Wales (2012)*.
www.gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/121127reviewofqualificationsen.pdf

and is applied consistently to all key Stage 4 performance indicators for 2016 onwards. We will not be applying this retrospectively to previous years data in order to preserve the robustness of the historical data that has been agreed with schools.

Example 3
Learners achieving the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4

	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**Weighted total (2014–16)**
Learners aged 15/Year 11	100	110	90	
Achieving Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics	50	55	50	
Weights	**1**	**2**	**3**	
Weighted learners	100 x 1 = 100	110 x 2 = 220	90 x 3 = 270	100 + 220 + 270 = 590
Weighted achievement	50 x 1 = 50	55 x 2 = 110	50 x 3 = 150	50 + 110 + 150 = 310

Percentage achieving Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics 2014–16 = (310 ÷ 590) x 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. Historically, 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 poorer than expected they have a negative residual. Further information on the methodology 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 1. 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).

Following discussions with key stakeholders, the weightings for each of the individual indicators (except attendance) has been amended.

	2014 weighting	2015 and 2016 weighting
Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics		
Overall performance during the previous three years	2	1.5
Performance of learners eligible for free schools meals (eFSM learners) during the previous three years	2	1.5
Relative progress (based on overall performance)	2	1.5
Performance set against FSM level of the school	2	3.5
Capped points score including English/Welsh first language and mathematics (new measure)		
Overall performance during the previous three years	2	1.5
eFSM learners' performance during the previous three years	2	1.5
Relative progress (based on overall performance)	2	1.5
Performance set against FSM level of the school	2	3.5
5+ A*–A or equivalent (new measure)		
Overall performance during the previous three years	1	0.75
eFSM learners' performance during the previous three years	1	0.75
Relative progress (based on overall performance)	1	0.75
Performance set against FSM level of the school	1	1.75

The overall total weight in each group of indicators remains the same however the weighting is re-distributed to allow an increased weighting to the eFSM residual element and lower weightings to the other indicators. We have listened to feedback from schools and have worked with regional consortia representatives to ensure that contextual information is more fully considered.

Attendance continues to have a weighting of 0.5.

How the standards group boundaries are set

The higher performing schools will be allocated the lowest scores with 21.0 being the lowest possible (i.e. being in quarter 1 for each measure), and the lower performing schools will be allocated the highest score with 84.0 being the highest score possible (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 ÷ 4 = **15.75**). The standards groups boundaries are then calculated as follows:

- **Standards group 1** – [>=21.0, <=36.75]
- **Standards group 2** – [>36.75, <=52.5]
- **Standards group 3** – [>52.5, <=68.25]
- **Standards group 4** – [>68.25, <=84.0].

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

New and amalgamated schools

For new and amalgamated schools (where pupils have transferred in from other schools) , step one data will be published along with step two and step three when two years worth of assessment data is available.

Where two years worth of assessment data is not available, step two and step three will be carried out by the regional consortia using step one to inform the process. In these cases, only step two and step three will be published.

For brand new schools (where pupils have not transferred from another school) with only one year of data, step one will not be calculated.

Performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in secondary schools

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. Socio-economic disadvantage should not be used as an excuse for poor performance.

In 2014, this analysis was performed between steps two and three to determine the overall support category. For 2015 and for this year (2016) it will be a judgment on the standards at the school and will be made at the end of step one, the standards group.

In order to continue to drive improvement for all learners, the Welsh Government has set a minimum standard for eFSM learners of 30% in 2015, 32% in 2016 and 34% in 2017. This minimum standard is a three-year weighted average at school level. In secondary schools, where performance of eFSM learners is below the agreed minimum standard, the judgement in relation to the school's standards group will not be assessed as being better than a 3, which means that the school can not be categorised as a green school. i.e. additional support is required to increase the achievement of eFSM pupils.

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

Whilst step one is data driven and will have generated a standards group for each school (1–4), step two consists of a judgement (A–D) based on the school's capacity to self-improve.

Schools where the judgement is A show the greatest capacity to improve along with the ability to support other schools. Those where the judgement is D require the most support.

