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

2017-2018

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Chief inspector of Education and Training in Wales
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Contents

Guide to the report

This year's report is the 26th consecutive annual report published in Wales since the Education (Schools) Act 1992 required its production.

The report consists of:

- The Chief Inspector's foreword

- Individual sector reports about inspection findings in 2017-2018

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

Annex 2 contains links to the documents referenced in the report.

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Foreword

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Meilyr Rowlands

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

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Foreword

Education and training is changing rapidly in Wales, with widespread reforms underway across schools and the post-16 sectors. This is my fourth annual report and the first based on our new inspection arrangements. Many of the trends noted in previous annual reports remain. The shift in culture towards a more collaborative and self-improving system continues apace. There is much we should be proud of and generally good or better education is provided by non-maintained nurseries, maintained special schools and further education colleges. Tackling underperformance and reducing variability remain key challenges in other education and training sectors, with this year's inspections being broadly similar in outcome to those of previous years. Improvements in fundamentals such as attendance and basic literacy over recent years have paved the way for overall improvements in primary schools this year. Standards are now good or better in eight-in-ten primary schools, up from seven-in-ten last year. Standards remain good or better in about a half of secondary schools, the same as last year.

The best schools, having secured the fundamentals of a good education, prioritise improving the learning experience of pupils. These schools are becoming more confident at trying out new approaches to the way they teach and to the curriculum they offer. They are increasingly providing exciting opportunities for pupils to engage in learning that broadens their horizons and stimulates their interest and enthusiasm. These more creative learning activities can blur the traditional divide between a formal curriculum and extra-curricular activity, and are designed to appeal to all pupils' interests and abilities. Pupils have more opportunities to choose what and how they learn. These rich, 'real-life' activities can involve the school working with specialists from the world of business, sport, or the arts, or with parents and members of the local community. The work is carefully structured to build on and improve pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and digital competence. For example, younger pupils at one primary school worked with a professional artist to produce beautifully illustrated storybooks. Increased pupil engagement results in better attitudes to school and to learning. Learners take on more responsibility, show greater pride and are keen to refine their work. Most of all, these pupils become confident, independent thinkers who are well-prepared and eager for future learning.

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The leaders in these schools, in collaboration with staff, parents and learners, establish a compelling vision of what they want to achieve as a community. They focus on getting the school ethos and culture right and invest wisely in professional learning and development. They understand that improving the curriculum and the learning experiences of pupils goes hand-in-hand with improving the quality of teaching. They ensure that all their staff know how to teach the basics and there is an agreed teaching and learning strategy that all adhere to and understand. Leaders in these schools work collaboratively to encourage new ways of working and as a result learners and staff enjoy their work and achieve high standards. They protect staff from unnecessary distractions, trust them to get on with the basics of their work, and filter out time-consuming bureaucracy. The new professional standards, the 12 pedagogical principles in Successful Futures, and the ongoing development of the new curriculum, have all helped to legitimise this growing focus on improving teaching and the learning experiences of pupils.

This year, Estyn published several reports that highlight interesting practice and establish a benchmark against which we can evaluate progress when the new curriculum is introduced. We published a report on **Improving teaching** that outlined strategic approaches that schools have taken to improve the quality of teaching and to build teaching capacity for the future. **Preparing for the Digital Competency Framework** identifies four stages of successful implementation. We also published thematic studies on specific areas of learning: **Science at key stages 3 and key stage 4, Good practice in the humanities, Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools, and Religious education at key stage 2 and key stage 3**. A common theme in these reports is the need for better professional learning for specialist teachers in these areas of learning. A report on **Curriculum innovation in primary schools** explains what is working well and the barriers to change. Self-evaluation questions from the report are intended to help schools gauge their progress with curriculum reform and are available as a separate wall-chart from our **website** (see overleaf). These self-evaluation questions are a good starting point for primary and secondary schools that are unsure about where to start with preparing for the new curriculum.

Previous annual reports have explored how the better secondary school and college leaders realise that providing more challenging and stimulating activities for learners is the best way to develop their independence and their critical thinking skills. These are the skills needed for further study and employment, and for achieving good examination results. These leaders do not allow an over-emphasis on examination technique to distort the quality of learning experienced by their learners across the school or college. This year, we published a report on **New qualifications** that considers the quality of teaching and assessment, planning, staff development and leadership in introducing the new GCSE specifications in English language, Welsh language, mathematics, mathematics-numeracy and the Welsh Baccalaureate in schools and colleges. Overall, we found that schools and colleges have responded positively to changes in GCSE English, Welsh and mathematics, but provision for the Welsh Baccalaureate is more variable.

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The current ambitious national programme of education reform affects all aspects of education and all sectors. We are in the middle of this change, with a new curriculum for 3 to 16-year-olds being rolled out from 2022 onwards. It will take time for the impact of these reforms to take effect. In the meantime, there is an immediate need to improve providers that are causing concern. For example, 5% of primary schools and 15% of secondary schools were identified as needing significant improvement or special measures this year (6% and 18% respectively over the 2010-2017 inspection cycle). Despite various initiatives, including banding and categorisation, it remains the case that these schools are not identified early enough and not enough is done to support them to develop sustainable strategies for improvement. Last year, Estyn trialled an 'improvement conference' for a school causing concern designed to ensure that all stakeholders that should be supporting the school work together and agree on how best to deploy and co-ordinate their support. It is good to understand that the Welsh Government has established a working group to tackle this important issue.

During this period of systemic change, it is essential that we safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable learners, and several of our reports this year have evaluated provision for disadvantaged groups. We surveyed providers to find out how they are preparing for change as a result of the ALN reform bill and our findings are published in **Readiness for ALN reforms**. We also published reports on the **Effective use of managed moves by local authorities and schools, The impact of the Learning and Skills Measure on vulnerable learners, The quality of education and training for young people engaged with youth offending teams** and on **Youth support services in Wales**. A common theme is the lack of continuity of provision or effective transfer of information when learners move between institutions and agencies. Another theme is that the schools that tackle poverty most effectively work hard at establishing closer relationships with parents and with the local community, although systematic support for them to do this is limited.

For these reforms really to impact on the ambition set out in the Welsh Government's national strategy **Prosperity for All** the opportunities for post-16 education and training need to build progressively on those in school and be linked to future employment and skills needs. A common theme in the reports we published on **Higher Apprenticeships** and on the quality of **A levels in sixth forms and further education colleges** was the need to improve impartial advice and guidance. This year also saw the publication of professional standards for further education and work-based learning practitioners. Providers are starting to use these standards to support professional learning. The best providers prioritise improving teaching and training and recognise the key role that professional learning has in improving outcomes and experiences for learners.

We published all our inspection judgements for the 2017-2018 academic year as official statistics in October 2018. Our interactive data website, **data.estyn.gov.wales**, allows readers to explore all these judgements. This Annual Report provides a full commentary on that data and reports briefly on each sector we inspect. In line with the suggestion made in **A Learning Inspectorate**, the report is shorter than usual, with the intention to produce a more detailed Annual Report next year. For further information on any aspect of Estyn's work, please visit **estyn.gov.wales**.

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Journey towards Curriculum for Wales

Evaluating your current curriculum

- To what extent do you promote the four purposes in your current curriculum arrangements?

- How do you provide a wide range of enrichment experiences for pupils and recognise their achievements?

- How do you ensure that pupils build well on what they have learnt as they go through the school or between schools?

- Are assessment arrangements appropriate and how well do they help pupils improve their own work?

- How well do you evaluate the effectiveness of your strategic partnerships and community involvement in the curriculum?

- To what extent are you ready to embrace change and engage with other schools and partners to develop your curriculum?

- How well do you use staff knowledge, skills and understanding when planning for improvement?

Realising Change

- What approaches or curriculum changes have been adopted and how effective have they been to date?

- How well do you support and enable changes to the curriculum?

- How well do you recognise main barriers to change and how do you address and overcome them?

- How well do staff and partners (for example pupils, parents and governors) support the realisation of change?

Evaluating change

- How well do you evaluate change to consider what is working well and what isn't, and why?

- How effectively do you monitor, review and adapt change in Stage 3? Do you involve all stakeholders?

- How well do you evaluate the impact of change in order to identify what needs to happen next and plan for further improvement?

- How well do you know which aspects require strengthening or more piloting before implementing them fully?

- How effective are your arrangements for systematic feedback and how well do you use your evaluation of all aspects of curriculum development from a range of perspectives, to plan future activities and change?

- How well do you consider the impact of different pedagogy to raise standards of teaching?

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Planning and preparing for change
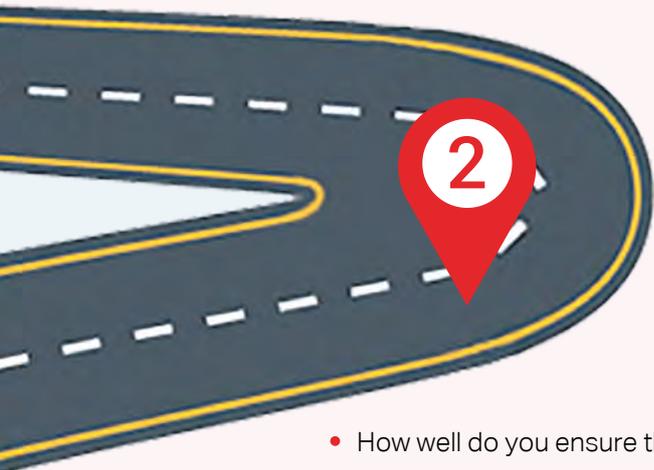
- Do leaders have a clear vision for what to change and why?

- Have leaders established the right culture and conditions for change? How do you know?

- Have leaders developed a strong professional learning culture that focuses on developing effective pedagogy?

- How well do staff use first-hand evidence to inform curriculum development?

- Do you factor sufficient time to raise awareness of curriculum change?

- Do you provide sufficient opportunities for staff to debate research findings in preparation for change?

- How well do you ensure that you will have the required resources in place to support any proposed curriculum change?

- How well do you use your staff's existing creativity and expertise to enable others to develop their imagination in relation to the curriculum?

- To what extent do you have a culture that supports working with other schools and partners?

- How do you ensure that staff and other stakeholders (for example parents and governors) know where to find the latest curriculum information so that they are all involved in preparing for change?

- To what extent have you received support from partners or pioneer schools to implement change?

- To what extent do staff gain skills and understanding to develop and implement a new curriculum?

- How well do you prioritise professional learning and protect time for staff to engage with appropriate activities?

- How well do you utilise skills, knowledge and understanding of all staff to plan for improvement and change?

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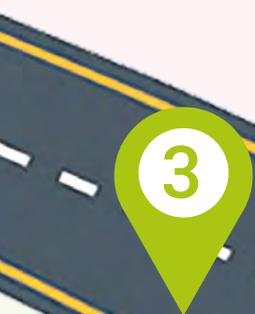
Foreword

Reports referred to in the foreword and links to the full reports

Estyn thematic reports

Improving teaching

Preparing for the digital competence framework

Science at key stages 3 and key stage 4

Good practice in the humanities

Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 in Welsh medium or bilingual schools

Religious education at key stage 2 and key stage 3

Curriculum innovation in primary schools

New qualifications

Readiness for additional learning needs reforms

Effective use of managed moves by local authorities and schools

The impact of the Learning and Skills Measure on vulnerable learners

The quality of education and training for young people engaged with youth offending teams

Youth support services in Wales

Higher apprenticeships in work-based learning

A Levels in sixth forms and further education colleges

A Learning Inspectorate: Independent review of Estyn, Graham Donaldson

Prosperity For All: The National Strategy, Welsh Government

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Foreword

In 2017-2018, we recognised the excellence of those providers that achieved 'excellent' in the majority of their inspection judgements and the local government education service that was judged 'excellent' for its leadership and management.

Cydnabod
Rhagoriaeth
Recognising
Excellence

Non-maintained nurseries	Meithrinfa Seren Fach Cylch Meithrin Eglwys Newydd Cylch Meithrin Cefneithin Gorslas Belle Vue Day Nursery
Primary schools	Ysgol Plascrug Cadoxton Community Primary Ysgol-Y-Wern Ysgol Gwenffrwd Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel Ysgol Llanfairpwllgwyngyll Ysgol Beca Ysgol Cefn Coch Ysgol Bro Gwydir Ysgol Gymuned Rhosybol Glan Usk Primary School Craigfelen Primary School Rhydypenau Primary School Ysgol Heulfan Pembrey C.P. School Cwmrhydyceirw Primary School Ysgol Yr Esgob Gaer Primary School
Secondary schools	Bishopston Comprehensive School The Bishop of Llandaff C.I.W. High School Olchfa School
Independent schools	St John's College Christ College Westbourne School
Special schools	Ysgol Y Gogarth
Local government education services	Denbighshire County Council

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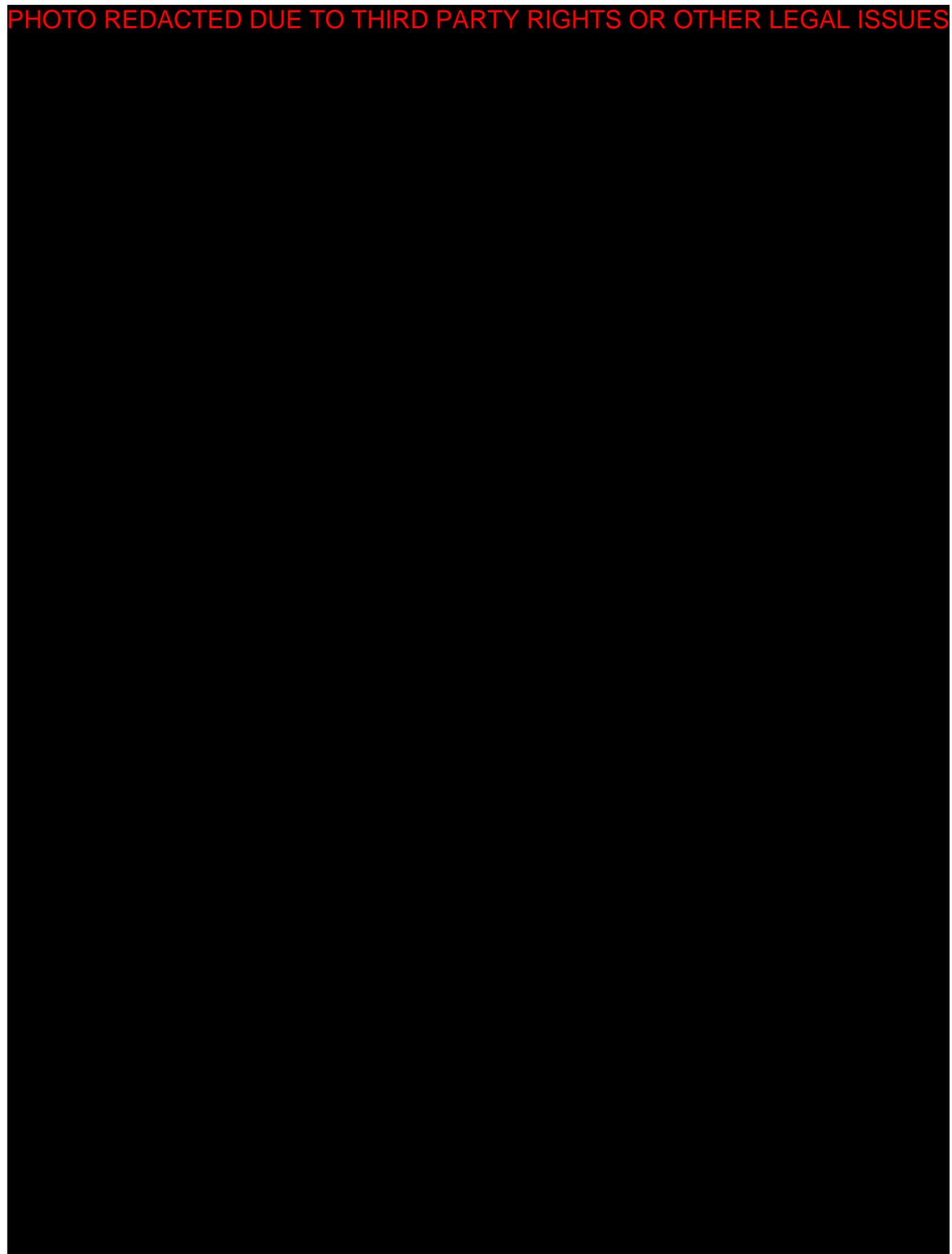
Sector report
Non-school settings for children under five

Nearly all local authorities fund part-time education for three-year-olds, and occasionally for four-year-olds, in settings as well as in schools. Although local authorities do not maintain these settings, they are responsible for ensuring that they provide foundation phase education of good quality. This includes providing leaders and practitioners with advice and support. Settings that provide early education include day care providers and playgroups. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspects the quality of care at these settings and Estyn inspects the education. Estyn and CIW will inspect non-school settings jointly from January 2019 onwards.

The number of settings offering part-time education continues to reduce. This year there were 593 providers of part-time education for three or four-year-olds, a fall from 613 last year and from 737 in 2010. This year we inspected 90 settings. Around a third are small settings with fewer than six three-year-old children. In these small settings, inspectors report on provision and leadership only, to avoid identifying individual children. The findings from all inspections have informed this report.

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Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Outcomes

Standards

Standards are good or better in nine-in-ten settings. This is slightly higher than the percentage identified last year.

In the very few settings where standards are excellent, most children make outstanding progress. They develop their early literacy, numeracy, physical and thinking skills exceptionally well and use these meaningfully in a range of contexts. For example, they work out how to transfer water from one trough to another, consider different ways of stacking blocks on top of each other to make tall 'beanstalks', and work out who will be chosen as 'helpwr y dydd' from the clues provided. In these settings, children develop their speaking skills to an extremely high standard, often from a low starting point, and use a comprehensive range of adjectives intelligently, for example to discuss the size and shape of favourite farm animals.

In settings where standards are good, most children progress well from their varying starting points. In particular, they develop their literacy, numeracy, physical and personal and social skills successfully. Most children communicate well with each other and with adults, extend their vocabulary, and talk confidently about their experiences. For example, they describe the wildlife they see on a walk in the community and explain to others how to take care near the road. They follow instructions competently, such as when washing cups after snack time. In Welsh-medium settings where most children are learning Welsh as an additional language, many make good progress in developing their Welsh speaking skills from their various starting points, and a few make very strong progress. They use simple patterns, phrases and vocabulary effectively and with increasing confidence. Most children in Welsh and English-medium settings develop their early reading skills well. They enjoy hearing stories and looking at books and many recognise at least the initial letters of their names on their pegs and snack mats. Most children use a range of tools to make marks confidently. Many know that writing has a purpose and a few children are beginning to form recognisable letters, for example when they write shopping lists in the home corner.

In English-medium settings, children routinely use simple Welsh words and phrases to count how many children are present, name colours, describe the weather and ask for 'dŵr' or 'llaeth' at snack time. In a few settings, they are beginning to use Welsh naturally during the sessions. For example, they count the candles on a birthday cake in Welsh or ask for 'tost' in the role-play area. However, in three-in-ten of these settings, children's use of Welsh outside formal group time is limited.

Most children count accurately to at least five in relevant contexts, and more able children count to at least ten in English and Welsh. Many children are beginning to recognise numbers appropriately, for example when they make 'telephone calls' in the home corner using a simple directory. They explore simple two and three-dimensional shapes in their play and sort and match objects increasingly skilfully, for example to separate autumn leaves by size and colour. Most children begin to consider weights and measures and to compare shapes and sizes effectively, including when talking about whether their foot size is 'bigger' or 'smaller' than a footprint. They begin to understand capacity successfully through activities such as filling and emptying different sized containers in the sand and water trays.

Figure 1:
Percentage of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

2%   90%   8%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate   ● Unsatisfactory

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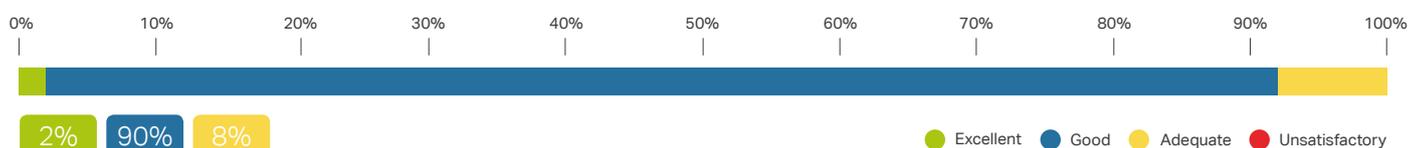
Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

There has been an improvement in children's use of simple information and communication technology (ICT). For example, nearly all children understand the purpose of ICT devices such as mobile phones and use these appropriately in their role-play. In many settings, children use devices such as digital cameras and CD players regularly. However, in two-in-ten settings, their ability to use ICT resources independently is weak.

Standards are adequate in almost one-in-ten settings. In these settings, children's progress is slower. In particular, they do not develop their numeracy and problem-solving skills well enough, or learn to work independently and persevere so that they finish tasks. More able children complete tasks quickly and do not develop their skills to a high enough level. In Welsh-medium settings, where standards are adequate, a few children do not develop their listening and speaking skills well enough.

Wellbeing

As in previous years, the standard of wellbeing is good or better in over nine-in-ten settings. This year, inspectors identified excellent standards of wellbeing in a very few settings. This is an improvement on last year where there were no excellent judgements. In these settings, most children develop their social interactions particularly well, make confident choices and show extremely high levels of independence, resilience and engagement in tasks. Where standards are at least good, nearly all children settle quickly. They enjoy the activities and are eager to find out new things. For example, they are curious about why a snail's shell is empty and they run away from the 'bear' in the outside area with great delight. Children make confident choices, follow the setting's rules well, and show care and kindness towards one another and visitors to the setting.

In the very few settings where standards of wellbeing are adequate, children do not engage fully in making decisions about their learning. They tend to lose interest in activities quickly and rely too much on adults to complete tasks.

Banana Moon Day Nursery

Children at Banana Moon Day Nursery visit a local residential care home regularly. This benefits both the children and the adults. The children are able to develop their social and emotional skills and residents interact with them eagerly.

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

Figure 2:
Percentage of judgements awarded for wellbeing, 2017-2018

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

5%   89%   6%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate   ● Unsatisfactory

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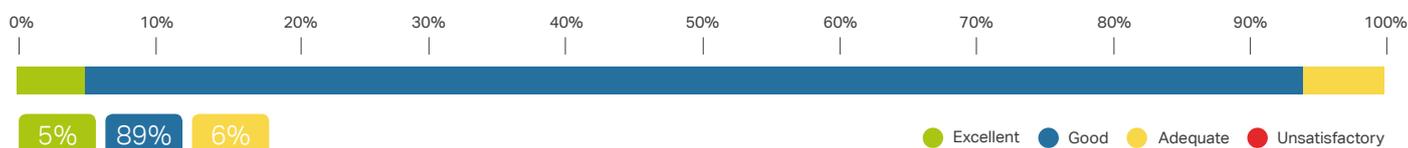
Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Provision

Provision is good or better in just over eight-in-ten settings. This is similar to last year, with a slight increase in the number of settings where provision is excellent. In these settings, practitioners have very high expectations of what children can achieve. They provide imaginative learning experiences that reflect the ethos of the foundation phase particularly well. They have a thorough understanding of the importance of play and provide engaging practical experiences. These capture children's interest, spark their curiosity and support them in developing their skills successfully. For example, practitioners provide carefully planned opportunities for children to practise their mark-making skills while drawing a map of Barti Ddu's journey across a treasure island and to develop their understanding of the properties of shapes while creating a treasure chest full of different shaped gems.

In settings where provision is good, practitioners develop children's literacy and numeracy skills well and plan activities to promote these skills in all areas of learning. However, as in previous years, even where provision is generally good, practitioners do not plan activities that help children to progress systematically or challenge more able children well enough. In many English-medium settings, practitioners provide purposeful opportunities for children to develop their Welsh speaking skills. They use the language confidently with children and encourage them to sing Welsh songs and traditional rhymes. However, in one-in-ten settings, practitioners do not plan well enough to ensure that children hear Welsh in different contexts and develop their language skills progressively. This year, we have seen that practitioners in most Welsh-medium settings support children new to the language particularly well, such as by introducing new vocabulary regularly and modelling specific language patterns carefully. Providing opportunities for children to develop their ICT skills systematically continues to be an area for development in the sector.

Martine's Childcare

Teachers use well-planned indoor and outdoor activities to improve pupils' skills at Martine's Childcare nursery. They record pupil progression on hand-held devices to identify opportunities to develop children's skills. Practitioners develop children's literacy and numeracy skills through interesting problem-solving activities and fun themed tasks.