The process of coming to a judgement on the school's capacity to bring about improvement begins with the school's self-evaluation. This is discussed 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 at step three. The national system is intended to strengthen schools' capacity to bring about their own improvement and to contribute to system-wide change.

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 judgment on a school's capacity to improve. The framework employs criteria to inform judgments about leadership and the quality of learning and teaching, has regard for the Estyn inspection framework and is used to inform headteachers' performance management. The framework for step two is the same for both primary and secondary schools. Regional consortia may choose to add relevant information, for example from that provided by the local authority, to take proper account of any relevant risk factors. However, the key drivers will be the use of the leadership and learning and teaching criteria.

In coming to a judgement about the school's capacity to self-improve, school leaders and challenge advisers must consider the extent to which a school has:

- the capacity and capability to lead and bring about improvement and implement plans

- need for 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 and evaluate areas for improvement and take effective action to remedy them

- learning and teaching of high quality

- learning and teaching strategies which have a positive impact on improving standards

- effective systems for tracking learners' progress and for targeting support effectively.

Leadership and learning and teaching

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

The framework and criteria relating to leadership and the quality of learning and teaching 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 and effectively. 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 including careful consideration of ALN and eFSM learners.

Step three: Overall support category

Overview

The outcomes of step one and step two will be combined to determine the school's support category (step three of the process). The final categorisation will be based on a colour coding system, this will be discussed with the school and agreed 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). Each school will receive a tailored programme of support, challenge and intervention based on this category.

The support category along with the outcomes for step one and step two will be published annually on the My local School website (http//mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk)

The level of support available for each category is as follows.

Green support category
A school in this category will receive **up to** 4 days of support.

Yellow support category
A school in this category will receive **up to** 10 days of support.

Amber support category
A school in this category will receive **up to** 15 days of support.

Red support category
A school in this category will receive **up to** 25 days of support.

Each challenge adviser will determine the nature of the bespoke support package to be provided to each school according to need which may result in the allocation of additional support days. This additional support could be delivered by a range of providers.

Annex A: Stages in the 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

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.

Stage 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**

Stage 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**

Stage 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**

Stage 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

Stage 1a

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

		(a)	(b) = (a) ÷ 20
Qualification	Grade	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

Stage 1b

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

		(b)	(c)	(d) = (c) ÷ (b)
Qualification	**Grade**	**GCSE equivalence**	**Total points**	**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

Stage 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.

		(b)	(c)	(d)	(e) = (d) ÷ 52
Qualification	**Grade**	**GCSE equivalence**	**Total points**	**GCSE points equivalence**	**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

Stage 1d

Round the result of stage 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.

	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f) = (e) rounded down to nearest whole number
Qualification	Grade	GCSE equivalence	Total points	GCSE points equivalence	GCSE A*–A points equivalence	
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

Stage 1e

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

	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g) = (f) x (b)
Qualification	Grade	GCSE equivalence	Total points	GCSE points equivalence	GCSE A*–A points equivalence		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.

Stage 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.

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

Stage 2b

The result of stage 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.

			(a)	(b) = (a) ÷ 52	(c)
Qualification	Grade	Level 2 threshold contribution	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 stages have been completed, we sum the 5+ A*–A or equivalent contribution from each stage. If the result of this calculation is 5 or more, then the learner will have achieved 5+ A*–A or equivalent. In our example, Stage 1 = 4, Stage 2 = 1 and Stage 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 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Year	School A	School B
2013	50	25
2014	55	22
2015	52	29
2016	60	30

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

Year	School A	School B
2013–2014	55 − 50 = 5	22 − 25 = -3
2014–2015	52 − 55 = -3	29 − 22 = 7
2015–2016	60 − 52 = 8	30 − 29 = 1

Stage 2: Calculate an adjustment factor

The progress made year-on-year in stage 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.

$X_{2016} \div 100$ (where 2016 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.

$(100 - X_{2016}) \div 100$

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 stage 1 gives the following.