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

Figure 3:
Percentage of judgements awarded for provision, 2017-2018

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

1% 87% 12%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate ● Unsatisfactory

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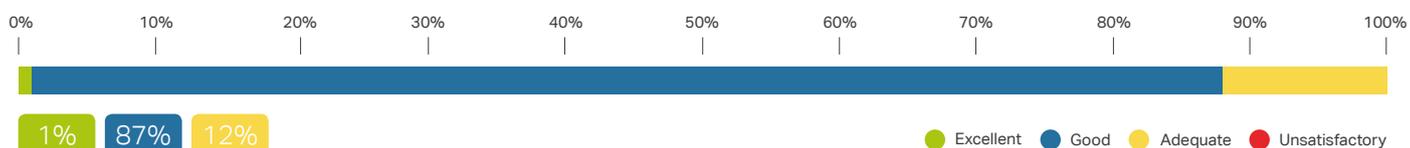
Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Teaching is good or better in over eight-in-ten settings, which is the same as last year. In the very few settings where teaching is excellent, practitioners have particularly high expectations of what children can achieve and intervene extremely sensitively to support their learning. In settings where teaching is good, practitioners provide a stimulating learning environment indoors and outside, and respond to children's interests well. However, as in previous years, in two-in-ten settings, practitioners do not provide enough opportunities for children to develop their problem-solving and thinking skills.

There continue to be weaknesses in developing manageable systems for assessing children's progress and using the information to plan children's next steps in learning. Most practitioners have a good grasp of what children can already do. However, they do not have a good enough understanding of how to move learning forward. This year, in a few settings where teaching is adequate, practitioners do not manage children's behaviour well enough.

Care, support and guidance continue to be a strength in the sector, with good or better standards in over nine-in-ten settings. In these settings, practitioners support children consistently well to develop their self-help skills and to learn to interact effectively with each other. They provide increasingly relevant opportunities to develop children's awareness of their own and other people's lives and beliefs, such as through learning about Christmas traditions in Poland from a family attending the setting. Most practitioners understand the value of outdoor learning and ensure that it is an integral part of the provision. They develop stimulating learning environments and follow children's interests to ignite their natural curiosity. The range of well-planned opportunities to develop children's skills outdoors continues to be an important area for development in the sector.

This year again, inspectors have identified serious concerns relating to safeguarding in a very few settings. In these settings, practitioners do not carry out risk assessments rigorously enough and leaders do not ensure that there are up-to-date policies and procedures to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

Cylch Meithrin Cefneithin Gorslas

Practitioners at Cylch Meithrin Cefneithin Gorslas have created an engaging learning environment for mathematical development by providing art and technology-based activities themed around children's interests.

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

Cydnabod Rhagoriaeth
Recognising Excellence

Belle Vue Day Nursery

Staff at Belle Vue Nursery have improved lunchtimes from being "a mess to a success"! Children learn how to use crockery and cutlery and treat resources such as vases for flowers carefully. They take on responsibilities at lunchtime and learn to respect others. Encouraging children to develop their conversational and social skills has resulted in more happy, confident and independent children.

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

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Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good or better in almost nine-in-ten settings and we identified a very few settings with excellent prospects for improvement this year. We saw a significant rise in the number of settings with good or excellent processes for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. Where processes are exceptional, leaders constantly look for ways to improve the setting, and measure success by its impact on the children. They monitor the effectiveness of their actions successfully. However, too few settings have a strong enough understanding of the purpose and value of self-evaluation. They rely too much on complicated and time-consuming procedures that do not help to identify their strengths or areas for improvement well enough. In these settings, leaders see self-evaluation as a process that they do for others and not something to bring about improvement for children.

Where leadership is good, leaders have a clear vision. They have a strong focus on developing a culture of improvement. Leaders set high expectations, communicate well with practitioners, and build a strong team. They use external advice and support effectively to improve practice. Where leadership is excellent, leaders prioritise improving children's standards and wellbeing. This year, we identified excellent practice in a very few settings. Leaders in these settings have exemplary procedures for improving standards and provision, and for supporting staff wellbeing and professional development. Practitioners provide outstanding learning experiences, support for children's wellbeing, and provision for skills development.

Leaders in these settings mentor and coach staff well and use performance management processes effectively to improve the quality of teaching. Where leadership is less successful, performance management is not rigorous enough to support practitioners to develop their skills. Leaders do not define roles and responsibilities clearly or evaluate the quality of teaching well enough. For example, leaders emphasise developing the maths area rather than supporting practitioners to improve children's numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Meithrinfa Seren Fach

Leaders at Meithrinfa Seren Fach have a strong focus on continuous improvement. They evaluate and improve quality through well-structured staffing and clear objectives. Managers and practitioners develop their skills and knowledge well. The nursery staff value the contributions of their stakeholders to help them to improve.

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

Cydnabod Rhagoriaeth
Recognising Excellence

Figure 4:
Percentage of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018

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

4% 84% 11%

Excellent Good Adequate Unsatisfactory

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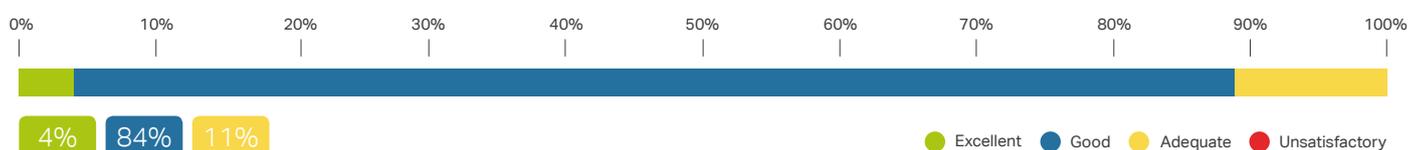
Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

In a very few settings, partnership working is excellent. These settings work particularly successfully with parents to provide valuable support for more vulnerable families and children with English as an additional language. Leaders respond extremely well to the individual circumstances of children and their families. They tailor support flexibly to meet their specific needs. For example, they provide words and phrases that parents can use to help their children. Practitioners work on specific aspects of children's development with parents on a one-to-one basis, for example sharing positive behaviour management strategies. Partnership working with parents is a strong feature in almost all settings and good settings use the local community well to support children's learning. This year, we have seen more examples of strong links between settings and local schools that build children's confidence as they move to the next stage of their education. These include regular visits from school nursery or reception teachers to get to know children, and opportunities for children to take part in school activities such as Easter egg hunts and sports day.

Practitioners in nine-in-ten settings take part in valuable training opportunities, often provided by local authorities and consortia. These include training funded by the early years pupil development grant that focuses on areas such as developing children's communication skills and improving ICT standards and provision. We are beginning to see the impact of these training opportunities, including a stronger focus on developing children's vocabulary and improvements in ICT standards and provision. Where practice is particularly strong, leaders evaluate the impact of training and new resources regularly to ensure that they support improvements in standards and provision.

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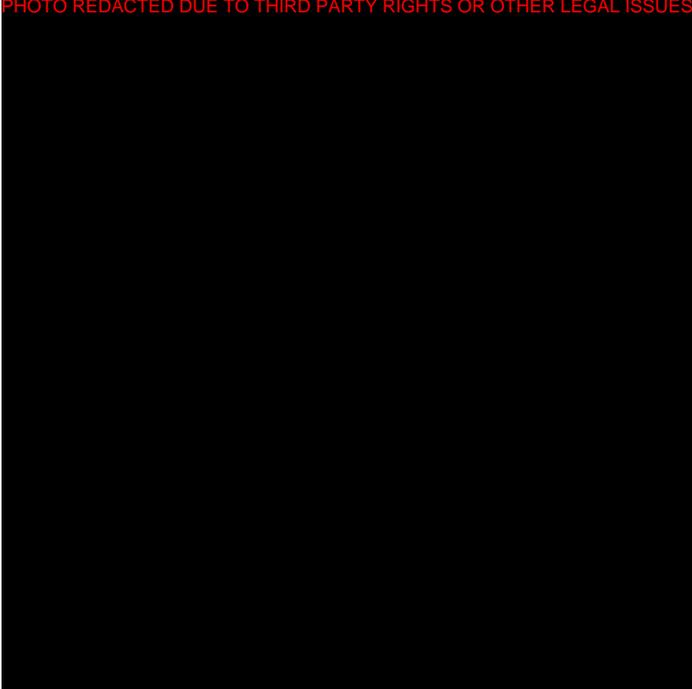
Follow-up activity:
Non-school settings for children under five

Around four-in-ten settings inspected this year need a follow-up visit from the local authority or monitoring by Estyn. This is similar to last year. Fewer settings than last year require focused improvement (the most serious level of follow-up).

In nearly half of the settings in need of monitoring by the local authority, leadership and processes for improvement are not strong enough and do not focus enough on developing children's skills systematically.

In eight-in-ten settings requiring monitoring by Estyn where there was a judgement on standards, children do not make good enough progress in developing their skills. This is often because practitioners do not use assessments well to identify and plan for children's next steps in learning. In most of these settings, performance management procedures do not support practitioners well enough to improve their practice and the provision. In many settings requiring monitoring by Estyn, leaders are new and have not developed management processes well enough. In the setting identified as requiring focused improvement this year, leaders do not act on their policies well enough. Their track record of improving standards and provision, including the quality of interactions with children, is inconsistent.

This year, all settings that required monitoring by the local authority made good progress and no longer need follow-up activity. Nearly all of these settings act purposefully on advice and support from the local authority advisory teacher to meet their recommendations. Three settings did not make enough progress while being monitored by Estyn. Two require a further period of monitoring and one has moved into the focused improvement category. This slow progress is often the result of significant changes in staff or premises during the monitoring period.

Of the seven settings requiring focused improvement at the beginning of this year, two no longer provide funded education. Four settings made enough progress and we removed these from follow-up activity. One remains in need of focused improvement.

Figure 5:
Non-school settings for children under five placed in follow-up in 2017-2018
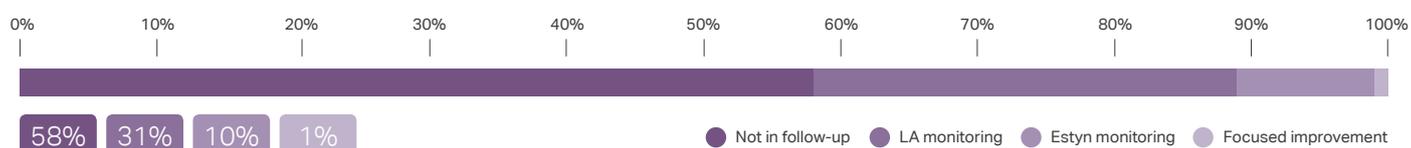
58%   31%   10%   1%

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

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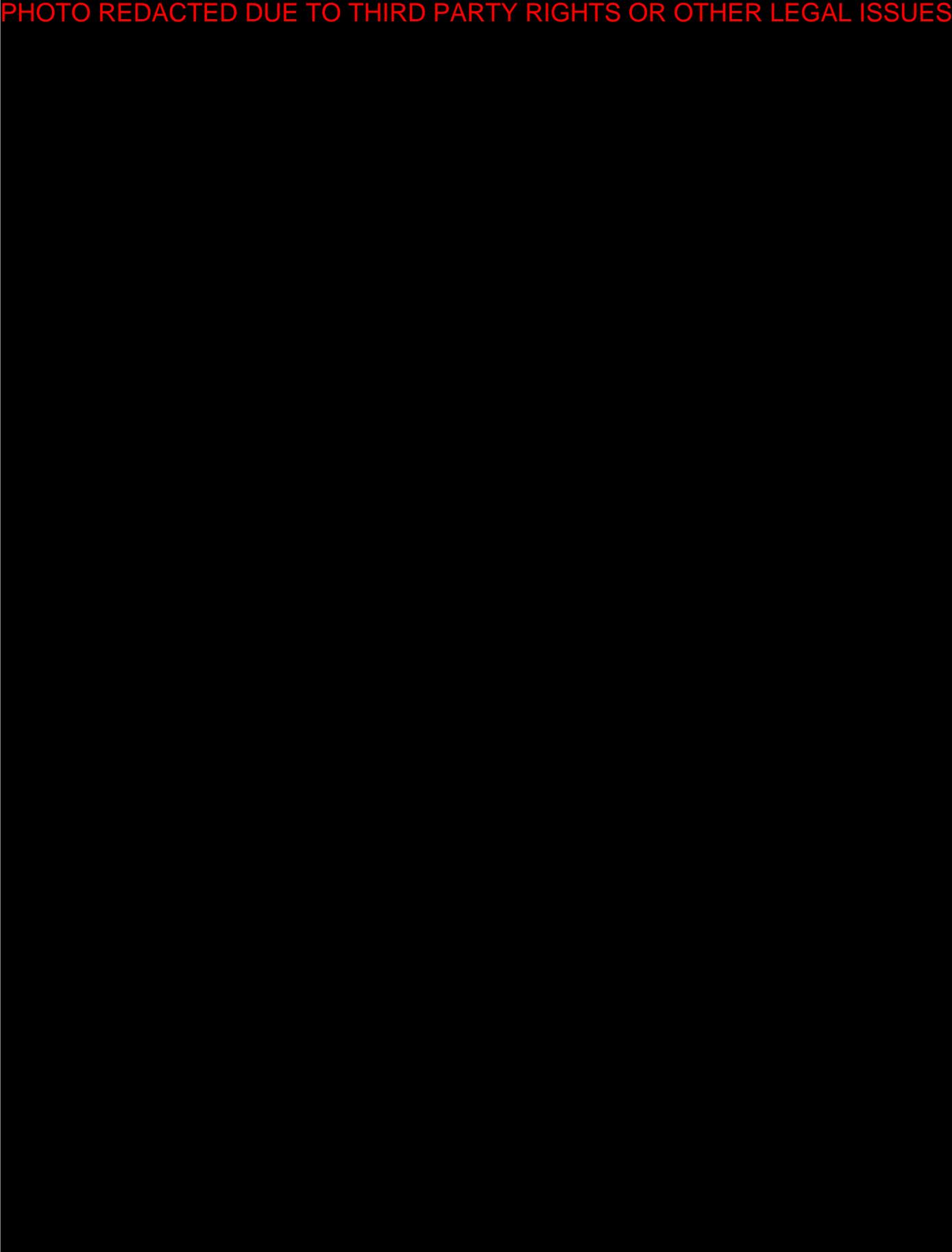
Sector summaries: Primary schools

Sector report
Primary schools

In January 2018, there were 1,272 primary schools in Wales. This is 26 fewer than in January 2017, when there were 1,298. The number of primary schools working as federations is increasing, with around 65 primary schools now working in around 30 federations. The number of primary school pupils has risen slightly since last year and stands at almost 278,000 in January 2018. (Welsh Government, 2018a.)

Between September 2017 and July 2018, we inspected 200 schools. The findings from all inspections have informed this report.

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Standards

Standards are good or better in just over eight-in-ten primary schools. The proportion of schools judged as excellent has doubled since last year from 4% to 8%.

In the very few schools where standards are excellent, nearly all pupils make sustained rates of very good progress and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills exceptionally well across all areas of the curriculum. In schools where standards are good, most pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. They build on their learning well as they move from class to class. In weaker schools, the rate of pupils' progress tends to vary too much. They may make suitable progress for their age and ability in one year, but then make limited progress in another. This means that their progress is not as good as it should be over time and they do not achieve high standards relative to their starting points.

Many pupils in specific groups, such as those with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language, make at least the expected progress from their starting points. In a few schools, more able pupils do not achieve well enough or make the progress they could.

In just under nine-in-ten Welsh and English-medium schools, most pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. In many Welsh-medium schools pupils develop their communication skills equally as well in both English and Welsh by the end of key stage 2. In May 2018, we published a thematic survey about Welsh in key stages 2 and 3 in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools (Estyn, 2018a). Please read the **report**.

Many pupils in foundation phase classes understand and use features such as rhyme and repetition when they retell familiar poems and stories. They listen carefully to each other and to adults, and use exciting vocabulary to express their ideas, for example when describing the ferocious and angry features of the wolf when re-telling the story of Little Red Riding Hood. In many schools with pupils from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, pupils benefit from speech and language programmes that help them to improve their understanding and acquisition of language.

In key stage 2, most pupils continue to develop their use of spoken language. They often choose their words carefully to present an argument or point of view, for example when exploring the dangers of gender stereotyping. A majority of pupils provide clear explanations about how they use their reasoning skills to work out which method to use to solve a problem, for example when working out

Figure 6:
Percentage of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

| 8% | 76% | 16% | 1% |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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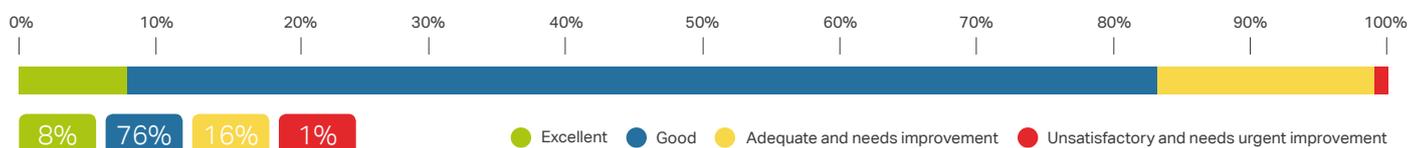
Sector summaries: Primary schools

mathematical problems that involve two or more processes or operations such as when calculating the most cost effective and efficient route for a journey. This helps them to begin to understand their own thinking processes better.

Many pupils develop their reading skills effectively. In reception classes, many pupils know the sounds that letters make and they use these successfully to help them to read simple words and short phrases. As they move through the foundation phase, they increase their range of reading strategies. For example, they recognise a suitable range of familiar words and use clues in the pictures to help them to work out the meaning of the text. In good schools, by the end of Year 2, pupils read fluently and expressively. Many pupils in key stage 2 read accurately and with good understanding. They use their reading skills purposefully to help them to research information in their work across the curriculum. For example, pupils use non-fiction books to find out how the digestive system works and internet search engines to research Greek gods. Many older and more able readers are enthusiastic about books and authors. They read widely for pleasure and enjoy discussing themes and issues from stories, for example when talking about the relationship between different characters in the story of The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas. In around a fifth of schools, pupils do not improve their reading skills well enough year-on-year, often because there is not a whole school approach to developing pupils' reading skills.

Many pupils' writing skills develop well as they move through primary school. They begin by experimenting with mark making in nursery classes and progress to writing initial sounds to represent words before moving on to writing whole words and simple sentences. They use these skills purposefully, for example to write invitations to a royal wedding and list the ingredients for the wedding cake. By the end of Year 2, many pupils write for a suitable range of purposes both in language lessons and across the curriculum. For example, they use interesting similes to describe animals in stories and write effective applications for jobs in the fire service. In key stage 2, many pupils write well. They adapt their writing style for different purposes and use vocabulary that is relevant to each task. For example, they use persuasive language to encourage visitors to come to Wales and to write discussions about whether foxhunting should be a legal activity. Pupils' ability to write well at length in all areas of the curriculum is an area for improvement in around a fifth of schools. In schools where standards of writing are adequate, pupils do not make enough progress in addressing basic and repeated errors in spelling and punctuation as they move through the school.

In English-medium schools, most foundation phase pupils make appropriate progress in developing their Welsh speaking skills. They use simple words to count how many friends eat different fruits at playtime, name colours and talk about the weather in nursery and reception. They gain confidence in talking about their likes and dislikes and begin to extend their phrases in Year 2. The progress of too many pupils slows as they move through key stage 2. They begin to lose confidence in their ability to speak the language and rely too heavily on prompt sheets for speaking and writing tasks. In a very few exceptional schools, pupils move easily between English and Welsh and use Welsh as part of their classroom routines and their social interaction. However, improving pupils' standards of Welsh, particularly in key stage 2, continues to be an important area for development in English-medium schools.

Ysgol Heulfan

Through close links with parents, therapists and highly trained practitioners, Ysgol Heulfan Primary School has helped to improve pupils' oracy skills using a range of communication techniques from singing and signing, to speaking and listening using a bilingual vocabulary. Feedback and reporting recorded rapid progress throughout the school.

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

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Pupils in nursery and reception begin to understand the principles of volume and capacity through their water play. Most practise and develop their counting skills well as they play in the continuous and enhanced provision[1], for example when they add up their strikes in a game of skittles. By Year 2, many pupils apply their knowledge of the number system, such as digits and simple mathematical symbols, suitably to work out time and money problems. In key stage 2, many pupils use an appropriate range of strategies to solve numerical problems, including those that involve place value. A majority of pupils have improved their ability to reason effectively and explain their chosen strategy for tackling a problem, but this is still an area for development for a minority of pupils. Many pupils apply their numeracy skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example to find the average time that parachutes take to fall when investigating forces, but this does not happen often or well enough in all schools.

Pupils' standards and application of ICT are a weakness in around four-in-ten schools. Most pupils make good progress in developing the communication strand of ICT, for example creating documents and presentations and sending electronic messages. A majority do not develop or apply their skills in creating and analysing databases and spreadsheets well enough.

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[1] Please see our glossary for definitions of **Continuous provision** and **Enhanced provision**.

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Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

The wellbeing of pupils in primary schools continues to be a strength and is judged good or excellent in almost all schools. Pupils' attitudes to learning, in terms of their ability to engage in unfamiliar experiences, concentrate, and respect the opinions of others, are improving as teachers focus more on developing these. However, in around half of schools, pupils' ability to work independently and persevere to solve problems, make decisions about their own learning, and seek alternative solutions remain areas in need of improvement.

Most pupils feel safe at school and are confident to speak to adults about their problems. Many understand the importance of keeping themselves healthy through eating a balanced diet and taking part in regular physical activity. Most pupils behave well both in lessons and throughout the school day. Many take on responsibilities to support school life and other pupils, for example in their roles as playground buddies and digital leaders. However, in around half of schools, pupils do not influence important school decisions. In many excellent schools, pupil leadership groups influence all aspects of school life, including curriculum development and pedagogy.

Most pupils participate well and enjoy their learning. They attend school regularly and understand the importance of getting to school on time. Pupils in schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals attend less well compared to pupils in other schools. The gap in attendance between schools in the highest and lowest free schools meals groups equates to around four more days of absence a pupil each year. Just under a fifth of schools received a recommendation to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Many pupils engage confidently in new situations and when learning about new topics. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, sustain concentration well and take pride in their work. They talk enthusiastically about their activities and achievements, such as when explaining how they planned and adapted a science experiment around volcanic eruptions. Many offer support to one another in lessons, recognising and showing appreciation for the skills and contributions of others. In most excellent schools, pupils stretch and challenge themselves. They discuss alternative approaches to solving problems, persevere and work together to check that their answers are reasonable. In these schools, pupils take a lead role in determining how and what they learn. They understand how to achieve their personal learning targets, many of which relate to developing key learning dispositions. Pupils develop these dispositions well across all areas of their work, for example remaining calm when receiving criticism or asking questions to deepen their understanding and clarify their thinking.

Ysgol yr Esgob

Staff at Ysgol Yr Esgob Voluntary Aided Primary School help pupils to improve their work, take responsibility for their learning, and raise standards through independent learning, regular self-assessment and setting clear learning objectives.

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

Cydnabod Rhagoriaeth
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Figure 7:
Percentage of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, 2017-2018

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

18%   75%   7%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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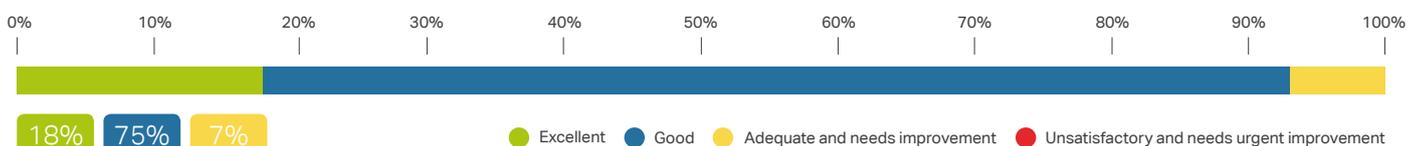
Sector summaries: Primary schools

Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching and learning experiences are good or better in three-quarters of primary schools, while teaching is good or better in nearly eight-in-ten schools. The quality of teaching is outstanding in one-in-twenty schools. The slight difference in the judgements for 'teaching' and 'teaching and learning experiences' is as a result of a few schools needing to make further improvements to their curriculum to support pupils' learning.

Where teaching and learning experiences are effective they provide challenge, engage pupils, and build systematically on their knowledge, skills and experiences. This allows pupils to make strong progress. Where there are weaknesses, these are often linked to inconsistent practices and poor curriculum organisation. Teachers' plans do not always contain appropriate or clear information about the knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils should acquire as they progress through the school. As a result, teaching does not build systematically on pupils' previous achievements. In June 2018, we published a survey with case studies that describe how schools improve the quality of teaching (Estyn 2018b). For more information please read the **report**.

In schools where teaching is good or better, many teachers have high expectations of all pupils and provide them with engaging learning activities that enthuse and challenge them at the right level. Many use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to explain their thinking. Most teachers create a calm and purposeful working environment. They use behaviour management strategies well to help pupils to stay on task. Many teachers use assessment 'formatively' so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve. The most effective teachers give pupils time to reflect and act on feedback to move their learning forward. This allows pupils to make progress and to become more independent as learners.

Around half of the recommendations in this inspection area relate to the quality of teaching. Ensuring that teaching meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are more able, and sharing good practice between teachers so that the quality of teaching is at least good in all classes across the school, continue to be areas in need of improvement in the primary sector.

Gladestry Church in Wales Primary

At Gladestry Church in Wales Primary School, there are exceptional levels of respect between pupils and staff. Teachers are determined that pupils should lead aspects of their own learning and they facilitate this through their exceptional teaching practices. The school exemplifies many of the 'pedagogical principles' that underpin the new curriculum.

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

Figure 8:
Percentage of judgements awarded for teaching and learning experiences, 2017-2018

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

7% 68% 23% 3%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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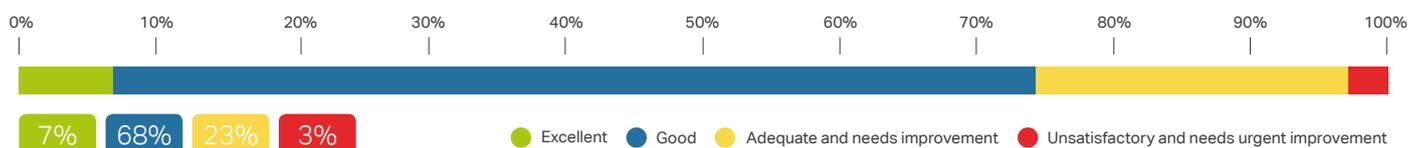
Sector summaries: Primary schools

In a very few schools, where teaching and learning experiences are excellent, teachers provide pupils with innovative, creative and stimulating learning opportunities that are tailored to the school's community and real life matters. For example, a school's community café provides a rich, stimulating environment for pupils to learn about healthy eating, marketing, sales and customer service.

The curriculum stimulates pupils' interests particularly well, ignites their imagination and ensures that they develop as independent learners. For example, pupils have opportunities to plan and deliver lessons to their peers on topics that they choose.

Around two-thirds of schools consider their approach to the curriculum carefully and plan valuable learning experiences. Thoughtful planning, often shared between a team of teachers and support staff, ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding build systematically. These schools enrich pupils' learning by arranging visits to relevant places of interest.

Nearly one half of schools need to improve the breadth, balance and appropriateness of their curriculum, in particular to ensure that they implement the ethos and principles of the foundation phase consistently and effectively. In December 2017, we published a report to help schools to deliver literacy and numeracy in Years 1 and 2 through interactive and fun learning experiences (Estyn 2017a). Please read the **report** to find out more about this. In a minority of English-medium schools, planning to develop pupils' Welsh language skills needs improvement.

In the very few schools where very strong and sustained practice is identified, effective curriculum organisation ensures that there are imaginative, and consistent opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. Teachers integrate these opportunities into pupils' learning and pupils apply their skills successfully and confidently. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress and achievement.

Nearly a quarter of schools need to improve the way that they plan for pupils to use literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in their work across the curriculum.

Ysgol-Y-Wern

An ambitious and innovative weather project is just one way that Ysgol-Y-Wern has developed and planned cross-curricular learning which challenges pupils' ICT, numeracy and literacy skills.

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

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Care, support and guidance

Care, support and guidance are a strength in the sector, with good or better outcomes in nine-in-ten primary schools. These schools create a culture where pupils feel safe, valued and cared for. Excellent schools value, motivate and respect all members of the school community. Leaders and teachers nurture pupils to become committed, resilient learners. Pupils develop a range of learning skills and dispositions that help them to become independent and confident learners who are willing to take risks.

Just over eight-in-ten schools have processes in place to track and monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing. They use this information well to implement a suitable range of intervention programmes and to set meaningful targets for pupils with special educational needs. Around half of schools use tracking information to provide extra challenges for their most able pupils. Around a fifth of schools do not refine their assessment and tracking procedures well enough to monitor the progress of specific groups of pupils.

Nine-in-ten schools have productive relationships with parents and carers and provide useful information to help them to support their child's learning at home. In around a fifth of schools, relationships and communication with parents are exceptional. These schools know their wider communities particularly well and adapt their provision flexibly to encourage both parent and pupil learning. For example, they offer bespoke support for families, such as counselling services and help for parents who are new to English. In June 2018, we published a thematic survey about how effectively schools engage with parents (Estyn, 2018c). For more information, read the **report**.

Almost all schools help their pupils to understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Many schools provide pupils with a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as athletics, rugby, dance and cricket, that supplement their PE lessons well.

Around-eight-in ten schools use positive behaviour strategies effectively. Members of staff know the pupils well and build constructive relationships. This helps pupils to feel secure when tackling new learning and builds their confidence and self-esteem. Most schools have comprehensive plans for developing pupils' social and emotional skills both within specific lessons and throughout the daily activities of the school. Many schools encourage their pupils to take part in community activities, such as working with the local council to keep their neighbourhood litter free or learning how to support dementia sufferers.

Cwm Glas Primary School

Cwm Glas Primary School has developed strong, trusting relationships with parents to support their children's learning needs and wellbeing. Leaders liaise with and support families, hosting nurture training events and family learning sessions. This inclusive and nurturing approach has resulted in all pupils making good progress.

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

Figure 9:
Percentage of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018

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

18% 72% 10% 1%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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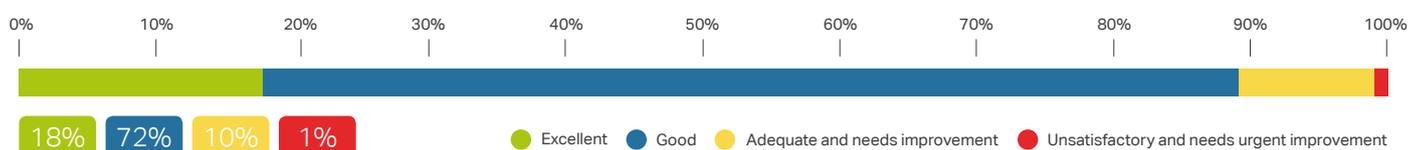
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In around a fifth of schools, the provision for listening and responding to the views of pupils is exemplary. In these schools, leaders seek pupils' views about the strategic direction of the school. For example, pupils contribute to the school improvement plan and take part in evaluation activities, such as learning walks. Many other schools do not give pupils enough opportunities to contribute to the life of the school beyond planning charitable events, or buying and organising playground equipment.

Many schools use trips and visitors suitably to enhance pupils' cultural knowledge and experiences. In a fifth of schools, this provision is exceptional and the school encourages pupils' imaginative and creative skills, for example through partnerships with local artists and national organisations such as Welsh National Opera.

Over eight-in-ten schools pay good attention to developing pupils' spiritual and ethical beliefs. Through collective acts of worship and regular discussions, they help pupils to understand the importance of honesty, respect and fairness. Nearly all schools have suitable arrangements to safeguard their pupils.

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Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good or better in eight-in-ten primary schools. In the most effective schools, leaders have a clear vision and share this successfully with staff and stakeholders. Leaders implement purposeful improvement strategies that have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. In around a quarter of schools, leaders do not consider the outcomes of self-evaluation activities well enough to improve teaching and pupils' standards consistently across the whole school.

In schools where leadership and management are at least good, leaders instil high expectations and develop an ethos of teamwork among staff. Most staff are clear about their responsibilities and carry them out well to improve key areas of the school's work, address national priorities and raise standards. Leaders support the work of teachers and support staff effectively through transparent performance management systems that identify strengths and areas for improvement. In good schools, leaders use meeting time efficiently, for example to discuss the school's strategic priorities or to review pupil progress.

In a fifth of schools, where leadership is less than good, senior leaders do not work with staff to develop a clear and shared vision. In these schools, there is a lack of strategic focus on how actions will improve outcomes for all pupils, particularly the more able. Our thematic survey, published in March 2018, provides school leaders with strategies and suggestions to support and challenge more able learners (Estyn, 2018d). For more information, please read the **report**.

In almost two-thirds of schools, governors use their knowledge of the school appropriately to challenge the work of senior leaders and ask pertinent questions about school performance. They have sound knowledge about the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.

In many schools, self-evaluation outcomes inform improvement priorities directly. In these schools, leaders and teachers undertake regular monitoring activities that form part of a continual conversation about the effectiveness of the school's provision with clear links to outcomes for pupils. Leaders seek and act on the views of stakeholders, including pupils and parents. They link these activities well to other systems such as performance management and professional learning to give a coherent structure to the school's overall improvement processes. This makes a positive difference to the quality of teaching, learning and wellbeing at the school.

Figure 10:
Percentage of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018

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

12% **69%** **16%** **4%**

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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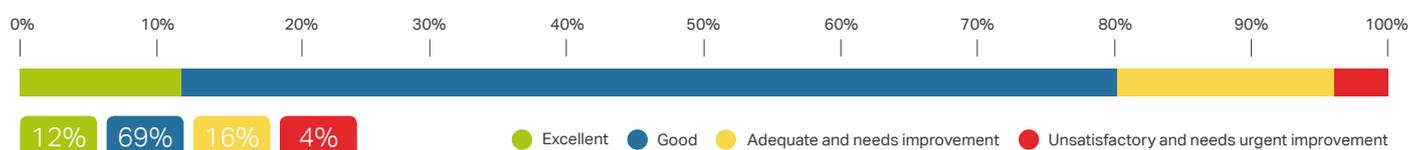
Sector summaries: Primary schools

In excellent schools, senior leaders develop an ethos of openness and collaboration that empowers all practitioners to reflect honestly on their own performance. This contributes to strong and consistently high standards and valuable developments in teaching and learning. Leaders and teachers in these schools address national and school improvement priorities effectively.

In schools where self-evaluation and school improvement systems are less than good, senior leaders do not focus these processes enough on outcomes for pupils or carry them out with enough rigour. In these cases, staff do not 'own' the school's improvement priorities or understand their role in achieving them. Where school improvement processes are weak, leaders are ineffective in addressing the school's own priorities as well as national priorities, such as the development of pupils' ICT skills and their use of Welsh in English-medium schools.

In schools where professional learning is effective, close links between the school's improvement priorities and well-planned professional development activities lead to measurable improvements in outcomes for pupils. Leaders in good schools ensure frequent opportunities for staff to work closely with colleagues in their own and other schools to improve pupils' outcomes, for example to develop pupils' writing for a range of different purposes. In September 2017, we published a summary and discussion paper on how schools work together (Estyn 2017b). For more information please read the **report**. In around one-in-twenty schools, professional development opportunities for staff are exceptional. In these schools, leaders work well with all staff to create learning communities built around a culture of collaborative working. For example, teachers work reflectively with colleagues as part of learning triads (three teachers who work together) to observe lessons and undertake work scrutiny to improve their professional practice.

In a fifth of schools where professional learning is weak, leaders do not focus well enough on improving the quality of teaching. They do not consider the benefit of professional development activities strategically or consider how these will benefit pupils and staff in the long term. This leads to a variability in the quality of teaching that impedes pupil progress over time.

In almost all schools, senior leaders manage human and financial resources efficiently to meet the needs of pupils and to match the school's improvement priorities. They deploy staff carefully to address the learning needs of pupils and work closely with governors to provide strong financial management, ensuring that the school gives and receives good value for money. Most school leaders use grant funding for its intended purpose and a few use specific funding to support pupils at risk of underachieving because of deprivation particularly well. For example, they support academically able pupils who are eligible for free school meals to achieve the higher levels, as well as supporting those pupils who are struggling to achieve the expected levels.

Ysgol Plascrug

Standards in Welsh second language at Ysgol Plascrug, are excellent. The school gives high priority to preparing pupils to become part of a bilingual society promoting strongly the use of incidental Welsh. Many members of staff have benefited from a range of courses and classes, which have helped them to improve their bilingual skills and teach more effectively through the medium of Welsh.

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

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Follow-up activity:
Primary schools

Around a fifth of primary schools inspected this year require extra monitoring. Twenty-nine schools are in Estyn review, seven in need of significant improvement and three need special measures.

Around one-in-seven primary schools inspected this year require Estyn review. This is fewer than in each of the past two years, when around one-in-four were identified as requiring monitoring by Estyn. Since September 2017, we have placed a greater emphasis on schools' capacity to drive their own improvement when considering whether Estyn review is required.

In these schools, pupils generally achieve adequate standards and, in about a third, standards are good. In many, wellbeing and attitudes to learning and care, support and guidance are good. However, in most cases, both teaching and learning experiences and leadership and management are adequate and need improvement. The quality of teaching varies too much across the school and not all teachers provide pupils with enough challenge or deliver lessons that meet the needs of pupils successfully. The curriculum is not always planned well enough, for example to ensure that numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum or that the foundation phase is implemented appropriately. Leadership is not strategic enough, and self-evaluation and improvement planning are not sharp. Leaders do not focus their monitoring of teaching well enough on the standards that pupils achieve.

Inspectors placed 10 primary schools in a statutory category following their core inspection. This is the same percentage as last year.

This year, in schools requiring significant improvement, either leadership and management or teaching and learning experiences are unsatisfactory. In schools in special measures, leadership and management and teaching and learning experiences are unsatisfactory along with other aspects of the school's provision. In these schools, pupils achieve adequate standards at best. The curriculum lacks breadth and does not encourage pupils to develop their literacy or numeracy skills well enough. Standards of teaching vary too much across the school and, in many classes, teaching does not meet the needs of all pupils. Too often, leaders in these schools do not involve staff well enough in developing a vision and strategic direction or in processes to monitor and evaluate standards and provision. Senior leaders do not focus their monitoring sharply on the quality of learning and classroom practice. Where they identify teachers who have not performed well enough, leaders' challenge is not robust enough to ensure that classroom practice improves.

Figure 11:
Primary schools placed in follow-up in 2017-2018

| 81% | 15% | 4% | 2% |

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

● Not in follow-up ● Estyn review ● Significant improvement ● Special measures

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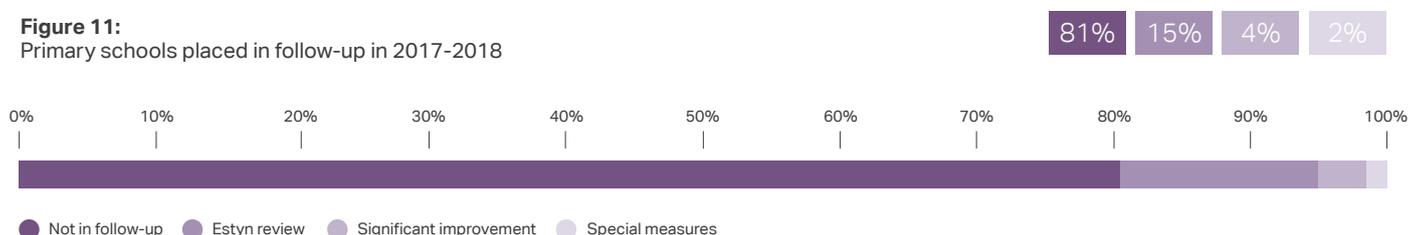
Sector summaries: Primary schools

In September 2017, 12 primary schools were in special measures. Following monitoring visits, six of these had made enough progress against the recommendations and were removed from this category. Generally, primary schools in special measures take around two years to make the required improvements. Most of the schools requiring significant improvement make the necessary improvements in around a year to 18 months. This year we removed three of the seven schools placed in significant improvement last year from further monitoring.

Over the course of the year, we have streamlined our procedures for schools in Estyn review. We monitor all schools placed in Estyn review through a desk-based review. Inspectors visit a sample of these schools, including schools where the evidence suggests that progress in addressing the recommendations is not urgent enough. Since January 2018, inspectors found that the 22 schools placed in Estyn review during 2016-2017 have made enough progress and do not require continued follow-up activity. In addition, inspectors revisited the few schools previously placed in the former category of Estyn monitoring and removed these from this level of follow-up.

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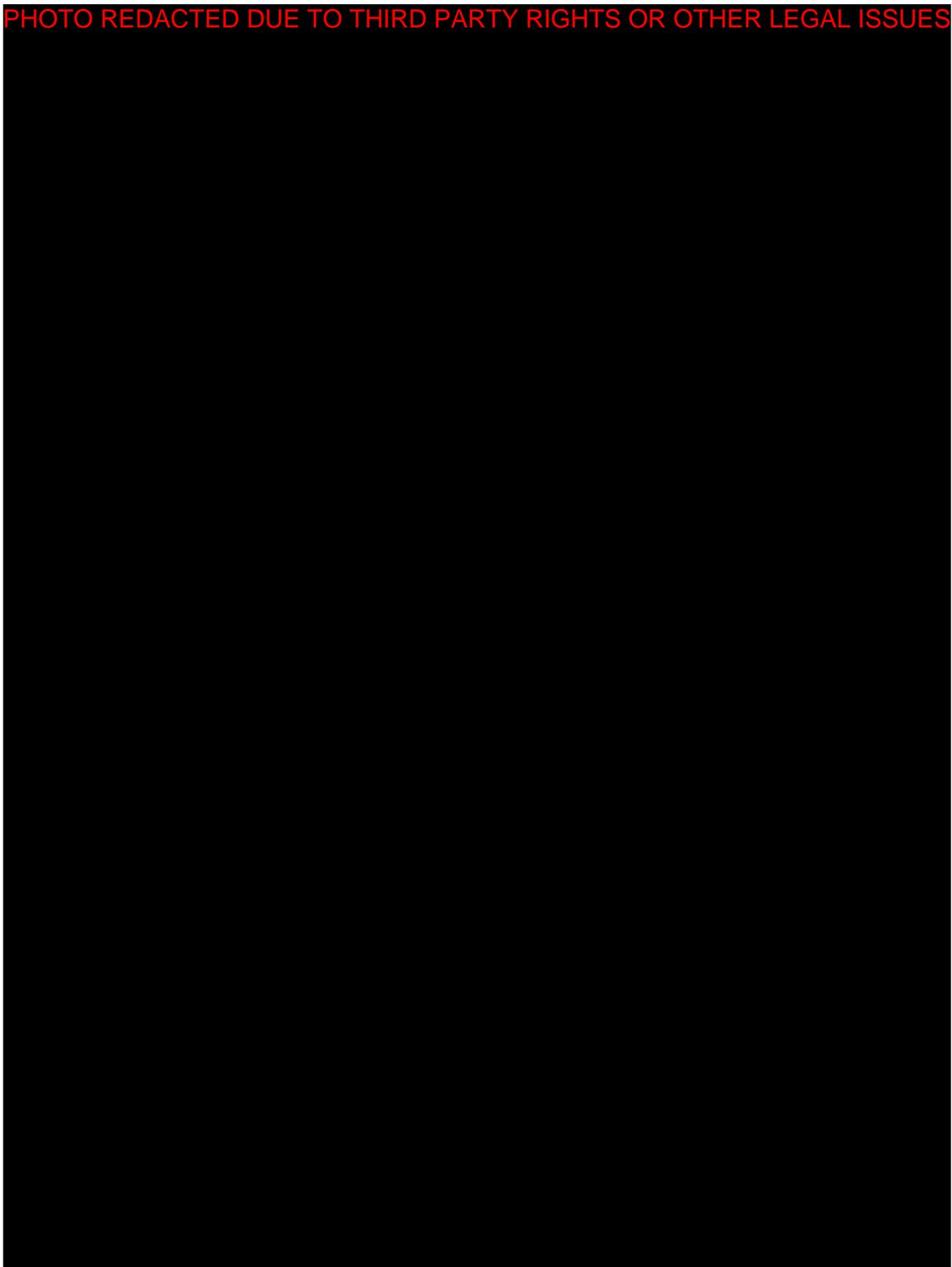
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Sector report
Secondary schools

In January 2018, there were 195 secondary schools in Wales. This is five fewer than in January 2017. Three secondary schools merged with primary schools to become all-age schools, two secondary schools federated to become one school and one school closed. The number of secondary school pupils was 172,218 in January 2018 compared with 174,812 in January 2017 (Welsh Government, 2018a).

This year, we inspected 27 schools. The findings from all inspections have informed this report.

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Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Standards

In half of secondary schools, standards are at least good. In around a sixth, standards are excellent. In these schools, high-quality teaching and effective care, support and guidance lead to high levels of enthusiasm for learning that have a positive impact on the progress of pupils. Leaders in these schools have a clear strategic vision and consistent focus on the quality of provision. However, in around half of schools, a majority of pupils across the age and ability range do not develop their knowledge and skills well enough or make enough progress.

In the half of schools where standards are good or better, many pupils recall prior learning well and are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to new and different contexts. They listen carefully and the majority make useful contributions to discussions. A minority give well-reasoned responses, are articulate and speak with enthusiasm and occasionally passion. However, a minority of pupils offer only brief responses to questions and are reluctant to extend their answers or develop their ideas. This is usually due to weak questioning that does not probe pupils' thinking and understanding.

A majority of pupils read fluently and have a range of strategies that help them to understand unfamiliar words. They are able to identify key information and make suitable inferences and deductions when analysing texts. A few pupils have well-developed higher-order reading skills. They are able to synthesise and summarise information successfully. They infer and interpret, and make perceptive deductions, for example when analysing characterisation in poems and stories.

When writing, many pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of purpose and form and know how to structure extended writing appropriately. A majority make good use of a wide general and subject-specific vocabulary. A few are accomplished writers who show strong levels of creativity and originality in many aspects of their written work, such as when they predict how the narrative of a poem will develop. However, a majority of pupils make too many basic spelling and punctuation errors in their writing. They do not take enough responsibility for improving the content and accuracy of their writing before they share it with the teacher.

Figure 12:
Percentage of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

15% 37% 41% 7%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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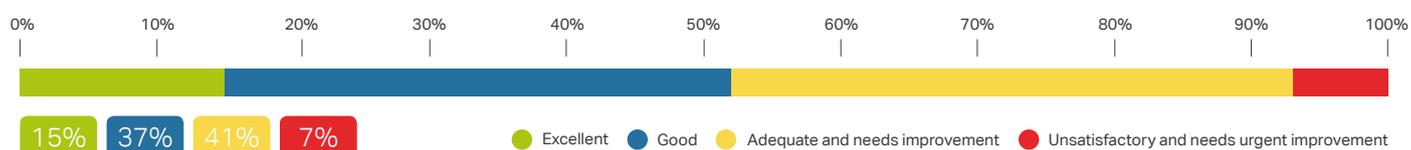
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

A majority of pupils apply their number skills suitably across the curriculum and carry out basic calculations correctly. These pupils apply their skills appropriately to new situations. However, in the majority of schools, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills well enough in contexts other than mathematics lessons. This is because most teachers give them tasks that present little challenge. For example, they ask pupils to construct bar charts and colour them in, but not to analyse data or draw conclusions. In these schools, there are not enough meaningful opportunities for pupils to solve problems set in real-life contexts.

Most pupils use basic ICT skills competently to research facts, retrieve information and create images. In a few schools, pupils apply their ICT skills purposefully alongside their creative skills, for example to manipulate imagery in art, design technology and photography. However, in most cases, pupils do not carry out work that extends their ICT skills. For example, they do not use spreadsheets to model real-life scenarios or to undertake sophisticated calculations.

The standards of Welsh of pupils in many Welsh-medium and in a minority of bilingual schools are good. They talk, read and write well in Welsh, and many use their language skills confidently in different contexts across the curriculum. Many pupils have the ability to use the Welsh language effectively in formal and informal situations. However, a few pupils do not develop their oracy skills to the best of their ability. In many cases, pupils speak Welsh in social situations less often than they did in their primary schools. This is because of the status given to the language by their peers and school leaders and the expectations that school staff have about speaking Welsh. In May 2018, we published a thematic survey about Welsh in key stages 2 and 3 in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools (Estyn, 2018a). Please read the **report**.

Only in around a quarter of English-medium secondary schools do pupils continue to develop their Welsh language skills when transferring from primary to secondary school. These pupils have a sound grasp of basic vocabulary and grammar, pronounce words accurately and write well for a variety of purposes. They develop their ability to construct their own sentences and demonstrate positive attitudes and enjoyment in learning Welsh. In the rest of the schools, pupils do not develop their Welsh speaking skills well enough in Welsh lessons or in other contexts. In these schools, pupils focus too much on preparing for examinations and do not have the confidence to attempt to speak Welsh. This has an adverse impact on their speaking, reading and writing skills. Around a half of these schools had a recommendation to raise standards in Welsh.