Year	School A			School B		
	Raw performance in last year	Progress	Adjustment	Raw performance in last year	Progress	Adjustment
2013–2014	55	5	= (55 ÷ 100) = 0.55	22	-3	= (100 – 22) ÷ 100 = 0.78
2014–2015	52	-3	= (100 – 52) ÷ 100 = 0.48	29	7	= 29 ÷ 100 = 0.29
2015–2016	60	8	= (60 ÷ 100) = 0.6	30	1	= 30 ÷ 100 = 0.3

Stage 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 2013 to 2016.

Year	School A			School B		
	Progress	Adjustment	Score	Progress	Adjustment	Score
2013–2014	5	0.55	2.75	-3	0.78	-2.34
2014–2015	-3	0.48	-1.44	7	0.29	2.03
2015–2016	8	0.6	4.8	1	0.3	0.3
Total			**6.11**			**-0.01**

Performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in secondary schools

As in the previous year, 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. Socio-economic disadvantage should not be used as an excuse for poor performance.

The performance of eFSM learners will be a judgement on the standards at the school and will be made at the end of step one, the standards group. A minimum standard for eFSM learners of 30% in 2015, 32% in 2016 and 34% in 2017 is applied after all other performance criteria within step one have been calculated.

Annex B: Criteria concerning leadership and learning and teaching to support the judgement about improvement capacity

Improvement capacity A

- Leaders and staff have developed a shared vision and there is a very clear strategy that has improved outcomes for nearly all learners.

- Leaders demonstrate a very strong capacity to plan and implement change and sustain improvement successfully in nearly all respects. They engage all staff and other partners very effectively in the change process.

- Self-evaluation is accurate, robust, systematic and well established. Self-evaluation is highly effective in contributing to improving standards, learning and teaching.

- Leaders and staff are highly effective in their analysis and use of the available performance data and evidence about the quality of learning and teaching and pupils' work to identify strengths and set improvement priorities.

- Leaders and staff have a relentless focus on raising standards. Targets reflect high expectations for the future achievement of all pupils and these are met consistently.

- The school has a very good track record in raising the achievement of nearly all pupils, including vulnerable learners over at least a three-year period.

- Improvement planning at all levels is highly effective in addressing the areas in need of most improvement. Action, including the use of resources, has led to sustained improvement in outcomes in key indicators for nearly all pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and other vulnerable groups.

- The school has a very strong track record in implementing successfully national and local priorities to improve standards and the quality of learning and teaching.

- Leaders and staff work very successfully with schools and other partners to enhance significantly their own and others' capacity to bring about improvement.

- Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are highly effective in supporting and challenging the school's performance.

- Leaders and staff have well defined roles and responsibilities and exhibit high professional standards.

- The school's leaders and governors give a high priority to developing the workforce: performance management and professional development are highly successful in improving pupils' progress, classroom practice and dealing with underperformance.

- The quality of teaching across the school and the impact on nearly all pupils' learning and progress is consistently good and often excellent.

- All staff have a shared understanding of the characteristics of excellent and good teaching and demonstrate these in classroom practice.

- Processes to lead, identify, validate and share effective practice achieve continuous improvement in the quality of learning and teaching across the school as a whole.

- Processes to track pupils' progress, identify needs and provide support are robust and effective in nearly all cases.

- Teacher assessment is consistent and accurate.

Improvement capacity B

- Leaders and staff have a shared vision and a clear strategy that has improved outcomes for most learners.

- Leaders plan and implement change and sustain improvement successfully in most respects. They enable staff and other partners to participate well in the change process.

- Self-evaluation is accurate, regular and thorough in most areas. Self-evaluation makes a strong contribution to improving standards and to learning and teaching.

- Most leaders and staff analyse and use performance data, evidence about the quality of learning and teaching pupils' work effectively to identify strengths and improvement priorities.

- Leaders and staff have a clear emphasis on raising standards. Through its targets the school has high expectations for the future achievement of its pupils.

- The school has a good track record in raising the achievement of most pupils, including vulnerable learners, over at least a three-year period.

- Leaders and staff are clear about the priorities that need to be addressed in the school's improvement plan. Action, and the use of resources, are effective in securing improvement in key indicators for most pupils, including for pupils eligible for free school meals and other vulnerable groups.

- The school gives good attention to national and local priorities and in general implements these effectively to improve standards and the quality of learning and teaching.

- Leaders and staff take advantage of opportunities to work with schools and other partners. Collaboration is developing well and makes an important contribution to capacity building and improvement.

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their work to support and challenge the school's performance is strong.

- The roles and responsibilities of leaders and staff are defined and communicated clearly and professional standards are met successfully in the main.

- The school's leaders and governors make good provision for developing the workforce. Performance management and professional development are largely successful in improving pupils' progress, classroom practice and in dealing with underperformance.

- Most of the teaching and its impact on most pupils' learning and progress is consistently good.

- Most staff have a shared understanding of the characteristics of excellent and good teaching and demonstrate these in classroom practice.

- Strategies to identify and share effective practice are generally successful in improving learning and teaching across the school as a whole.

- Processes to track pupils' progress, identify needs and provide support are robust and effective in most cases.

- Teacher assessment is consistent and accurate in the main.

Improvement capacity C

- The school's leaders have established a vision and strategic objectives. However, there are inconsistencies in how these are shared and understood and their impact on the outcomes learners achieve.

- Leaders manage change successfully in some areas. In other areas change is not embedded successfully and so does not lead to sustained improvement. The change process does not always engage staff and other partners sufficiently.

- Self-evaluation is effective in some areas but not in others. The contribution of self-evaluation to improving standards, learning and teaching is inconsistent.

- The analysis and use of performance data and evidence about the quality of learning and teaching and pupils' work by leaders and staff is not always used well enough to inform strengths and improvement priorities.

- Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the need to improve outcomes but targets and expectations for pupils' future achievement are not always challenging enough.

- The school's track record in raising pupils' achievement, including that of vulnerable learners, is inconsistent over a three-year period.

- Leaders and staff make suitable links between the outcomes of self-evaluation and improvement priorities in a few areas. Planning and the use of resources have impact in some areas but not in others, such as the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and other vulnerable groups.

- The school's leaders take account of national and local priorities but planning does not always have sufficient impact on standards and learning and teaching.

- Leaders and staff participate in school improvement activity with schools and other partners but the impact of collaboration on standards and provision is inconsistent.

- Governors support the school. They receive relevant information but require support to be fully effective in how they challenge the school to make improvements.

- The roles and responsibilities of leaders and staff are defined clearly for the most part but there are inconsistencies in the extent to which professional standards are met and accountability exercised in practice.

- The school's leaders and governors do not always make a strong enough link between performance management, professional development and achievement of the school's priorities. The impact on improving pupils' progress, classroom practice and dealing with underperformance varies.

- Systems to lead and improve learning and teaching are not fully developed. Variations in the quality of teaching limit pupils' learning and progress in a few areas.

Improvement capacity C

(Continued)

- The characteristics of good and excellent teaching are well defined but applied inconsistently in classroom practice.

- The identification and sharing of effective practice is not yet systematic enough and its impact on improving learning and teaching across the school as a whole is inconsistent.

- Processes to track pupils' progress and identify needs lack in rigour in some areas and support does not always have sufficient impact on the progress pupils make.

- There are some inconsistencies in the reliability and accuracy of teacher assessment.

Improvement capacity D

- Work to establish an agreed vision is underdeveloped. As a result there is a lack of clarity in the school's strategic direction and in how this is understood, and insufficient impact on improving learners' outcomes.

- Leaders do not demonstrate sufficient capacity to plan and implement change successfully. Management of the change process does not engage staff and other stakeholders effectively.

- Self-evaluation lacks rigour and breadth. It makes a limited contribution to improving standards and learning and teaching.

- There are wide variations in how leaders and staff analyse and use performance data and evidence about the quality of learning and teaching and pupils' work and limited impact on securing improvement.