In the schools where standards are good or excellent, many pupils make strong and sustained progress throughout their time at the school and achieve well by the end of key stage 4. However, in half of schools, the majority of pupils do not achieve in line with their abilities by the time they reach the end of compulsory schooling. In a few schools, outcomes in examinations may appear more positive than progress and standards seen in lessons and pupils' work. These schools devote much energy to making sure that pupils achieve at least a grade C to achieve the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics. In a very few cases this results in successful outcomes in this indicator but not in the indicators that show performance at higher levels (5A*-A) or across a broad range of subjects (the capped point score).

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Sector summaries: Secondary schools

At key stage 4, girls continue to outperform boys nationally, particularly in subjects such as English and Welsh. The progress and outcomes for pupils eligible for free schools meals continue to be lower than those of other pupils (Welsh Government, 2017).

In nine-in-ten schools, pupils with special educational needs make suitable progress against their targets. However, in half of schools, targets for these pupils are not challenging enough.

In school sixth forms, many learners make strong progress in their knowledge and understanding. These learners have secure recall of previous learning and apply their prior knowledge and skills confidently to new situations. Many have strong problem-solving skills and a majority make perceptive connections between the different topics and subjects that they study. Many learners speak confidently and make well-considered points in class discussions. They engage maturely in debates and discussions and come to well-reasoned conclusions. A few learners do not make enough progress because they do not have the depth of understanding or the level of skill or motivation required to study at advanced level. As a result, around a quarter of Year 12 learners in schools and colleges fail to progress to Year 13 (Welsh Government, 2018b). During their A level studies, many learners develop their independent learning skills well. A majority lack strong independent learning skills when they start their A level courses and a minority remain too dependent on others for support.

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Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In two-thirds of secondary schools, wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good or excellent. They are adequate and need improvement in two-in-ten schools and, in one-in-ten, wellbeing and attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory and need urgent improvement

In the quarter of schools where pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning are exceptionally strong, this has a significant impact on pupils' personal development and the standards that they achieve.

In two-thirds of schools, most pupils behave very well and show respect for their teachers, other staff and each other. In these schools, most pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the support and opportunities given to them. Most pupils feel safe in their school and know where to turn if they need help. In these schools, pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep healthy by eating a nutritious diet and undertaking regular physical exercise. Many pupils take advantage of the valuable opportunities offered for participation in sport, cultural and community activities.

A notable feature in many schools is the willingness of pupils to take on leadership roles and responsibilities. They contribute to the life and work of the school in many ways, for example as members of school councils, as digital leaders and sports ambassadors, and by providing peer support to other pupils. A majority of pupils develop well as ethical and informed citizens and have a strong awareness of fairness, equality and tolerance.

In two-thirds of schools, most pupils engage well in lessons, show pride in their work, and are inquisitive and enthusiastic learners. They work well together in pairs and groups and support each other's learning effectively. In these schools, many pupils demonstrate high levels of resilience and independence when undertaking challenging tasks, which has a substantial positive impact on their progress. However, in a third of schools, a minority of pupils show little interest in their work, are easily distracted and disrupt the learning of others. These pupils lack resilience and tenacity when the work is challenging. This has a detrimental effect on the standards pupils achieve and their progress.

Figure 13:
Percentage of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, 2017-2018

26% | 41% | 22% | 11%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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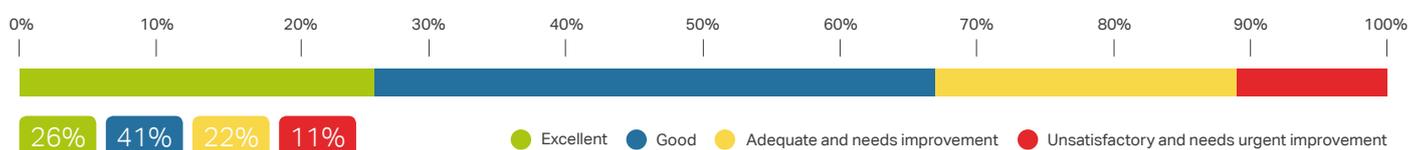
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Many sixth-form pupils demonstrate resilience and an enthusiasm for their work. These pupils are well motivated. They demonstrate a well-developed work ethic and have high expectations of themselves. Most learners enjoy their A level studies, although they find them notably more difficult than GCSEs. They appreciate the level of intellectual challenge and the opportunity to study a limited range of subjects of their choice. However, in our recent **thematic survey** we found that most learners find studying A levels stressful (Estyn, 2018e). They consider A levels to be important qualifications that have serious implications for the rest of their lives. The demands of studying three or four subjects as well as an additional qualification such as the Welsh Baccalaureate add to this stress, especially when learners have additional responsibilities such as part-time jobs.

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Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Teaching and learning experiences

In a half of secondary schools, teaching and learning experiences are good or excellent. In four-in-ten they are adequate and need improvement and in just under one-in-ten they are unsatisfactory and require urgent improvement.

In one-in-six schools, teaching is outstanding and ensures that pupils make rapid progress. In these schools, teachers are exacting in their expectations of what pupils can achieve and this is reflected in the quality of pupils' work. These teachers offer pupils frequent examples of exceptional work, which encourages high expectations. They have strong subject knowledge and communicate a passion for learning. They plan stimulating lessons that arouse pupils' curiosity, challenge their thinking, and encourage them to explore ideas creatively. Many teachers in these schools have a detailed knowledge of individual pupils' needs and use this to adapt tasks and resources sensitively to support and challenge pupils of all abilities.

In a third of schools, teaching is effective in promoting strong progress, developing pupils' confidence and engaging them in their learning. In these schools, nearly all teachers have constructive relationships with their classes and create a supportive and positive learning environment. Most teachers in these schools set demanding tasks and encourage pupils to be self-reliant. Most teachers provide useful verbal feedback to pupils about how to improve their work. A majority also provide helpful written feedback that is focused on improvement.

In a half of secondary schools, there are shortcomings in teaching and assessment. In these schools, a minority of teachers set learning activities that lack challenge and fail to engage pupils in their learning. In June 2018, we published a survey with case studies that describe how schools improve the quality of teaching (Estyn, 2018b). For more information please read the **report**. Assessment is the weakest aspect of teaching. Teachers do not ensure that all types of assessment, whether carried out by the teacher or by pupils themselves, are useful or have a positive impact on improving standards.

In seven-in-ten schools, the curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well across all key stages. In these schools, the learning experiences offered through the formal curriculum and extra-curricular activities engage pupils' interest and enrich school life. In the best examples, teachers help pupils become creative and ambitious learners.

Figure 14:
Percentage of judgements awarded for teaching and learning experiences, 2017-2018

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

15%   33%   44%   7%

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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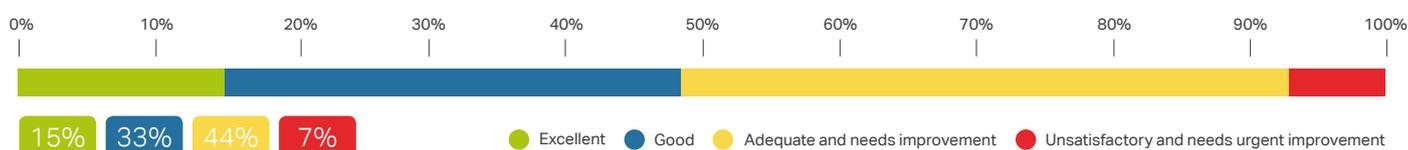
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

In two-in-ten schools, there are creative approaches to the design of the curriculum, and imaginative schemes of work and enrichment projects. These provide engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and explore their creativity. These schools have developed clear guiding principles for their curriculum. These include links to real-life learning, first-hand experiences, and opportunities for investigation and for problem solving that help to create independent, resilient learners.

As reported in the 2016-2017 Annual Report, the performance measures and changes to the qualifications framework are leading to a narrowing of the curriculum at key stage 4. In many schools, pupils have more lessons in the core subjects, particularly mathematics, and less time studying other subjects. In a few schools, the choice of vocational courses has also reduced and this affects the appropriateness of the curriculum available, particularly for vulnerable learners. In April 2018, we carried out a thematic survey to find out the impact of the learning and skills measure on these vulnerable pupils (Estyn, 2018f). For more information about this please read the **report**.

A few schools work well with partner primary schools to make sure that curriculum provision builds on the experiences and learning of pupils when they make the transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3. These schools make sure that teachers have a clear understanding of the quality of work and standards pupils achieved in their primary school and plan well for progression. More usually, in subjects across the curriculum, pupils repeat work covered at key stage 2 and, as a result, pupils do not always make enough progress in improving their skills and knowledge.

In a half of schools, effective planning for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. In nearly all schools, there are suitable arrangements in place to support pupils with very weak skills. However, planning for the progressive development of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped in most schools. Tasks are often limited to basic word processing or to producing slideshows where pupils cut and paste from websites.

In the other half of schools, provision for the development of pupils' literacy, particularly writing, and numeracy across the curriculum is inconsistent. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills progressively in authentic contexts. This is generally because the co-ordination and quality assurance of the provision for these skills are weak. As a result, teachers do not have a firm grasp of how to make sure that their provision for skills is appropriate and leads to progression. For example, in subjects other then English or Welsh, what is expected of a Year 9 pupil's extended writing is often no different from that expected in Year 7. Numeracy tasks that do not require pupils to use the graph skills they have learned in mathematics lessons are common. Only a few schools make sure that teachers know enough about the standard that they should expect of pupils' skills when they join in Year 7.

Most English-medium schools have increased the number of pupils taking Welsh language qualifications, but very few plan well to increase the day-to-day use of Welsh. A few English-medium schools do not ensure that pupils fluent in Welsh gain Welsh first language qualifications. Welsh-medium schools enter nearly all pupils for Welsh GCSE. However, a few bilingual schools do not ensure that pupils make suitable progress from key stage 3 to key stage 4.

Olchfa School

Learning managers at Olchfa School have planned schemes of work around the key areas specified in 'Successful Futures'. Teachers develop pupils' core skills through areas of learning called iCommunicate, iCalculate, iDiscover, iThink, iCreate and iThrive. A team of teacher-researchers have informed the school's teaching and learning practice, ensuring that the learners are at the heart of planning and evaluation.

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

Cydnabod
Rhagoriaeth
Recognising
Excellence

Ysgol Bro Edern

Teachers at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Edern train to ensure they are aware of the latest digital developments to support pupils in using ICT. At every opportunity, digital devices are used across lessons to develop pupils' knowledge. This has resulted in improved standards. Teachers share their good practice confidently with other schools.

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

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Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Care, support and guidance

In three-quarters of secondary schools, the care, support and guidance of pupils has strong features. These schools have a positive, inclusive and caring ethos and a culture of respect that support pupil wellbeing. As a result, pupils make good progress in their personal development.   These schools have suitable arrangements to monitor pupils' academic progress and their wellbeing. In the best examples, schools use a range of evidence to develop a rounded view of each pupil. They use these arrangements well to celebrate achievement, as well as to identify underperformance or barriers to learning. This enables them to intervene promptly to meet the needs of individual pupils. In these schools, pupils with special educational needs and those experiencing emotional or social difficulties are supported well. The schools make effective use of partnerships with other agencies in this work.

Members of staff in most schools promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development suitably through assemblies, registration periods, and their personal and social education programmes. The arrangements to promote healthy living are strong in most schools. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and local community. These arrangements have a positive impact on the development of pupils' social and personal life skills.

In around three-in-ten schools there is a culture of high expectations, and consideration for others pervades all aspects of school life. In these schools, pupils learn to respect the values and beliefs of others and many develop particularly high levels of self-confidence. There are extensive opportunities to develop pupils' skills through participation in pupil-led policy groups, acting as mentors or tutors for younger pupils, or volunteering to lead activities in the local community. This is very effective in fostering pupils' decision-making skills and self-esteem.

Nearly all schools have suitable arrangements to promote the welfare of pupils and protect them from harm. These include training in the 'Prevent' strategies, safe recruitment practices, careful management of site security and support to help pupils to stay safe online.

Ysgol y Preseli

Ysgol y Preseli has refocused its interpretation of more able pupils and updated its practices to ensure that it considers pupils' individual needs. A leader with responsibility for more able and talented pupils leads staff training sessions to ensure a consistent approach across the school.

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

Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn

Staff at Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn set up a support centre for pupils at school. Staff at the centre deliver a variety of specialist and specific wellbeing courses to help pupils to cope with their difficulties. These include sessions to help pupils deal with issues such as anger management and bereavement. After undertaking courses, many pupils have developed positive attitudes towards learning and improved their social skills.

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

Figure 15:
Percentage of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018

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

26%   48%   22%   4%

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate and needs improvement
- Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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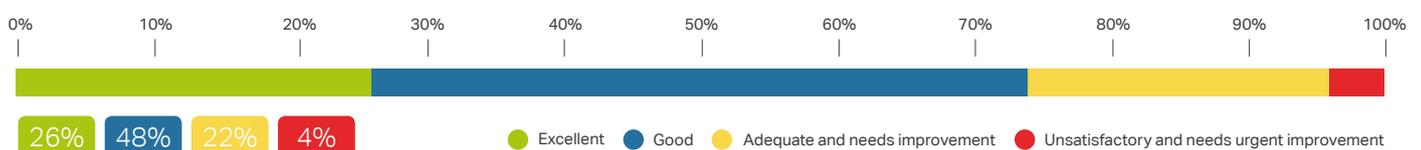
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Leadership and management

Leadership is good or excellent in a half of secondary schools. It is adequate and needs improvement in four-in-ten and unsatisfactory in around one-in-ten schools.

In schools with effective leadership, there is a clear strategic vision focused on improving the quality of teaching and provision. In a half of schools, leaders have a clear understanding of their role and discharge their responsibilities well. They share their expectations widely, have ambitious improvement priorities, and make sure that these are communicated successfully. They create strong teams and motivate staff well. In the few very best cases, the quality of leadership at all levels across the school is highly effective. There is a shared determination to provide high quality teaching and exceptional levels of wellbeing. As a result, in these schools, there is a sustained positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils in lessons and over time.

In a half of schools, leadership is inconsistent. In most of these cases, leaders do not have good enough oversight or understanding of the quality of teaching or the impact of provision generally. In a few cases, roles and responsibilities are not suitable or equitably shared.

Most schools have a clear cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning activities. Around half of schools make good use of a comprehensive range of evidence, including performance data, lesson observations, work scrutiny and the views of pupils, parents and staff. This enables leaders, in many cases, to identify strategic priorities and monitor carefully the impact of provision. In the half of schools that have important shortcomings in this aspect, evaluation activities do not identify clearly enough important aspects that require improvement. For example, when looking at pupils' skills development they do not consider well enough the quality of the work that pupils produce or the impact that the quality of teaching has on the development of skills. In around half of schools, leaders do not use the findings from evaluation activities well enough to inform priorities for improvement. For example, evaluation activity might suggest that teachers have weak questioning skills but there is no plan for how this will be addressed.

The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School

Leaders and teachers at The Bishop of Llandaff High School are committed to developing the quality of teaching through training, setting a good example, and helping pupils to achieve their full potential. Pupils develop the skills necessary to be successful in an ever-changing world and understand a sense of morality.

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

Cydnabod Rhagoriaeth
Recognising Excellence

Figure 16:
Percentage of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018

11% 41% 41% 7%

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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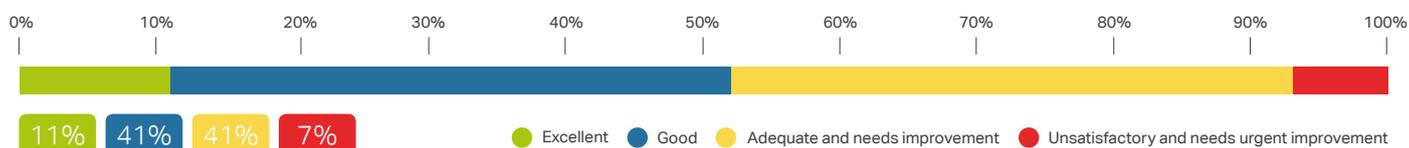
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

In nearly all schools, there are suitable arrangements to support the professional learning of teaching staff. In a few schools, this is a strong feature. In these schools, teachers are involved in valuable research activities and joint curriculum planning, which supports high-quality teaching and learning. Training is matched closely to the professional development needs of individuals and priority areas for the school. The training activities are effective in developing and sharing good practice and in many cases are supported well by partnerships with other providers, including universities. In a minority of schools, leaders and teachers do not understand the research behind teaching approaches well enough to adapt these to their own contexts. Leaders do not follow up the impact that this professional learning has in the classroom well enough. As a result, this work has little impact on the quality of teaching or on pupils' outcomes.

Two-fifths of schools inspected have deficit budgets and a very few have a significant deficit (Welsh Government, 2018c). Generally, spending links closely to strategic priorities and leaders monitor finances carefully. Teachers make effective use of the available accommodation to create a positive learning environment. Many leaders make appropriate use of grant funding. For example, they use the pupil development grant to fund the work of learning coaches, which makes a valuable contribution to the progress and wellbeing of vulnerable pupils.

The Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School

Staff at The Bishop of Llandaff High School listen to families' recommendations for their children's futures. The school undergoes regular self-evaluation for its performance, management, teaching and provision. Focusing on pupil support has raised standards.

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

Cydnabod
Rhagoriaeth
Recognising
Excellence

Castell Alun High School

Teachers at Castell Alun High School have worked in teams to evaluate teaching looking at different themes as part of the school's wider continuous professional development programme. A collaborative ethos has generated high quality learning in the classroom and beyond.

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

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Sector summaries: Secondary schools

# Follow-up activity:
Secondary schools

Of the 27 secondary schools inspected this year, just under half require some level of follow-up. Nine schools were placed in Estyn review, two are in need of significant improvement and two need special measures.

At the beginning of the autumn term, 10 schools were in special measures. Six of these schools were removed from this category following a monitoring visit. Two schools received their first visit following their core inspection. These visits focused on ensuring that the schools had a suitable post-inspection action plan in place. Of the remaining two schools, one had made insufficient progress against the recommendations and remains in special measures, while the other closed at the end of the academic year. In schools in special measures, leaders at all levels do not have enough impact on pupil outcomes. In particular, they do not focus closely enough on the extent to which teaching has a positive impact on standards, progress and pupils' engagement in their learning.

There were 12 schools requiring significant improvement at the beginning of this academic year. Estyn carried out visits to monitor the progress of ten of these schools. Four had made enough progress to be removed from this category. One school had made limited progress against its recommendations and was judged to require special measures. Three schools had made progress against their core inspection recommendations, although not enough to remove them from this category. As there were significant recent changes in leadership in these schools, it was decided that they should remain in this category for around another six months. In addition, Estyn visited the two schools judged as requiring significant improvement during 2017-2018 to ensure that their post-inspection action plans are suitable and likely to bring about the required improvements.

In November, we reviewed the progress of the 19 schools in Estyn review (formerly Estyn monitoring). This review involves evaluation of the progress reports submitted by these schools and their local authorities as well as analysis of key stage 4 outcomes since the time of the core inspection. Following the review, nine of these schools were judged to have made enough progress and therefore did not require further monitoring by Estyn. Of the remaining schools, five remain under Estyn review.

Figure 17:
Secondary schools placed in follow-up in 2017-2018

| 52% | 33% | 7% | 7% |

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

● Not in follow-up   ● Estyn review   ● Significant improvement   ● Special measures

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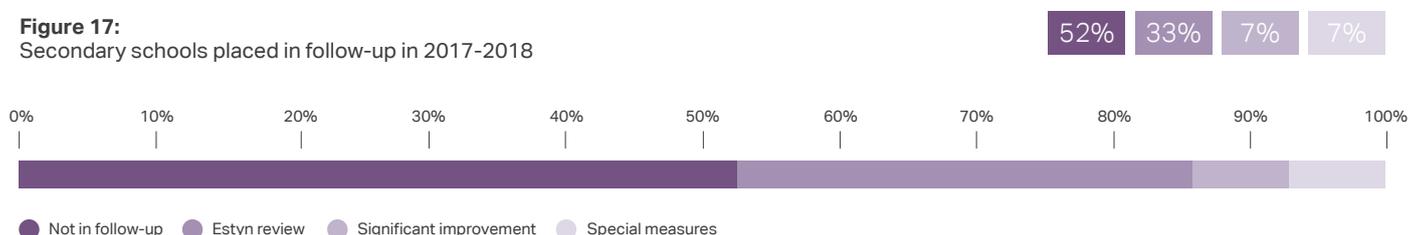
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

The other five schools received a monitoring visit. One school was judged to have made enough improvement and was removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review. Two schools had not made enough progress against the recommendations from their core inspections, one was judged to be in need of significant improvement and the other was placed in special measures. In the other two cases, inspectors judged that the schools should remain under Estyn review and have extra monitoring visits.

At the end of the this year, there are seven schools in special measures, 10 requiring significant improvement and 17 under Estyn review.

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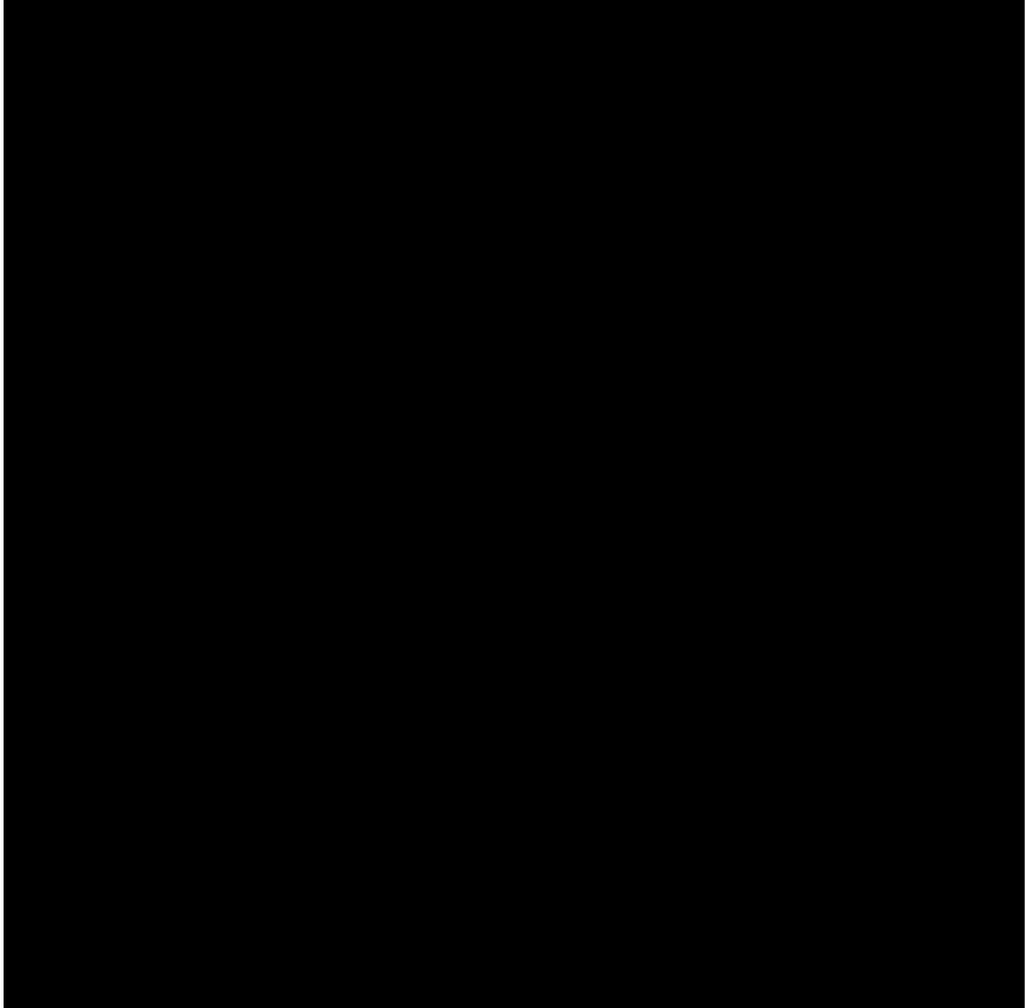
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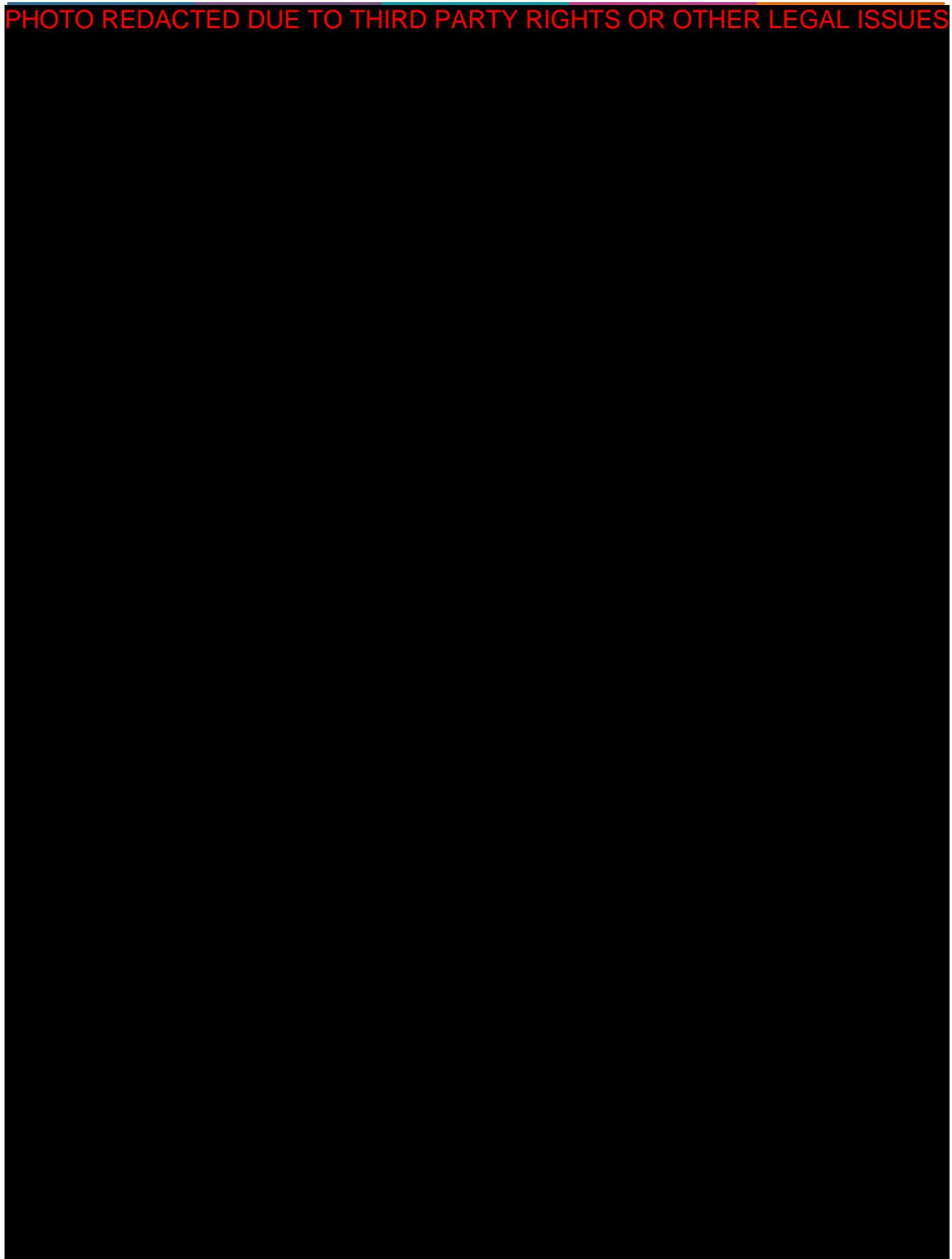
Sector report
Maintained all-age schools

All-age schools provide education for pupils from age three or four up to 16 or 18 years old. In January 2018, there were 13 all-age schools in Wales (Welsh Government, 2018a). This is three more than in January 2017. The sector continues to grow, with a further seven schools planned to open in the next two years. The sector is diverse. All-age schools have different numbers of sites and different age ranges of pupils. They are set in both rural and urban locations and there are all-age Welsh-medium and English-medium schools.

This year, Estyn inspected three all-age maintained schools. The schools range from over 1,600 pupils on four sites to fewer than 400 pupils on three sites. Each school receives pupils into Year 7 from other partner primary schools. Two schools provide education for pupils aged 3 to 16 years and one school educates pupils from the age of 3 to 18 years. The findings from all inspections have informed this report.

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Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools

Standards

In one all-age school inspected this year, standards are good. Most pupils make strong academic and social progress during their time at this school. They recall prior learning successfully and build on it well. Many pupils have sound communication skills. They express themselves clearly by using extended vocabulary and correct sentence structures. The most able pupils in the secondary phase show strong creative skills when writing. Across the school, many pupils develop good arithmetical skills and apply them correctly.

In two schools, most pupils make strong progress as they move through the primary phase, but pupils' progress in the secondary phase is weaker. A majority of pupils make appropriate progress as they move through the school. Pupils in the secondary phase do not apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively enough across the curriculum.

Figure 18:
Number of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

| 1 | 2 |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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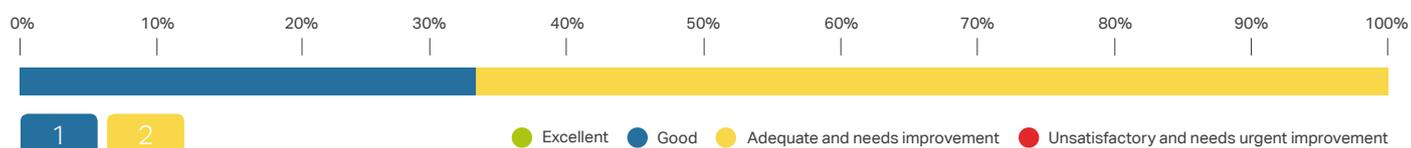
Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In two of the all-age schools inspected, wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good. In these schools, most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They show motivation in their work and apply themselves diligently to their tasks. This has a positive effect on many pupils' standards of achievement. Most pupils develop strong interpersonal skills during their time at the school. Pupils on the school councils take their responsibilities seriously and have a positive influence on school life. Many pupils participate in and enjoy the comprehensive range of learning experiences and extra-curricular activities that the schools provide.

In the other school, strengths in the primary phase of the school are not seen in the secondary phase. Nearly all pupils in the primary phase behave well and are courteous to adults and each other. They are confident, resilient and independent learners and have a clear understanding of what to do when they find work difficult. Secondary phase pupils depend too much on guidance from teachers and do not develop as independent learners well enough. The poor behaviour of a few secondary pupils has a detrimental effect on other pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Figure 19:
Number of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, 2017-2018

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

| 2 | 1 |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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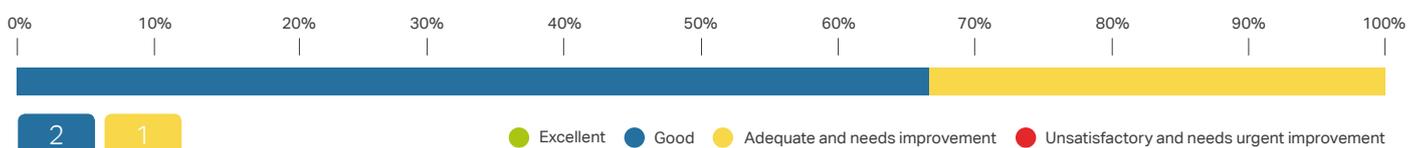
Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools

Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching and learning experiences are good in one of the all-age schools inspected. This school provides stimulating and interesting experiences that motivate and challenge pupils of all ages. Teachers from the secondary phase work effectively with the primary schools to ensure that the secondary curriculum builds successfully on pupils' previous learning. The school has an innovative and experimental attitude in terms of developing the curriculum to provide stimulating experiences for pupils to develop their organisational and creative skills, for example by challenging Year 8 pupils to organise and hold a sports day for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Teachers foster good working relationships with pupils and develop detailed plans to ensure that pupils make consistent progress. Teachers provide interesting explanations to extend pupils' subject knowledge. Many teachers question pupils skilfully to prompt them to extend their responses. They also provide useful comments for pupils on how to improve their work and give them supporting tasks to improve specific aspects.

Where the quality of teaching is weaker, teachers do not plan purposefully enough or tailor activities skilfully enough to meet the needs of pupils across the range of abilities. Teachers do not provide pupils with helpful written feedback. Their comments are too superficial and complimentary, and they do not give pupils enough advice or regular opportunities to improve their work. Teachers, particularly in the secondary phase, do not provide pupils with suitable challenge and do not help pupils to develop their skills and understanding well enough. In June 2018, we published a survey with case studies that describe how schools improve the quality of teaching (Estyn, 2018b). For more information please read the **report**.

Figure 20:
Number of judgements awarded for teaching and learning experiences, 2017-2018

| 1 | 2 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

55

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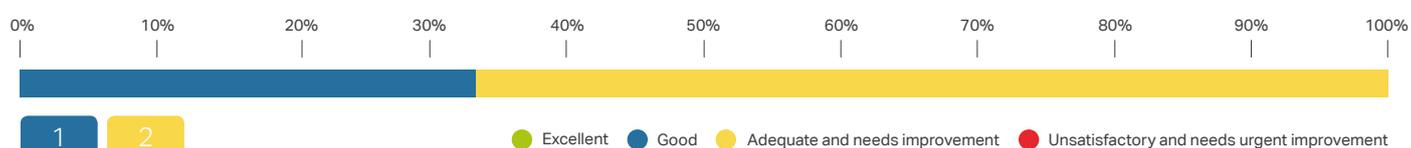
Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools

Care, support and guidance

In two of the all-age schools inspected, care, support and guidance are good. These schools have a strong sense of community and homely atmosphere that contribute towards pupils' attitudes to their learning and wellbeing. Teachers plan and provide a comprehensive personal and social education programme. They know their pupils well and provide effectively for the emotional and social needs of vulnerable pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils behave exceptionally well and treat their peers and others with respect and care. Members of staff celebrate pupils' successes effectively, for example through the positive use of social media. The schools provide many beneficial opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities and cultural activities to develop them as well-rounded citizens.

In one school, arrangements to track pupils' progress and make use of the information in the secondary phase are weak. Processes to monitor and improve pupils' behaviour in the secondary phase are not effective enough. Staff do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning.

Figure 21:
Number of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018

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

| 2 | 1 |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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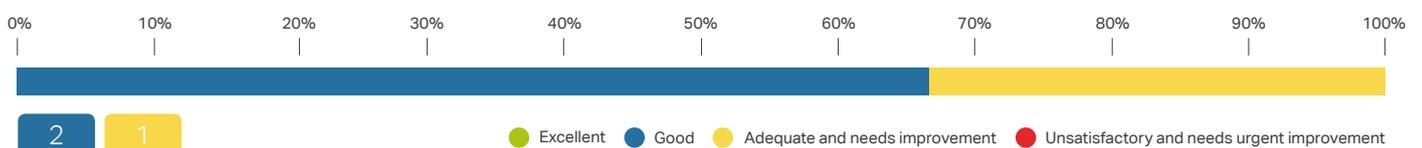
Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management varies across the sector. In the schools inspected this year, leadership is good in one school. It is adequate and needs improvement in another, and is unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement in the third. Where leadership and management are good, senior leaders have a clear vision based on ensuring high standards. They ensure that teachers provide rich learning experiences for pupils and that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Leaders manage change successfully and support other teachers and staff to experiment and innovate. The school has a cycle of rigorous, well-established self-evaluation and quality monitoring processes. Leaders respond well to the development needs of individual staff.

There are shortcomings in leadership in two of the three schools inspected. Where there are major shortcomings, leaders have not addressed the weaknesses in the school well enough and have not had enough impact on improving provision and standards. The quality and impact of leadership vary too much, with leadership at all levels in the secondary phase being ineffective. Leaders do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and do not ensure that pupils build well enough on the progress that they make during the primary phase.

Figure 22:
Number of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018

| 1 | 1 | 1 |

Excellent · Good · Adequate and needs improvement · Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

57

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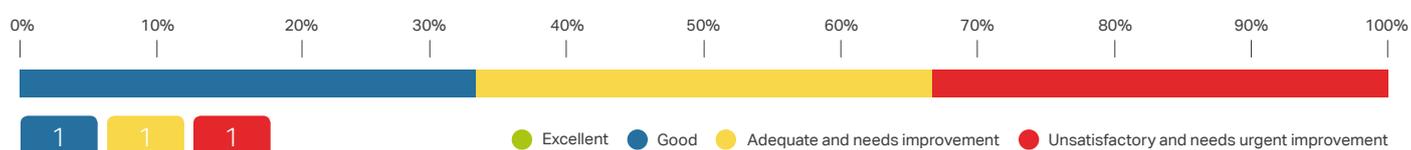
Follow-up activity:
Maintained all-age schools placed in follow-up in 2017-2018

Two all-age schools require follow-up activity, one through Estyn review, and one requires significant improvement.   During the year, we removed one school inspected in the previous inspection cycle from Estyn review. Another school made enough improvement and no longer requires significant improvement.

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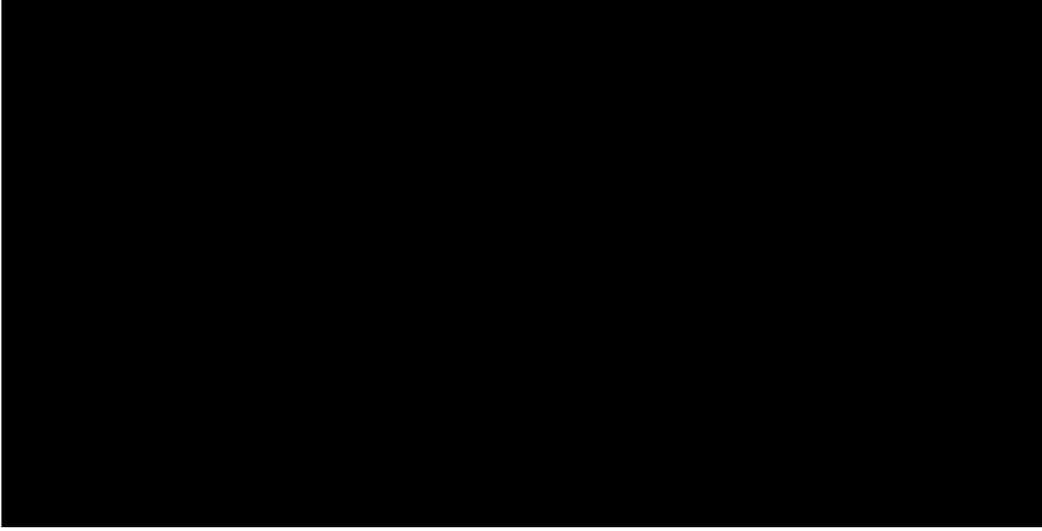
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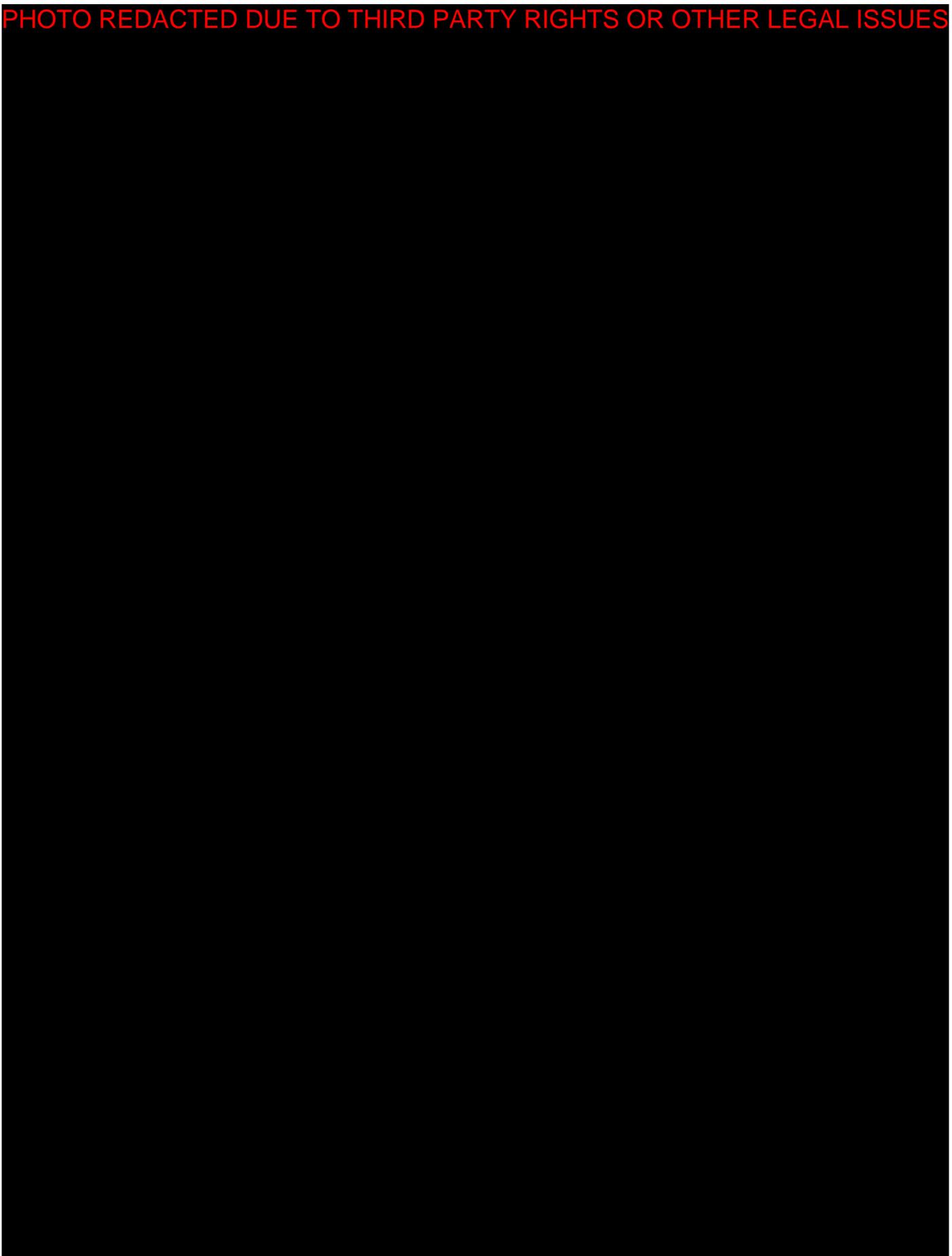
Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Sector report
Maintained special schools

In January 2018, there were 41 maintained special schools in Wales, two more than in 2017. Three schools have federated to become one school. The schools provide for pupils with a range of needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils attending maintained special schools continues to increase. In January 2018, the number of pupils in special schools across Wales was 4,831 compared with 4,727 last year (Welsh Government, 2018a).

This year, we inspected four maintained special schools. The findings from all inspections have informed this report.

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's
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Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Standards

In three of the four schools, standards are good or better. In these schools, pupils make strong progress in relation to their needs, abilities and prior attainment. Pupils make particularly strong progress in their communication, literacy and numeracy skills and apply these successfully in the community. Many pupils use thinking skills well to solve problems and plan activities to support their growing independence. By the time that they leave school, nearly all pupils gain a suitable range of qualifications or units of credit in courses that match well to their needs and abilities. Nearly all pupils move on to college, further training or a suitable placement.

Where standards require improvement, pupils do not use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well enough across the curriculum and make limited progress in achieving their individual education or behaviour targets. In April 2018, we carried out a thematic survey to find out the impact of the learning and skills measure on vulnerable pupils (Estyn, 2018f). For more information about this please read the **report**.

Figure 23:
Number of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

| 1 | 2 | 1 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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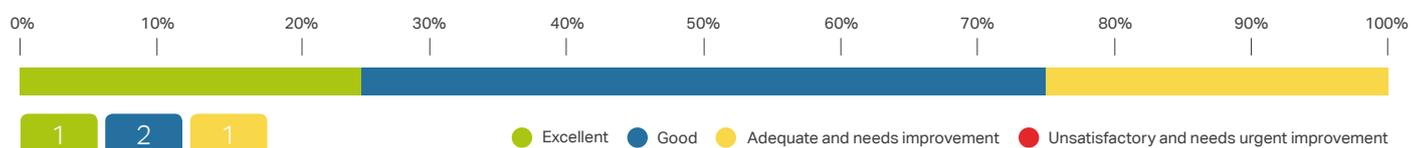
Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good or better in three of the four schools and adequate in the other. Where wellbeing and attitudes towards learning are strong, pupils engage enthusiastically in their learning and grow in confidence. Most pupils behave very well and show respect for their teachers, visitors and each other. A key feature of these schools is the positive attitude of pupils to developing their social skills by working on projects in the wider community. For example, they volunteer to work at local community centres, participate enthusiastically in enterprise projects and raise money for national charities.

Where wellbeing and attitudes to learning require improvement, too many pupils have poor attitudes towards learning. They make slow progress in managing their behaviour and leave lessons early without completing work. Poor levels of engagement have a detrimental effect on their own learning and disrupt the learning of other pupils.

Figure 24:
Number of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, 2017-2018

| | Excellent | Good | Adequate and needs improvement | Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement |

62

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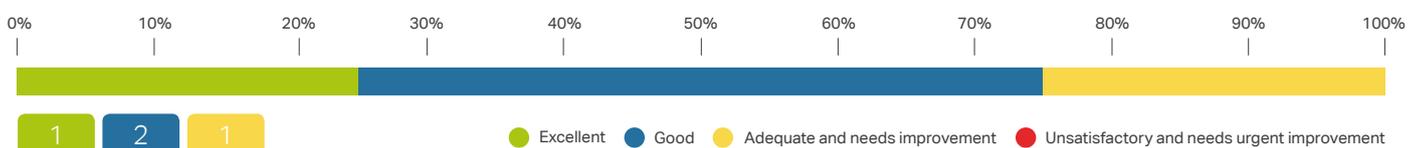
Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Teaching and learning experiences

Nearly all staff in special schools build positive working relationships with pupils and create stimulating learning environments where pupils feel safe and can flourish. Two of the four schools provide a rich and varied curriculum that is relevant to pupils' needs. Staff use their sound knowledge of the pupils to plan interesting and stimulating learning opportunities, including valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills in the community. In these schools, staff work together well to tailor learning experiences carefully to the specific needs, interests and abilities of the pupils. As pupils move through these schools, the curriculum builds well on their knowledge, understanding and skills.

A key feature of these schools is the strong focus across the curriculum on improving pupils' communication skills. Staff and therapists work together well to provide specialised technology and therapy, such as eye-gaze and voice-activated switches. This helps pupils to develop greater independence and provides better access to the curriculum. Teachers plan carefully to enable pupils to develop and apply their skills successfully across a range of contexts. Teachers use questioning well to ensure that pupils engage, check their understanding and develop their thinking skills and creativity.

In schools where teaching and learning experiences are weaker, learning pathways are not varied enough and do not meet the needs and aspirations of all pupils, particularly those at key stage 4. Where teaching requires improvement, the pace of lessons is too slow and learning tasks are not challenging enough. These shortcomings in teaching and the breadth and suitability of the curriculum mean that pupils disengage from learning, are too passive and do not achieve as well as they could.

Figure 25:
Number of judgements awarded for teaching and learning experiences, 2017-2018

| 1 | 1 | 2 |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

63

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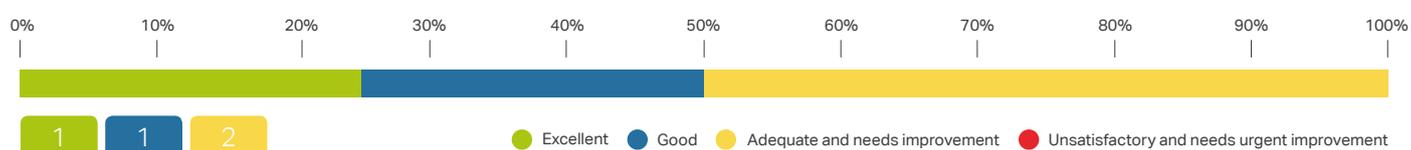
Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Care, support and guidance

Three of the four schools make strong provision for the care, support and guidance of pupils. These schools create calm, nurturing environments where pupils develop positive attitudes about themselves and others. Leaders and teachers form strong partnerships with parents and specialist agencies that make an important contribution to many aspects of pupil wellbeing. Members of staff provide valuable support for parents to extend learning beyond the school day, and to ensure a consistent approach to meeting pupils' wellbeing needs at weekends and during school holidays. For example, they share detailed individual plans with parents that identify specific targets and provide training for parents in strategies used in school. Procedures for identifying pupils' needs and tracking pupil progress are robust. These help staff to plan successful interventions that meet pupils' needs well.