- There is an acknowledgement of the need to improve outcomes but targets and expectations for pupils' future achievement are too low. Leaders are not always open to challenge or to taking the action required as a result.

- The school does not have a strong track record in raising pupils' achievement including that of vulnerable learners over a three-year period.

- Planning lacks detail and does not address clearly enough the specific aspects that require improvement. The pace of improvement is often too slow. Implementation, including the use of resources, has insufficient impact on improving pupils' outcomes in key areas, such as on the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and other vulnerable groups. There is an over-reliance on external support.

- Although account is taken of national and local priorities planning to improve standards, learning and teaching is of too variable a quality and has limited impact.

- Leaders and staff have limited involvement in worthwhile collaborative activity with schools and other partners and the capacity to benefit from partnership working is underdeveloped.

- Whilst governors are supportive of the school as a body they do not have sufficient capacity to challenge the school to make the improvements necessary.

- The requirements of roles and responsibilities are not defined clearly enough. The school's leaders do not hold staff to account effectively and there are wide inconsistencies in the extent to which professional standards are met and accountability fulfilled.

- Leaders and governors' processes for performance management and professional development have limited impact on improving pupils' progress, classroom practice and in dealing with underperformance.

- Work to lead and improve learning and teaching is not planned and implemented effectively. There are significant variations in the quality of teaching that limit pupils' learning and progress in key areas.

Improvement capacity D
(Continued)

- There is little shared understanding of the characteristics of excellent and good teaching which is reflected in classroom practice.

- Good practice is not identified effectively or used to improve teaching across the school as a whole.

- Processes to track pupils' progress and identify needs is of variable quality and support has limited impact on the progress pupils make.

- There are significant inconsistencies in the reliability and accuracy of teacher assessment.

# 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
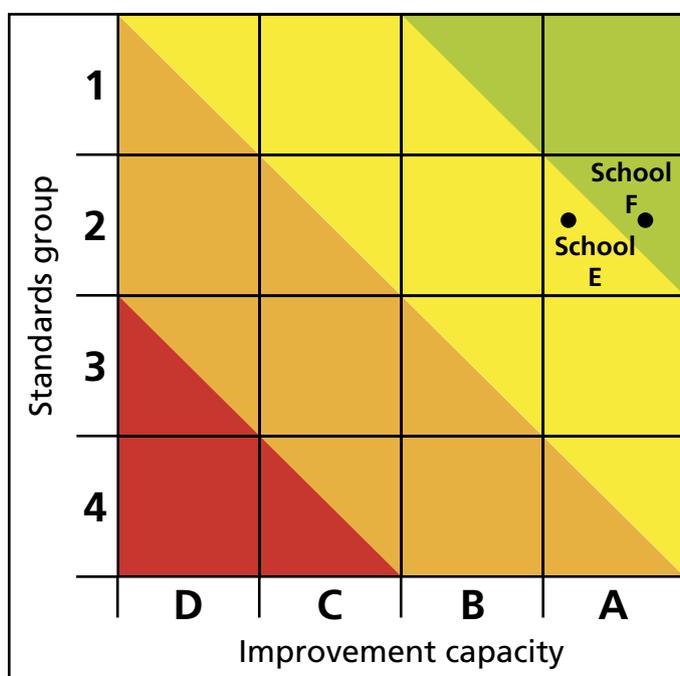
- Schools E and F are both in standards group 2.