Where care, support and guidance require improvement, staff are inconsistent in applying the school's procedures to promote positive behaviour and improve pupil engagement. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress in managing their behaviour and miss too much education. Arrangements to set pupil targets that relate to their identified needs and to track and monitor pupil progress are not robust enough.

Ysgol y Gogarth

Ysgol y Gogarth was instrumental in setting up a multi-disciplinary group whose aim is to improve the transition of pupils between school and further education.

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

Cydnabod
Rhagoriaeth
Recognising
Excellence

Ysgol y Gogarth

Ysgol y Gogarth worked with Bangor University to develop an approach to behaviour support that is based on teachers, behaviour analysts and other professionals working closely together. The aim is to teach pupils the skills needed to reach their full potential and to reduce barriers to learning.

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

Cydnabod
Rhagoriaeth
Recognising
Excellence

Figure 26:
Number of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018

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

1	2	1

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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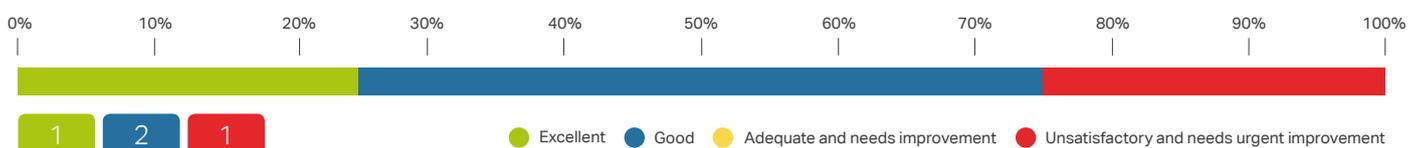
Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Leadership and management

In two of the four schools, leadership and management are good or better. In these schools, leaders communicate a clear vision for the school. They are confident in making informed innovations to the curriculum and create vibrant learning communities that focus well on improving pupil outcomes.

Professional learning is a strength of these schools. Leaders provide valuable opportunities for staff to exchange knowledge with peers in other schools through networks and school-to-school collaborations. Leaders build strong strategic partnerships with other schools and colleges, which helps to enrich the curriculum and support pupils' transition to suitable placements on leaving school.

Leaders know their school's strengths and areas for improvement well. They have a clear cycle of quality assurance activities and make effective use of a comprehensive range of evidence, including performance data, lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work. They take good account of the views of pupils, parents and staff.

In the schools where leadership requires improvement, there are newly established teams in place that are beginning to have an impact on school improvement. Leaders provide strong support for the day-to-day operation of the school but do not plan strategically to address priorities for school improvement well enough. There are not enough opportunities for staff to observe good practice within their own school and in other similar schools.

Figure 27:
Number of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018

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

1	1	1	1	● Excellent	● Good	● Adequate and needs improvement	● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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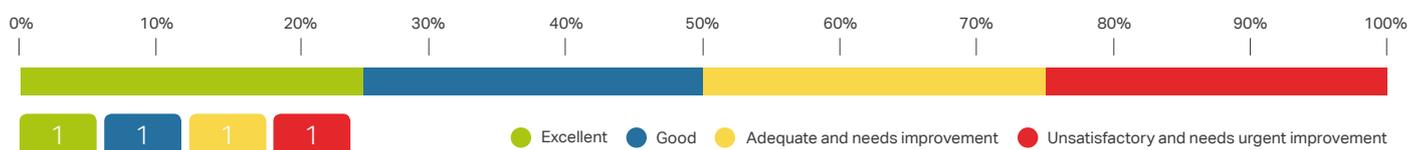
Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Follow-up activity:
Maintained special schools

This year we identified one school that needs special measures to improve. We visited five schools that required extra monitoring. Each of these schools had made good progress and no longer required follow-up activity. These schools responded well to the support provided by their local authorities and improvement partners. In each school, the role of senior leaders has strengthened and leaders ensure that school improvement activities focus clearly on improving pupil outcomes.

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Figure 28:
Maintained special schools placed in follow-up in 2017-2018
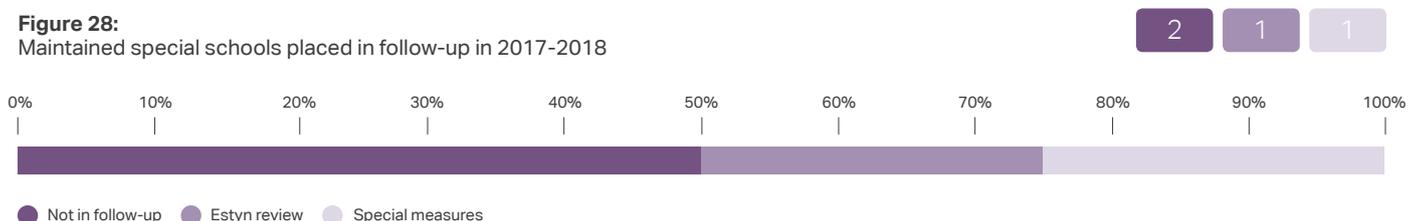
| 2 | 1 | 1 |

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

● Not in follow-up   ● Estyn review   ● Special measures

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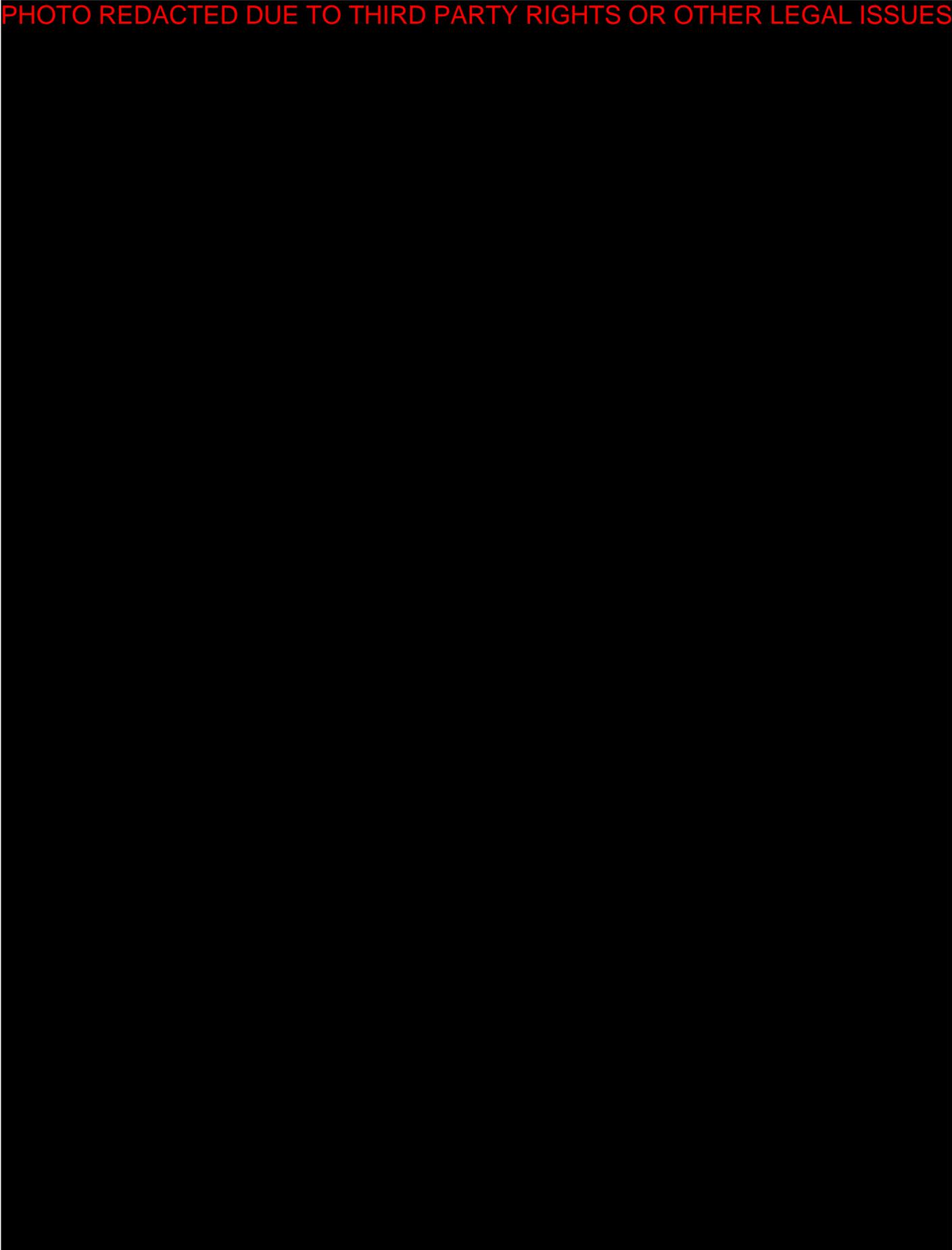
Sector report
Independent special schools

In January 2018, there were 32 independent special schools in Wales, one more than in January 2017. A further two schools opened between January and August 2018. Independent special schools educate pupils aged from 3 to 19 who have a range of needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the schools are small and pupils usually live in children's homes attached to the schools. In schools with fewer than six pupils, we report on provision and leadership only, to avoid identifying individual pupils. This year we inspected six independent special schools and reported on pupils' standards and wellbeing in four of these.

In addition to full inspections, we carry out regular monitoring inspections of independent special schools, usually every 12 to 18 months. This year, we carried out monitoring visits to 18 schools. The findings from all inspections and visits have informed this report.

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Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Compliance with Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

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

Two of the six independent special schools inspected and around three-quarters of schools visited as part of the monitoring process complied with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. Four of the six schools inspected and around a quarter of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process failed to meet one or more of the standards. In most cases, these schools failed to comply with Standard 1, the quality of education provided. Curriculum plans and schemes of work are weak and learning experiences do not match well to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress. Nearly all of these schools also failed to comply with Standard 3, the welfare, health and safety of pupils. In many cases, this is because policies relating to the promotion of good behaviour, first aid and educational visits do not provide clear enough guidance for staff.

This year we conducted three focused visits to independent special schools in response to a request from the Welsh Government relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Schools that did not meet regulations relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils were required to submit a plan to the Welsh Government to show how they will make the required improvements.

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Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Standards

In the four independent special schools where we judged outcomes for pupils, standards are good in one and adequate and need improvement in three. Where standards are good, pupils learn to manage their anxieties successfully and make strong progress in developing relevant communication and social skills. Many pupils develop their thinking and problem-solving skills well. For example, they plan and prepare their own meals or apply the skills they learn in school to work experience placements in the community. This helps them to become more independent in their daily lives.

In schools with adequate standards, too many pupils do not engage with learning. Pupils make limited progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. They do not use these skills regularly enough in real life situations and in subjects across the curriculum.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good in one school, adequate in two and unsatisfactory in the fourth. Where wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good, pupils behave well and engage enthusiastically in their learning. Pupils develop high levels of trust in staff, which contributes positively to the development of their confidence and self-esteem. In most of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process, pupils learn to manage their behaviour successfully in relation to their individual needs. This helps them to engage well in lessons and build their social skills and self-confidence. In three of the four schools, too many pupils make slow progress in managing their behaviour and do not engage well in learning. They do not respond well to staff support and leave lessons early without completing tasks.

Figure 29:
Number of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

1   3

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
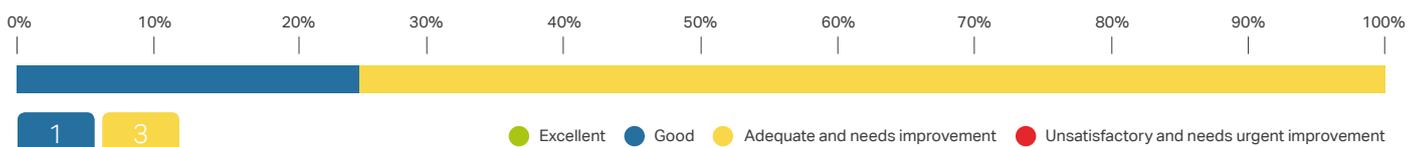
Figure 30:
Number of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, 2017-2018

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

1   2   1

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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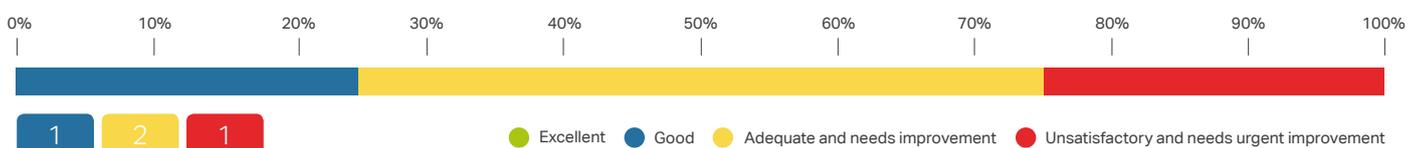
Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Teaching and learning experiences

The quality and range of learning experiences vary considerably between schools. In a third of the schools inspected and in three-quarters of the schools monitored, teaching and learning experiences are good. Teachers tailor the curriculum well to meet individual pupils' needs and provide a suitable variety of well-planned activities. Enrichment projects provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their skills in the community. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and progress. They deliver interesting and stimulating lessons that help pupils to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills.

In the two-thirds of the schools inspected and in one-quarter of the schools monitored, teaching and learning experiences require improvement. In these schools, the curriculum is too narrow with few opportunities for pupils to follow accredited courses or to access colleges of further education and learning experiences in the community. Where teaching requires improvement, teachers set learning activities that lack challenge. Teachers are over reliant on a limited range of approaches to teaching such as the use of worksheets. Teaching and support staff are inconsistent in their response to poor behaviour. These schools have frequent changes in teaching staff and there is a lack of continuity and coherence in curriculum planning. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills progressively across the curriculum. As a result, pupils make slow progress in developing these skills.

Figure 31:
Number of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

2	2	2

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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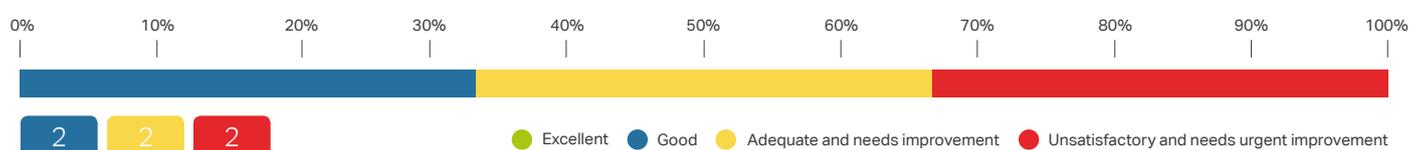
Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Care, support and guidance

Provision for the care, support and guidance of pupils is good or excellent in two of the schools inspected. It is a strong feature in three-quarters of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process. In these schools, staff know the needs and abilities of their pupils well. They form highly effective multi-disciplinary teams and plan learning experiences that match well to pupils' specific needs and interests. Teaching and support staff implement interventions to support pupils' identified needs successfully. They build strong partnerships with parents and carers to extend learning opportunities beyond the school day.

In four of the schools, the provision for care, support and guidance requires improvement. In these schools, arrangements for staff to track and monitor pupils' progress in developing their skills across the curriculum are not robust enough. Staff are inconsistent in applying procedures for target-setting, managing challenging behaviour and absenteeism. Two of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process do not have effective systems to promote good behaviour. As a result, pupils do not engage well with their learning and do not make enough progress.

Aran Hall School

The school implements a reward-based programme developed in the United States of America to improve the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils. Senior leaders at Aran Hall refined the programme so that staff could implement it successfully across education and residential settings.

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

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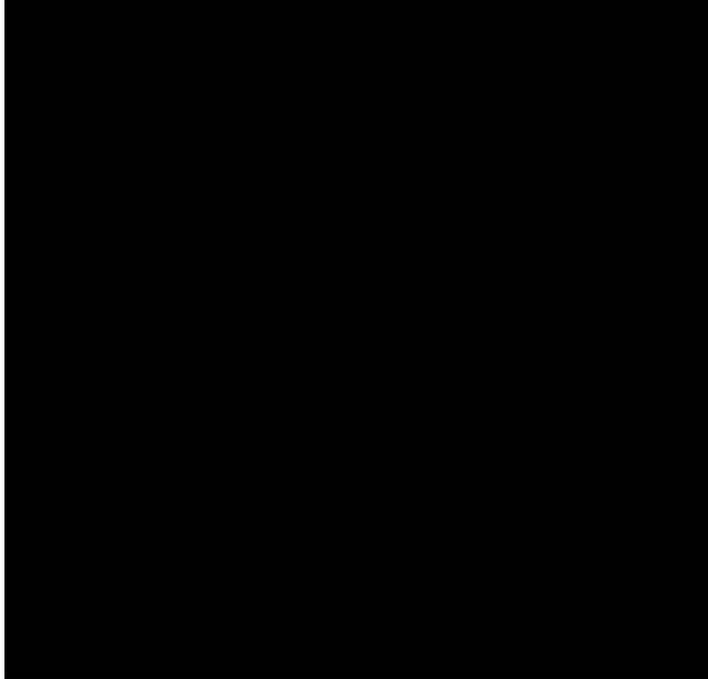
Figure 32:
Number of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018

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

1	1	3	1

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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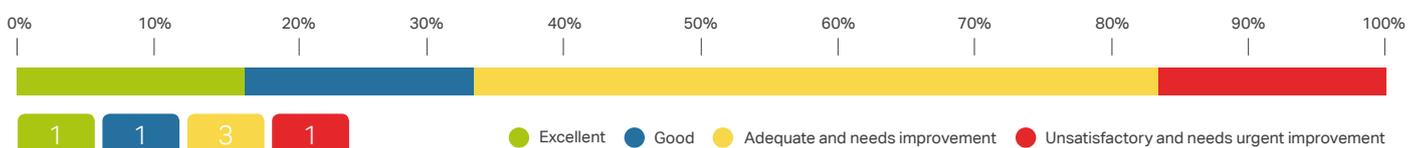
Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Leadership and management

Nearly all independent special schools provide education for pupils who live in attached children's homes. A strong feature of most of the schools is the successful collaboration between education and care staff. Staff work together well as a team and feel comfortable seeking advice from each other. This helps to ensure that pupils have consistent support and guidance.

Leadership and management are good in two of the schools inspected. In these schools, leaders benefit from the support of colleagues within their organisation who help to quality assure standards and provision. Leaders are confident and engage appropriately with other providers to identify good practice that strengthens their work and benefits their pupils. In these schools and in many of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process, leaders communicate a clear vision for the school and create a positive and nurturing ethos that supports pupils' needs effectively.

In four of the schools inspected, leadership and management require improvement. In these schools, and in just over half of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process, self-evaluation and improvement planning activities do not focus well enough on raising pupils' standards. Opportunities for professional development do not place enough emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Arrangements for staff to learn from peers in other schools through networks and school-to-school collaborations are weak.

In around a quarter of schools visited this year for core inspections and monitoring visits there has been significant disruption to teaching and learning because of changes in senior leadership. This has an adverse impact on important aspects of pupils' progress and wellbeing.

Ty Bronllys

Highly effective joint working between the education, residential and multi-disciplinary teams supports the provision for individual pupils.

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

Figure 33:
Number of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018 inspections
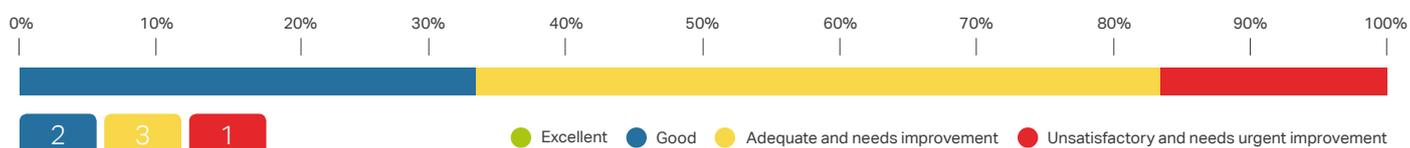
0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%

2	3	1

● Excellent　● Good　● Adequate and needs improvement　● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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Sector report
Independent mainstream schools

In January 2018, there were 35 independent mainstream schools in Wales. These schools educate almost 10,000 pupils. This is around 2% of pupils in Wales. This year, we inspected six independent mainstream schools. Three of these schools are all-age schools, one educates pupils aged 7 to 18 years and two schools provide education for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. This sample reflects the diversity of schools within the sector. The findings from all inspections have informed this report.

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Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

In independent schools, we inspect the extent to which the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 (National Assembly for Wales, 2003). This year, five of the six schools inspected met all of the regulations. In one school, we identified shortcomings in compliance with a few regulations relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the condition of the premises. We will monitor this school to ensure that it makes the required improvements to maintain registration.

This year we completed four focused visits. In all cases, the reason for the visit was concerns regarding the school's compliance with regulations relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. These concerns were about safety checks for buildings. Where schools did not meet the regulations, they were required to submit a plan to the Welsh Government to show how they will make the required improvements.

Standards

In the independent schools inspected this year, standards are good or better.

There are excellent features in the standards in half of the schools. In these schools, pupils recall previous learning exceptionally well and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills successfully to new contexts. They are confident and articulate learners. Classroom discussions are often thought-provoking and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively, for example when Year 10 pupils explain their opinions about 'Why Hitler wanted the Sudetenland'. Pupils read fluently and enthusiastically and younger pupils understand the importance of developing their reading skills. Pupils make strong progress in developing their writing skills and more able pupils use a well-developed and expressive vocabulary to engage the reader. Pupils develop strong mathematical skills and they apply these confidently in a range of appropriate contexts. For instance, Year 6 pupils decode algebraic equations to create a maze. In the other schools, pupils do not always use their numeracy and literacy skills to the same standard in subjects across the curriculum.

Figure 34:
Number of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

| 3 | 3 |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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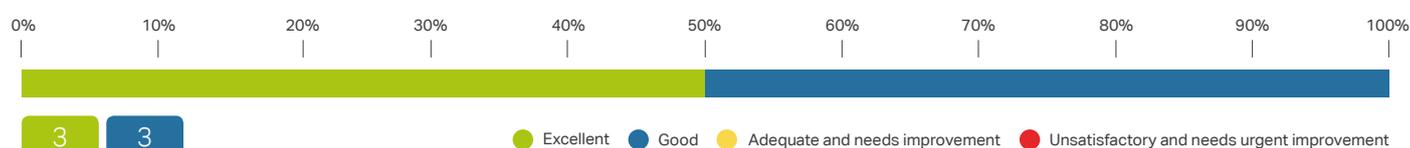
Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In all schools inspected this year, wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good or better. There are excellent features in half of the schools. Pupils are exceptionally well motivated and display extremely positive attitudes towards their learning. They exhibit high levels of curiosity and are confident and resilient learners, particularly when working independently. Pupils with leadership roles take their responsibilities seriously and are proud of their positions.

The comprehensive range of co-curricular activities that pupils attend regularly strengthens and extends pupils' learning and life skills considerably. For example, they practise their survival skills in 'bush craft' and edit the school's newsletter in the young journalist club. These activities have a positive impact on pupils' physical and emotional health and foster strong working relationships.

In half of schools, a few pupils rely too heavily on the teacher to support their learning or have limited opportunities to develop their leadership roles and influence the work of the school.

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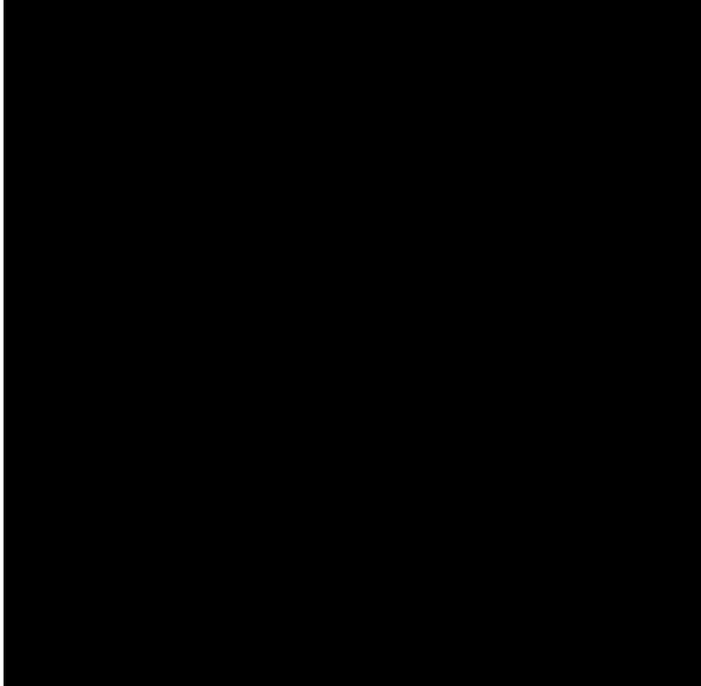
Figure 35:
Number of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, 2017-2018

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

3	3

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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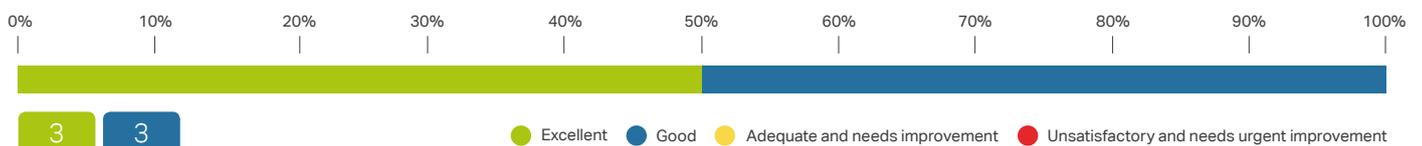
Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Teaching and learning experiences

In five of the schools, teaching and learning experiences are good or better, with excellent features in a third of schools. In these schools, teachers plan a stimulating and engaging curriculum that builds progressively on pupils' skill development and knowledge. As a result, pupils gain a fascination for learning and sustain their interest and concentration. Well-planned co-curricular opportunities support the curriculum well and enhance pupils' wellbeing and their social and life skills significantly, for example a visit to Bletchley Park to investigate patterns and codes.

Teaching is good in five of the schools and adequate in the other. Where teaching is strong, teachers use engaging resources to inspire pupils and encourage them to explore ideas independently. High-quality questioning skills probe pupils' understanding and move their learning forward. In addition, strong verbal feedback enables pupils to address errors promptly and extend their learning. In nearly all of the schools, teachers do not always adapt teaching well enough to meet the needs of individual pupils, particularly the more able. Our thematic survey, published in March 2018, provides teachers with strategies and suggestions to support and challenge more able learners (Estyn, 2018d). For more information, please read the **report**.

In all of the schools, one of the recommendations made relates to improving teaching. In June 2018, we published a survey with case studies that describe how schools improve the quality of teaching (Estyn, 2018b). For more information please read the **report**.

Figure 36:
Number of judgements awarded for teaching and learning experiences, 2017-2018

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

2	3	1

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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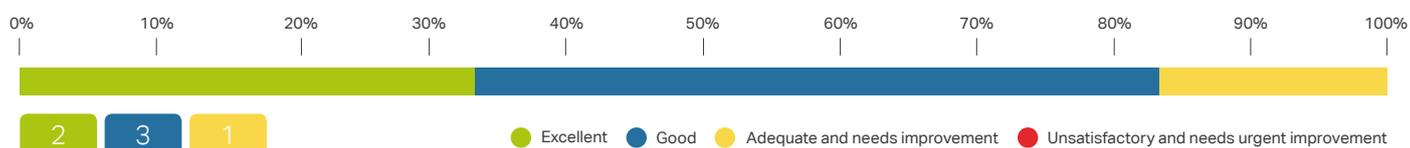
Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Care, support and guidance

In five of the schools, care, support and guidance are good or better, with excellent features in two-thirds of schools. Where care, support and guidance have excellent features, they contribute successfully to pupils' high standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning.

In schools with exceptional practice, there are well-developed tracking systems, and staff monitor pupils' progress robustly. Teachers take prompt action to arrange suitable interventions to support pupils and celebrate pupils' achievements positively. Arrangements for the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs and the provision for pupils with English as an additional language are effective. Members of staff promote the importance of good citizenship well and provide pupils with many opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities. There is regular communication with parents, who feel part of their child's education journey and know how to support their learning. In a few schools, little use is made of assessment information to inform planning and, as a result, learning activities do not always meet the needs of all pupils.

Redhill Preparatory School

Staff at Redhill Preparatory School place the emotional intelligence of their pupils as a high priority. Members of staff implement strategies to support the social and emotional wellbeing of pupils through questionnaires, skills sessions and pupil-led focus groups where they discuss concerns openly.

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

Westbourne School

Westbourne School assesses the language ability of pupils who are learning English as an additional language before they start at the school and these pupils have the opportunity to attend a summer school. Teachers promote high levels of inclusion and encourage these pupils to participate in activities, such as assemblies, charity events, international days and public speaking lessons.

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

Cydnabod
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Figure 37:
Number of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018

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

| 4 | 1 | 1 |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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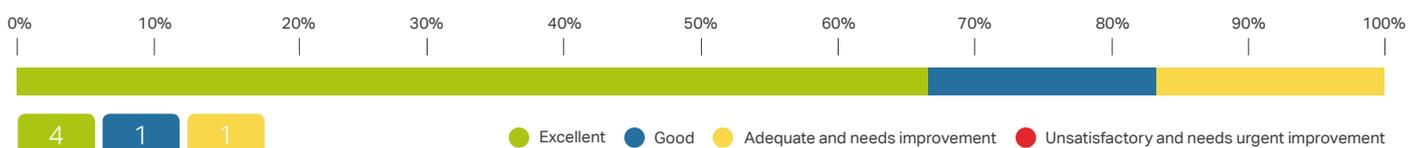
Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Leadership and management

In five of the schools, leadership and management are good or better. In three of these schools, the headteacher had joined the school within the last year. Well-planned succession arrangements ensured a particularly smooth transition period when the new headteachers took up their posts. This enabled leaders to build on their schools' existing strengths during a time of change.

In schools with excellent leadership, staff share values and aims that the whole school community understand. These underpin all areas of school life. Staff at all levels provide leadership and have a strong focus on school priorities and pupils' progress. Staff talk openly and confidently about their practice, and this improves the opportunities for them to learn from each other. Leaders have systematic arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's work and they use this evidence well to maintain school improvement.

Where there are shortcomings in leadership, the quality of the monitoring of teaching and learning by leaders varies too much or there are too limited a range of opportunities for professional learning. Half of the schools inspected had recommendations to strengthen arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a third had a recommendation to enhance opportunities for professional learning.

Figure 38:
Number of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018
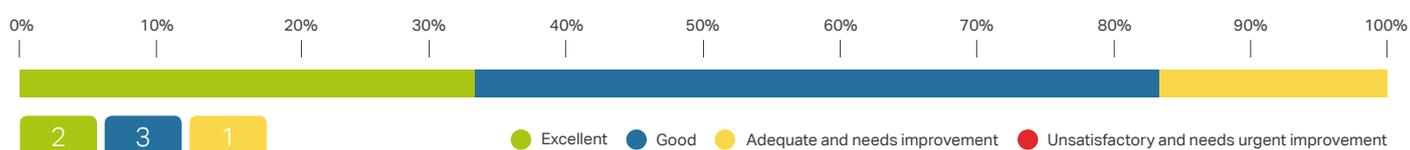
| 2 | 3 | 1 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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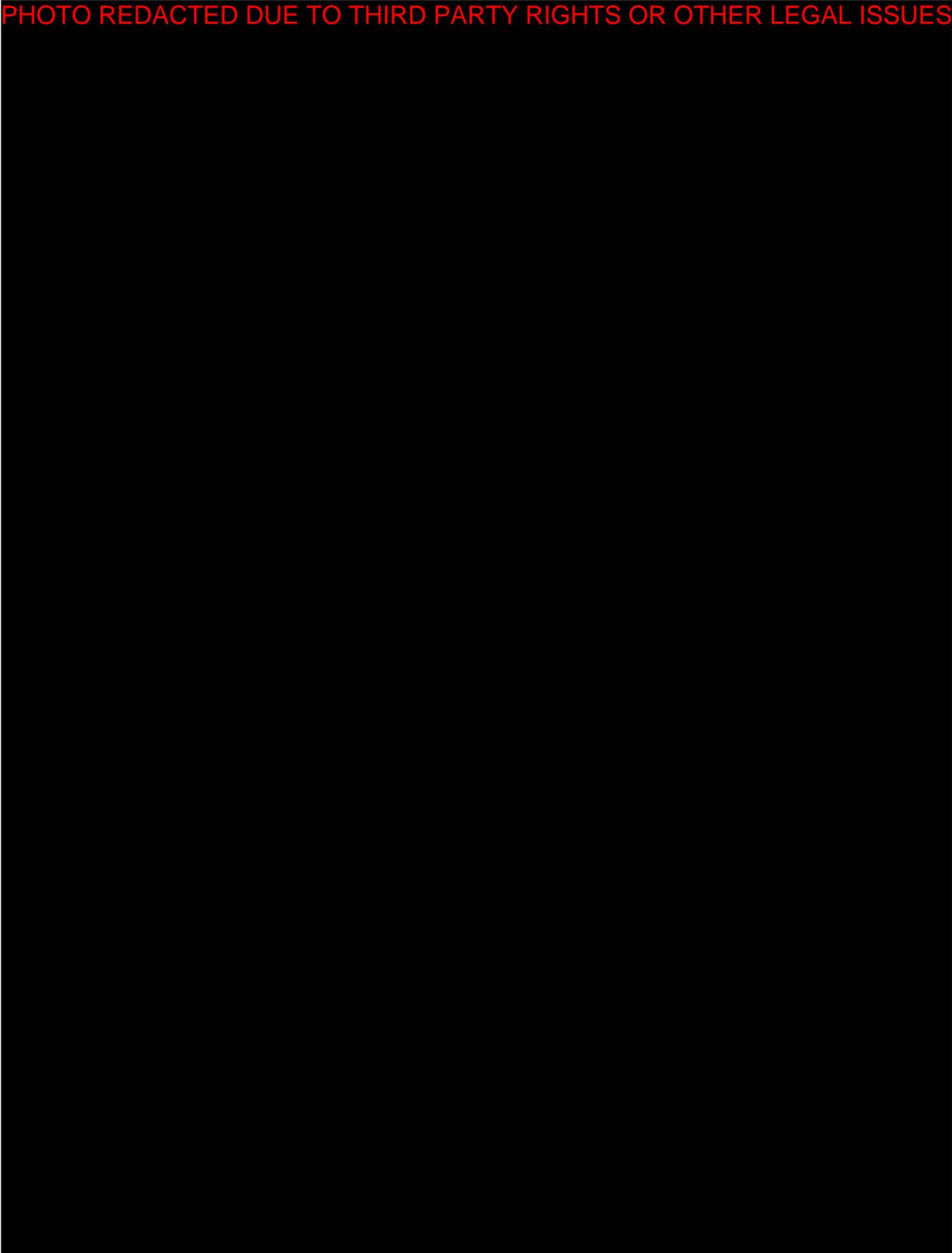
Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Sector report
Independent specialist colleges

This year, there are seven registered independent specialist colleges in Wales. This is the same as in January 2017. These colleges educate around 220 learners aged 16 and over. The colleges provide for a diverse range of pupils' needs, including autistic spectrum disorder, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. In four of the colleges, many learners live in residential homes attached to the college.

In addition to full inspections, we carry out regular monitoring visits of independent specialist colleges. These visits consider the progress made by the colleges against specific recommendations from core inspections and previous monitoring visits. This year, we carried out monitoring visits to five specialist colleges.

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Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Standards

In the independent specialist colleges visited this year, most learners make at least suitable progress against the learning goals in their individual learning plans. Many learners gain valuable units of credit or qualifications that relate clearly to their long-term goals and aspirations. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills well over time and have worthwhile opportunities to apply these across the curriculum.

In three of the colleges, learners make strong progress in developing their communication and social skills. In two colleges, learners respond well to opportunities for them to take part in work-related activities to acquire important problem-solving and practical skills in realistic working contexts. They apply these skills successfully to work experience placements in the local community, for example at a leisure centre and organic food retailer. The progress that learners make in these areas helps to build their confidence and prepares them well to live more independently.

In one college, it is difficult to evaluate the progress of individual learners or groups of learners because systems for tracking and evaluating learners' progress remain too informal.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In all the colleges visited, many learners have positive and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. Many learners engage confidently in their learning and sustain their interest well in sessions. They take pride in their achievements and, where they are able, share these successfully with their peers, staff and visitors to the college.

Many learners make particularly strong progress in improving aspects of their personal wellbeing during their time at college. For example, they learn to manage their social difficulties and approach new situations with greater confidence. This helps them to become more resilient learners. Learners with more challenging behaviours learn to manage these with increasing success because of the well co-ordinated support they receive from staff.

Most learners attend college regularly, and arrive at sessions punctually and ready to learn. In one college, learners do not attend college regularly enough and are not punctual to lessons. These learners miss valuable opportunities to learn.

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Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Teaching and learning experiences

Each of the colleges visited provides a distinctive curriculum that ensures that learning experiences generally match well to learners' abilities, needs and aspirations. In two colleges, learning experiences focus strongly on developing learners' practical and independent skills through a range of work-related activities and work experience placements with a variety of local and national employers. Other colleges emphasise opportunities for learners to develop their communication, literacy and numeracy skills through classroom-based learning that links to relevant opportunities to apply these skills in the community.

In all colleges, teachers have a strong understanding of learners' individual needs and build positive working relationships with learners. Teachers and support staff work together closely to plan relevant activities for learners that take good account of their social and emotional needs. This allows them to make sound progress against their individual targets.

In two of the colleges, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for learners to develop and practise their independence skills. This means that in these colleges learners do not develop these skills well enough.

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Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance is a notable feature of the colleges visited. The colleges provide calm and nurturing environments in which learners build their confidence and make effective progress in their learning over time. Four of the colleges have robust processes in place to identify learners' needs and abilities, both before they start and when they join the college. They use this information well to place learners on suitable learning pathways and to make sure that they have the support they need to achieve their identified learning goals. A particularly strong feature of three of the colleges is the high level of specialist therapeutic support they provide. Through their work with trained therapists, tutors and learning support staff develop useful strategies to work with learners and to help them manage their anxieties and difficulties successfully.

In one of the colleges, the provision for sex and relationships education is limited. This means that learners are not suitably prepared to manage their personal safety in these areas when they leave the college.

Leadership and management

In the colleges visited this year, leaders communicate a strong vision that focuses clearly on equipping learners with the skills that they need to make a successful transition to the next phase of their lives. Over the past two years, specialist colleges have developed a valuable network to share good practice in areas such as assessment and target setting. This collaborative work is an emerging strength of the sector. It is helping to improve the quality of provision for learners in specialist colleges across Wales.

The colleges have effective systems to collect information on the attendance, punctuality and behaviour of learners. This information helps colleges to identify where individual learners require extra support to improve their engagement in learning. Four of the colleges have suitable processes to collect data relating to learner progress and the quality of teaching. However, senior leaders do not use this information well enough to identify strengths and areas for development in these areas. In particular, these processes do not focus clearly enough on the impact of teaching on learning. As a result, self-evaluation and improvement planning activities in these colleges have limited impact on improving the quality of learning and teaching.

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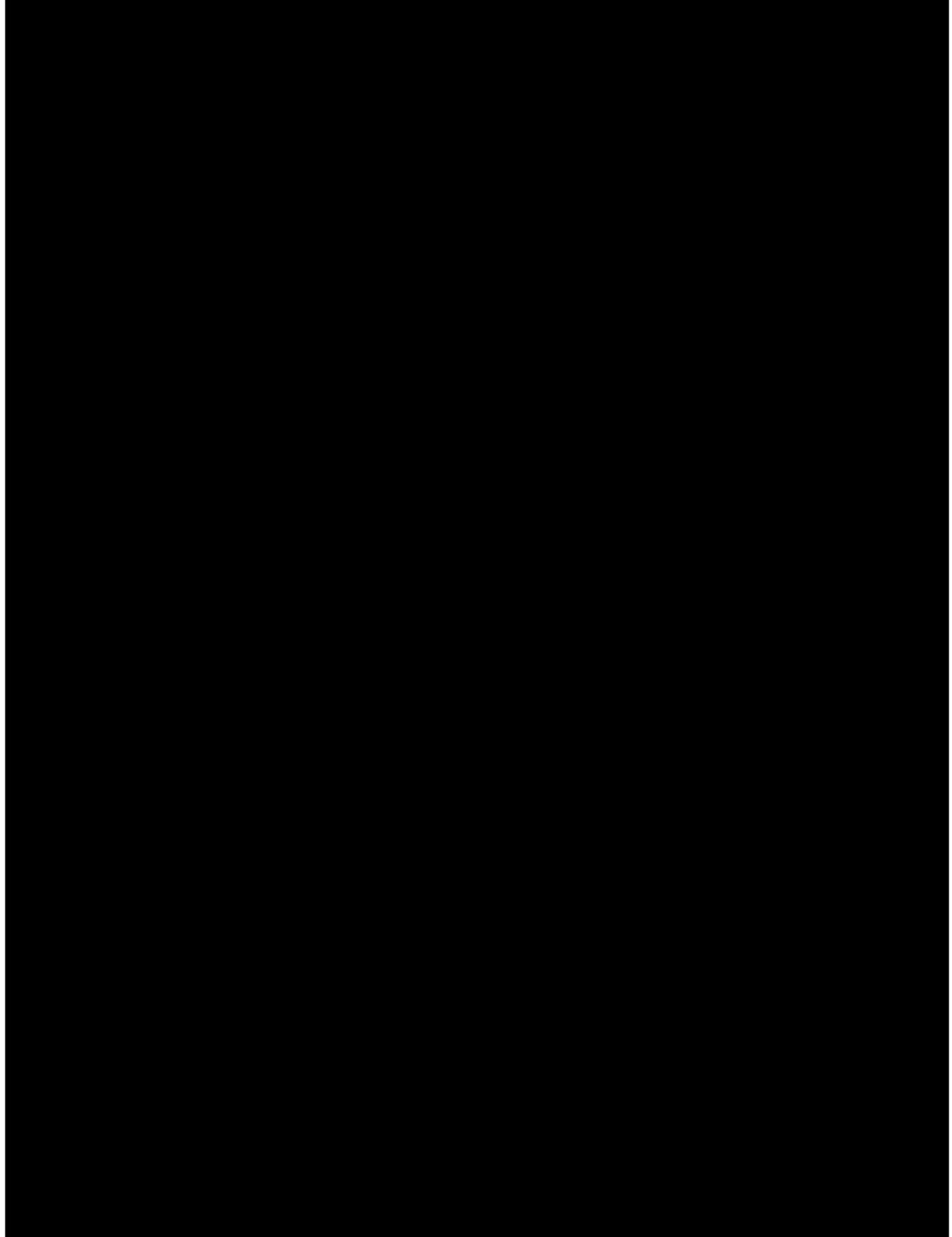
Sector report
Pupil referral units

In January 2018, there were 23 registered pupil referral units (PRUs) in Wales. This is two fewer than in January 2017, when there were 25. There were approximately 800 pupils educated in PRUs in January 2018 (Welsh Government, 2018d). One local authority opened a PRU in September 2018. There are two local authorities without a registered PRU.

This year we inspected three PRUs. The findings from all inspections have informed this report.

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Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Standards

Generally, key stage 2 pupils at each of the PRUs inspected make strong progress towards achieving their learning and behaviour targets. Many develop the skills and confidence that they need to make a successful return to mainstream education.

Two of the PRUs inspected also cater for the needs of pupils at key stages 3 and 4. The standards that pupils in this age range achieve vary widely between the two PRUs. At one PRU, standards are good. At this PRU, pupils make effective use of ICT to research and present their work in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils work well independently and many develop sound reading skills. At the PRUs where pupils' standards require improvement, pupils do not use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well enough across the curriculum and make limited progress in achieving their individual education or behaviour targets.

Figure 39:
Number of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

1	1	1

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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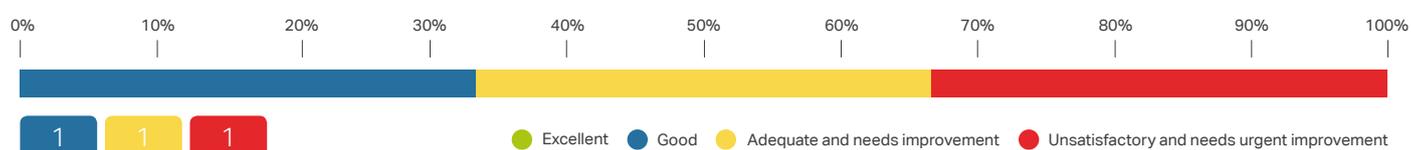
Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

At each of the three PRUs, many pupils respond well to the caring ethos of the PRU and a majority establish a strong sense of trust in the staff. This helps many pupils to make important improvements to their behaviour.

A majority of pupils engage well in learning activities, concentrate on completing tasks to the best of their ability and have positive attitudes towards learning. This is particularly the case where pupils have choice over what and how they learn. However, a few pupils at each PRU, across all key stages, do not focus well enough in their lessons and lose interest in their work. At each of the PRUs, pupils do not have a strong enough voice about what and how they learn.

Figure 40:
Number of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes for learning, 2017-2018

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

| 2 | 1 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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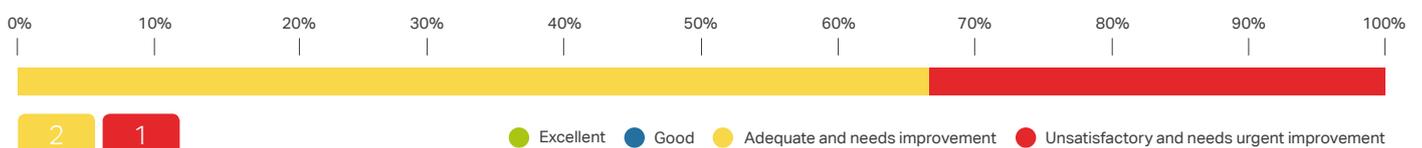
Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers at the PRUs generally know the needs, abilities and interests of pupils well. Learning experiences for pupils of primary school age are particularly effective. For this age group, PRUs provide a nurturing environment and small class sizes. This helps a majority of pupils to thrive. Teachers plan engaging learning activities that encourage these pupils to learn and play within clear boundaries.

At two PRUs, there are strong links between the PRU and local schools and colleges. This helps PRU staff to provide individual learning programmes for pupils that draw on the resources available at these other providers. These arrangements also help pupils at the PRUs to maintain contact with their friends at local schools and colleges. Generally, pupils achieve better outcomes where PRUs link closely to local mainstream schools.

Where provision at key stages 3 and 4 needs improvement, the range of learning experiences, facilities and resources do not meet the needs and interests of pupils well enough. There is a lack of continuity between the courses that pupils start in their mainstream school and those that they access in the PRU.

Figure 41:
Number of judgements awarded for teaching and learning experiences, 2017-2018

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

| 1 | 1 | 1 |

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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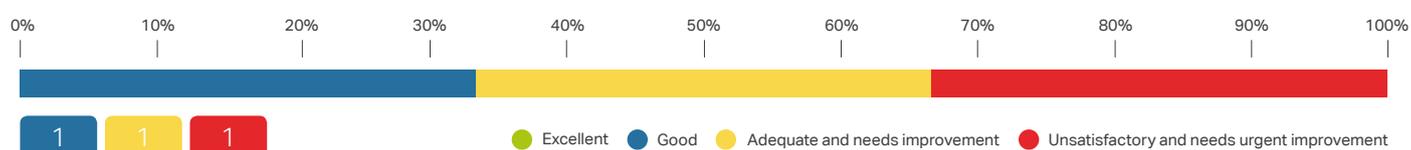
Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Care, support and guidance

Care, support and guidance are good in one of the PRUs inspected this year. At this PRU, teachers manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and track pupil progress well. Staff provide useful opportunities for pupils to learn the importance of healthy lifestyles and to understand their own emotional needs.

In the two PRUs where care, support and guidance require improvement, staff do not apply procedures for behaviour management and tracking pupil progress consistently. Staff do not use assessment data well enough when setting targets in pupils' education and behaviour plans.

Each of the three PRUs have formed effective partnerships with important stakeholders that have a beneficial impact on pupil welfare. These include school-based counsellors, health care professionals and education welfare services.

At two PRUs, staff support the transition process well through sharing useful information with partners when pupils return to mainstream education, colleges of further education or work-based providers.

Figure 42:
Number of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018
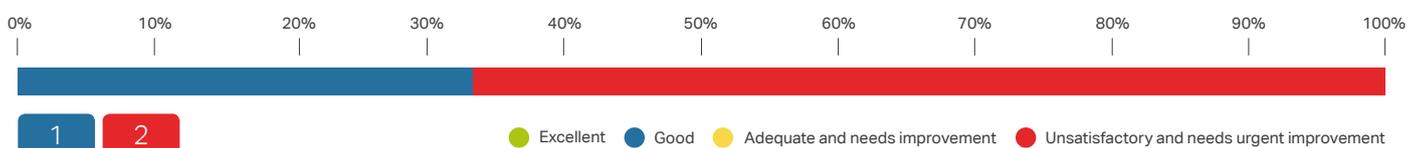
| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

| 1 | 2 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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Leadership and management

Leadership and management require improvement at the three PRUs inspected this year. Two PRUs have experienced significant and recent changes to the membership of the senior leadership team, including the teacher in charge. Leaders at these PRUs have introduced new systems to support self-evaluation and improvement planning. At the time of their inspections, it was too early to evaluate the impact of these changes on pupils' outcomes.