- 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
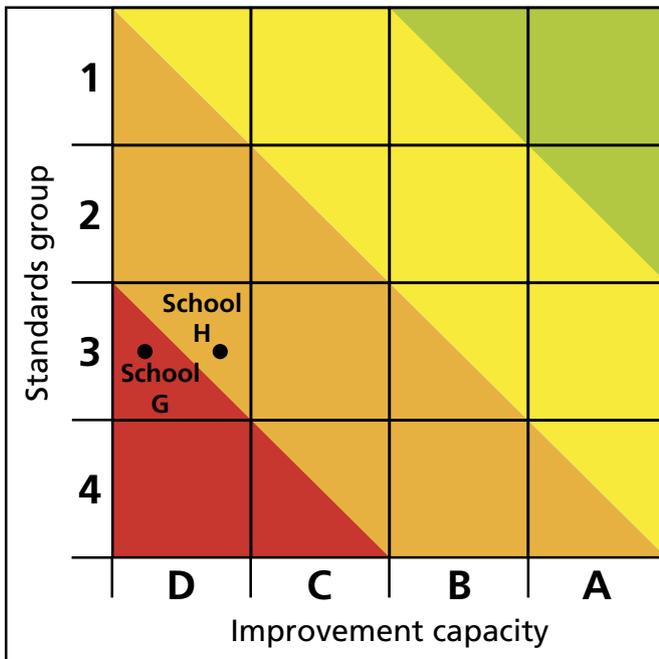
- Schools G and H are both in standards group 3.

- In both schools the performance of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) is lower than the agreed target.

- 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
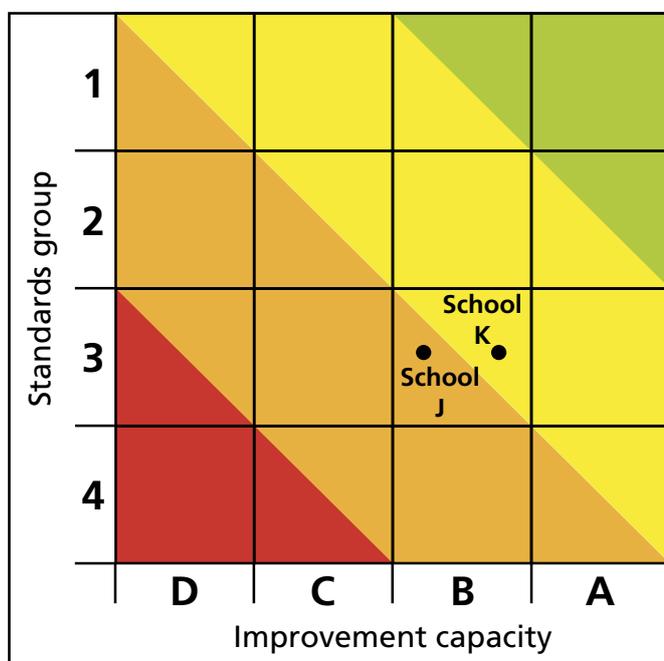
- Schools J and K are both in standards group 3.

- In both schools the performance of their eFSM learners is lower than the national target. As a result, in step one they are judged to be in standards group 3.

- 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
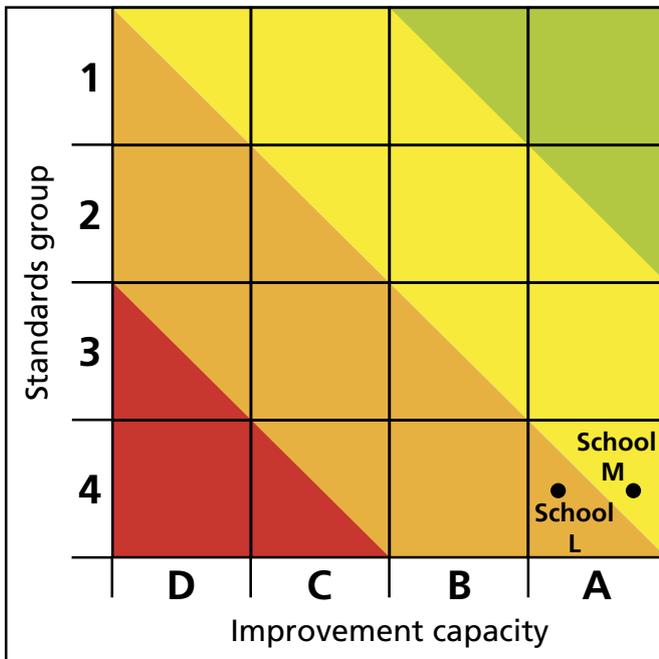
- Schools L and M are both in standards group 4.

- 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.