The third PRU has increased the number of pupils on roll, the range of pupils' needs and the number of provisions that make up the portfolio PRU. The PRU's processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning require improvement. The role of the management committee in setting the strategic direction of the service requires strengthening at two PRUs.

Figure 43:
Number of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018

| 2 | 1 | | ● Excellent | ● Good | ● Adequate and needs improvement | ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement |

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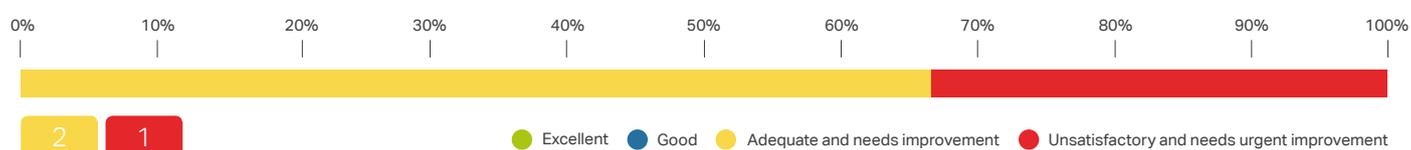
Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Follow-up activity:
Pupil referral units

In 2017-2018, we identified one PRU as requiring special measures and another as requiring significant improvement.

This year we visited two PRUs that required extra monitoring. One PRU required significant improvement and the other needed special measures. Both had made suitable progress and we removed them from follow-up.

Key to the success of these PRUs were improvements to leadership and management. Leaders in both PRUs strengthened their partnership arrangements with their local authorities, consortia and local mainstream schools. In March 2018, we carried out a survey on the impact of managed moves on pupils (Estyn, 2018g). We found that managed moves are more likely to be successful when schools and local authorities work well with pupils and their families. For more information about our findings about managed moves, please read the **report**.

Leaders of PRUs have improved the membership and role of their management committees and these have appropriate oversight of the standards that pupils achieve.   Leaders implement clear self-evaluation processes and invest in the professional development of their staff. This helps to provide staff with the skills and confidence they need to implement change.

Figure 44:
Pupil referral units placed in follow-up in 2017-2018

| 1 | 1 | 1 |

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

● Estyn review   ● Significant improvement   ● Special measures

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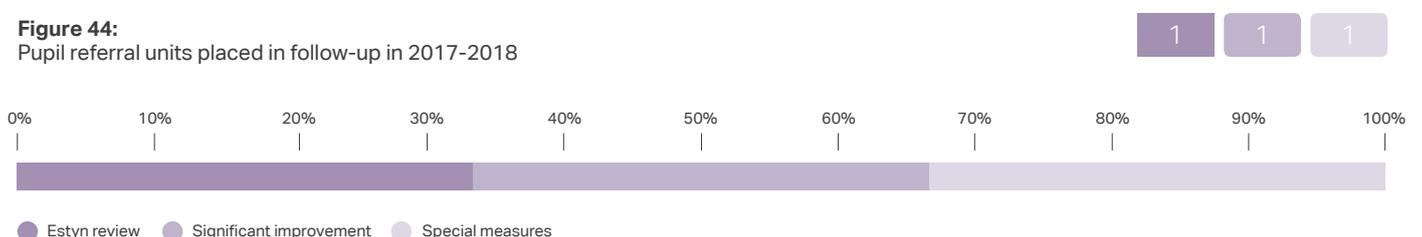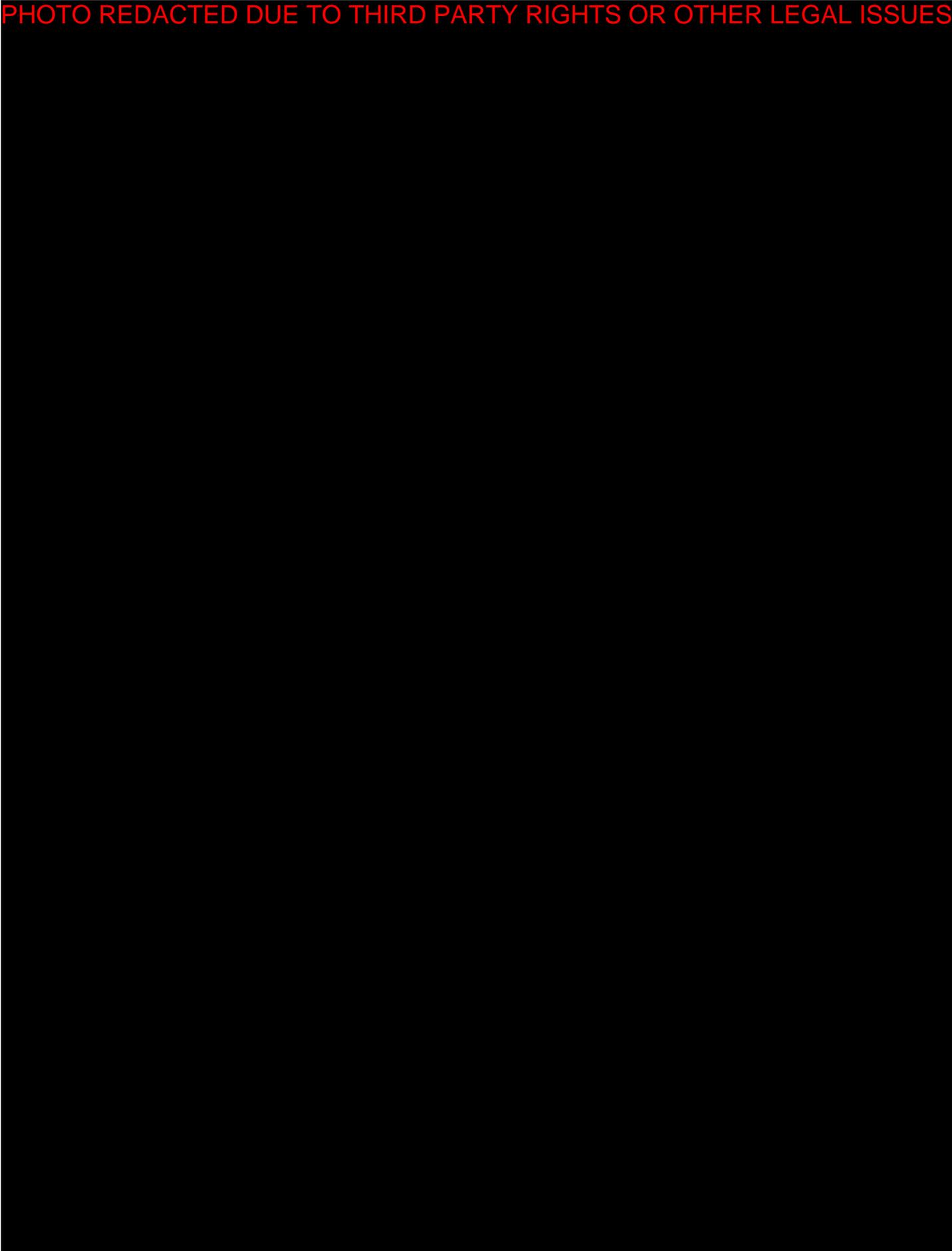
Sector report
Local government education services

This year, we carried out two pilot inspections of local government education services. We monitored the progress of the four regional consortia following their inspections in 2016 and made follow-up visits to the three local authorities where we held improvement conferences last year. We also surveyed local authorities to learn more about the support that they provide to education settings for children under five.

The pilot inspections took place in Neath Port Talbot in December 2017 and in Denbighshire in February 2018. During these inspections, we evaluated three inspection areas. These are the outcomes that pupils in the local authorities achieve, the quality of the education services provided by the authority, and the quality of leadership and management. Following the inspections, we consulted stakeholders about proposed changes to the way that we inspect local government education services. We published our updated inspection guidance in September 2018.

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Sector summaries: Local government education services

In Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, outcomes for pupils, the quality of education services and leadership are good. Senior officers and elected members have a clear vision to ensure that children and young people receive an effective education. They have a good understanding of the key challenges facing the education service and individual schools and they know their schools well. Challenge advisers and teacher development officers provide appropriate support and challenge to schools. The authority provides a broad range of support services that meet the needs of vulnerable learners well. This means that pupils make strong progress over time. They start school with weaker skills than their peers in other authorities but perform well in key stage 4. However, performance in primary schools does not compare well with that in similar authorities and officers do not consistently evaluate their work well enough. To find out more, please read the report: **Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**.

In Denbighshire County Council, outcomes and the quality of education services are good and leadership is excellent. The authority's political and strategic leadership is successful in managing change. For example, the restructure of education and children's services has resulted in a coherent, blended service that is better able to meet the needs of children and young people. The connections between these services help the authority to respond quickly to the needs of families and pupils and help officers to implement intervention and support at an early stage. The authority knows its schools very well and has clear policies, strategies and processes for school improvement work. It has a suitable range of appropriate provision for vulnerable pupils, which is generally effective in meeting their needs. Performance across the secondary schools has been variable over the last three years, but standards at key stage 4 in nearly all key indicators broadly compare well over time with those in similar authorities across Wales, and with national outcomes. We asked Denbighshire to produce a case study outlining the excellent practice in leadership and management. To find out more, please read the report: **Denbighshire County Council**.

We monitored the four regional consortia for school improvement between September and November 2017. These visits focused on the progress each consortium had made against the recommendations from the inspections carried out in 2016. Three of the four consortia made at least satisfactory progress. During the monitoring visit, we found that GwE in North Wales, the consortium with the most recommendations to address, had made strong or very good progress with all recommendations identified during the inspection. In ERW, the progress in addressing the recommendations from the inspection of June 2016 was relatively slow. This is partly due to disagreements across the local authorities and ERW's central team about the delivery of school improvement services regionally, as well as varying levels of commitment to regional working amongst senior officers and elected members. ERW's central team has introduced a range of appropriate measures to improve the quality of challenge and support for schools causing concern. However, in the 18 months following the initial inspection of ERW, the executive board and joint committee too often accepted reports from management without robust challenge. This means that there are limited actions or decisions arising from reports presented and progress in key areas of work in the region has been slow, including for example the pace of improvement in secondary schools causing concern. In addition, ERW's central team has found it difficult to increase the pace of improvement under the existing governance arrangements.

Denbighshire County Council

The restructure of education and children's services has resulted in a service that is better able to meet the needs of children and young people.

For more information please read the **case study**

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Sector summaries: Local government education services

In 2016 and 2017, Estyn facilitated improvement conferences with Pembrokeshire, Powys and Wrexham local authorities. The aim of the conferences is to help to understand fully the reasons for the weak performance in important aspects of the education services' work and to ensure that firm plans were in place to improve these. This year, we held follow-up conferences to monitor the progress of each authority. The three local authorities have weak performance in secondary schools. Officers and elected members have taken early if limited steps to address the issues and have coherent improvement plans. In Powys, we also considered the effectiveness of central finance support in overseeing school budgets and, in Pembrokeshire, the local authority's support for vulnerable learners. After the improvement conferences, local authority link inspectors monitor closely the progress that local authorities make in addressing these issues.

In March, we published a thematic report on the effective use of managed moves in local authorities and schools (Estyn, 2018g). We found that, in most local authorities, inclusion services have a clear vision for supporting vulnerable pupils and provide schools and PRUs with useful guidance on a range of issues including managed moves. However, in a few local authorities, this vision is not shared or understood well enough by a few schools. In these local authorities, home schools are unclear about their responsibilities around supporting and monitoring a managed move and do not undertake this role effectively enough. Many local authorities have introduced systems to collect data on managed moves and a few have robust systems to track pupil progress in this area. However, local authority staff do not use this data well enough to review the success of initiatives or identify trends and patterns at school or local authority level. As a result, the timeliness and effectiveness of targeted support for schools are too inconsistent across Wales. For more information about our findings about managed moves, please read the report: **Managed moves**.

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Sector summaries: Local government education services

In August, we published a report about the value of youth work in Wales (Estyn, 2018h). We found that there are many varied and effective youth support services available to young people in Wales. An important feature of these services is the way they are able to support young people to develop their social and emotional capabilities, including determination, self-control, confidence, resilience, and self-motivation. Through these youth support services, youth workers and other professionals work with young people to achieve personal change in their lives. For a minority of young people, these services can act as vital support and be life changing, but these services are not available to all young people. This is because there is no overall strategy for the planning, provision or funding of services, and policy makers and providers do not have one clear, shared vision for the delivery of services. Read our report to find out more about youth work in Wales: **Youth Support Services in Wales**.

In March 2018, the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning announced the intention to secure the strategic direction of youth work in Wales through the development of a new Youth Work Strategy.

Estyn provides its opinion over the merits of school reorganisation proposals and their likely impact on standards and provision. This year we responded to 29 proposals in 15 local authorities. We found that nearly all proposals would either improve or maintain the standards that pupils achieve and the quality of provision.

In the summer term, we carried out a survey in all local authorities to find out how they support childcare settings to deliver funded education to children under five. Most local authorities in Wales provide funded education for three-year-old children and a very few for four-year-olds in non-school settings as well as in schools. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that the settings provide funded early education of good quality. This includes offering advice and support from a qualified practitioner. We found that all local authorities understand their responsibilities for providing statutory funded education appropriately. However, they do not always take a strategic enough approach to plan, support and fund education in this sector.

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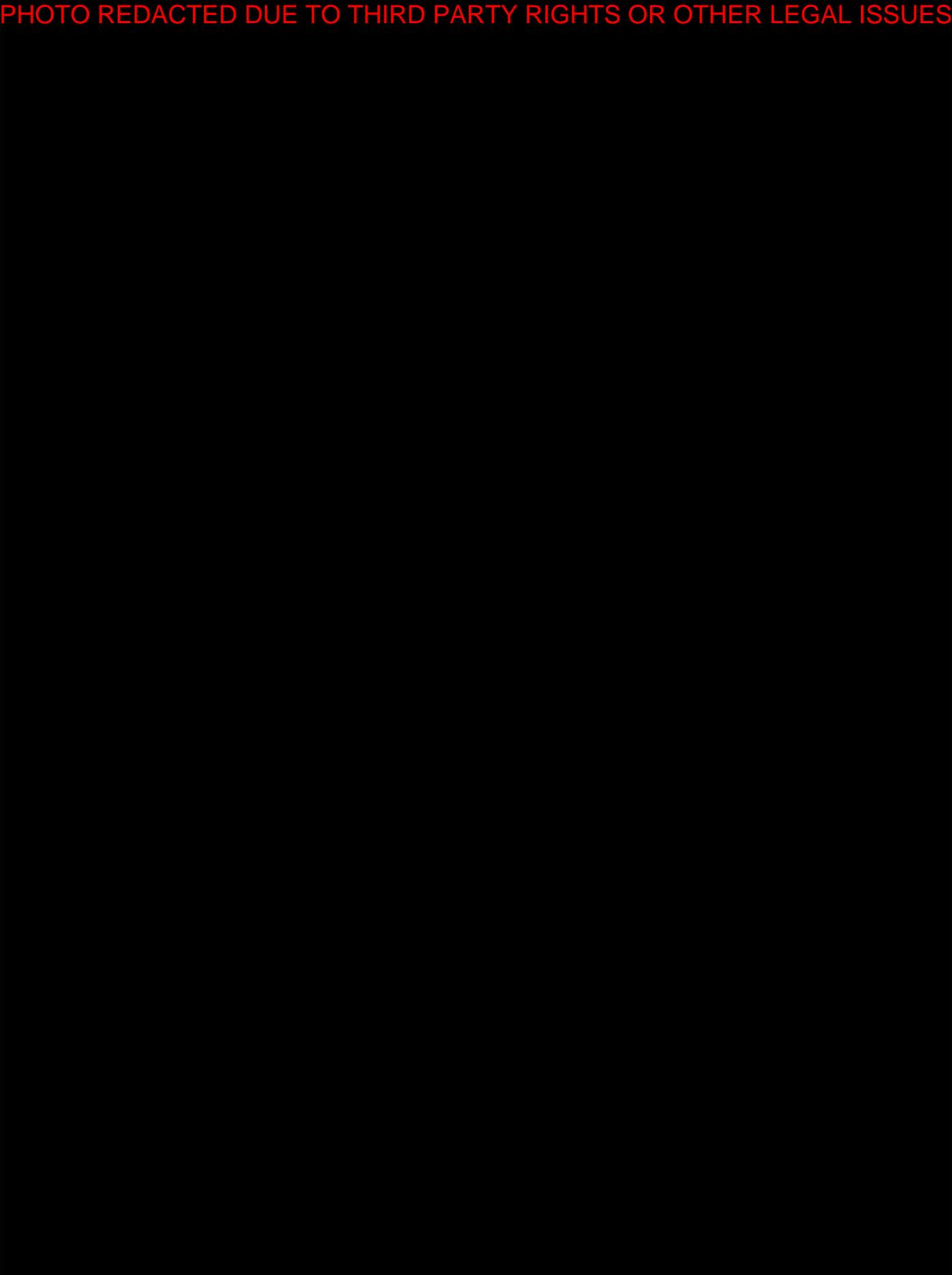
Sector summaries: Further education

Sector report:
Further education

In January 2017, there were 13 colleges providing further education courses in Wales. By July 2018, this had reduced to 12 colleges due to the amalgamation of Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion. The only sixth-form college currently in the sector is converting from an incorporated further education institution to a local authority maintained status (Colegau Cymru, 2018).

Many further education colleges are large multi-sited institutions that cover a wide geographical area. A minority of colleges, such as Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and NPTC Group, operate under a group structure with several local sites operating under separate college names under the overall control of one further education institution. A few colleges are directly owned by higher education institutions, while others work in partnership with higher education institutions.

This year, we inspected three further education colleges. During the year, we developed new inspection arrangements with stakeholders. We inspected two colleges under the previous inspection framework and one college, as a pilot, under the new inspection arrangements. The findings from these inspections have informed this report. In this section of the report, we have not included charts that show the inspection judgements because of the differences between the two inspection frameworks.

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Sector summaries: Further education

Standards

Standards are good in two of the colleges inspected and adequate in the other. Where standards are good, many learners make strong progress in sessions and generally succeed in attaining their qualifications at rates around or above those achieved nationally. Most learners are motivated to achieve and many progress well onto higher-level courses at their college, into work-based learning, higher education or employment.

Most learners use the information from assessments appropriately to identify their strengths and the skill areas that they need to improve, for example literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Many learners present written work well and a majority write appropriately for a range of purposes. The majority of learners on pre-GCSE and GCSE resit programmes in mathematics and English make suitable progress from their starting points. Many learners use suitable software packages well to complete and present work on their main programmes of study. However, in a minority of cases, learners do not practise and develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills well enough through their vocational and academic programmes.

Many learners on vocational programmes attain high grades and develop their vocational skills and practical competencies well. However, where standards require improvement, too many learners do not make the progress of which they are capable. For example, a minority of AS and A level learners attain lower grades than expected from their prior attainment. Too many AS level learners do not progress through to complete their full A level programmes.

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Sector summaries: Further education

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning are good in the three colleges inspected. Nearly all learners feel safe at college. Most are motivated to succeed, enjoy their learning and value the support that they receive from staff. They are considerate to each other and show respect to staff and visitors. Many learners demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. A few learners do not have a good enough understanding of how to stay safe online.

Many learners attend college regularly and behave well in sessions and in communal areas. However, a few learners arrive late for lessons or do not attend regularly enough. In a few cases, this behaviour delays the start of lessons and impacts on progress in learning.

Learner representatives, elected by their peers, work well with managers to identify ways to improve their college experiences. They help to steer the work of the college by making useful contributions to governing body meetings and by providing their views on key developments, such as the design of new buildings. Most learners feel that college managers value their views.

Many learners develop useful employability skills and make valuable contributions to the community by taking part in activities such as youth enterprise events, charity fundraising and college enrichment programmes. A very few learners also develop effective problem-solving and technical skills through taking part in skills competitions.

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Sector summaries: Further education

Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching is good in two of the three colleges and adequate in the other. Learning experiences are good in all three colleges. Most teachers demonstrate strong up-to-date subject knowledge and technical skills. They plan their courses and lessons well and many set clear and appropriate expectations for learners.

Nearly all teachers have positive and productive working relationships with learners that promote effective learning and enable most learners to make good progress. Most teachers use an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies and many use questioning skilfully to develop learners' thinking skills and understanding. Many teachers work well with technical and support staff to meet the needs of learners. A minority of teachers do not support learners well enough to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. For example, although most teachers set learners appropriate long-term goals, many learners lack clear specific short-term targets for improving these skills.

Many teachers provide useful verbal and written feedback on learners' work to help learners to understand what they do well and what they need to improve. Most track learner progress systematically, for example through electronic systems. They use these records well to inform individual progress reviews with learners and to provide valuable reports for parents.

Where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not challenge and engage all learners well enough. As a result, a minority of learners, especially those with strong prior attainment, do not make appropriate progress or attain the grades of which they are capable.

The colleges offer a comprehensive range of courses and use labour market information appropriately to inform their curriculum plans. They provide clear progression pathways and provide valuable opportunities for learners who did not achieve grades A*-C in GCSE mathematics and English at school to improve their grades through resit examinations. The colleges deliver very few courses through the medium of Welsh or bilingually and there are too few opportunities for learners to sustain or develop Welsh as an employability or life skill.

Staff at the colleges work well with employers to provide meaningful work experience or beneficial work-related experiences for many learners. Welsh Baccalaureate programmes provide worthwhile opportunities for many learners to improve their skills and gain extra qualifications.

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Sector summaries: Further education

Care, support and guidance

Care, support and guidance are good or better in the three colleges inspected. They provide a comprehensive range of valuable services to support learning and the health and wellbeing of learners. Nearly all learners have access to impartial advice and guidance, as well as specific support services that provide help to learners facing personal, financial, educational or other difficulties.

Where care, support and guidance are excellent, the college provides highly effective and responsive support for its learners. It also identifies and develops its most able learners particularly well.

The colleges have strong working relationships with other educational organisations, charities and social support services and work well with these to support individual learners. This helps to ensure that smooth transition arrangements are in place for learners with special educational needs who join the college and provides co-ordinated support for learners who are most at risk of disengaging from education.

Learning support assistants provide effective and well-targeted support for learners when needed. They provide personalised support for those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, physical support needs and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Specialist staff such as college counsellors provide valuable support to learners who experience particular difficulties in coping with the demands that they face. As a result, many vulnerable learners overcome significant barriers to their learning, make sustained progress and achieve valuable qualifications.

Overall, college arrangements for safeguarding give no cause for concern. However, colleges need to improve how they evaluate the impact of their teaching and training about radicalisation and extremism.

Gower College Swansea

Gower College Swansea is particularly effective at identifying and developing its most able learners on both academic and vocational programmes. These learners benefit from extensive support through activities such as personal coaching and visits to external institutions, as well as a broad range of subject and skills masterclasses. Learners are particularly well prepared to secure places in competitive progression routes to higher education or employment.

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

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Sector summaries: Further education

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good in the three colleges. College principals and their senior management teams provide clear direction and strategic leadership.

In both colleges with good arrangements for quality improvement, leaders use robust processes for self-evaluation, including detailed reviews of learner performance and outcomes, to drive improvement. They use internal validation panels and external reviews well to strengthen self-evaluation processes. Governing bodies review college progress against key aims and objectives and provide appropriate challenge and support to senior managers. In one college, there is a need to make sure that self-evaluation and improvement planning are effective throughout the organisation.

College leaders provide good opportunities to train and develop middle leaders. They are beginning to make use of the Welsh Government's new professional standards for post-16 practitioners to drive professional development activities and create professional learning communities within and between colleges. In particular, their use of personalised coaching and support from teaching and learning mentors is beginning to increase innovation and enhance the quality of teaching.

College leaders prioritise and manage resources effectively.   Their strategic plans, including estate strategies, take appropriate account of the need to respond to local and regional skills needs. In both of the colleges inspected under the previous common inspection framework this year, partnership working is excellent. These colleges have strong and sustained partnership arrangements with a range of external organisations.

Follow-up activity

None of the colleges inspected this year require follow-up activity. No specific follow-up visits to further education colleges took place this year. We visited all colleges not inspected this year as part of our routine further education link inspector visit arrangements. These visits review progress against the recommendations of previous inspections.

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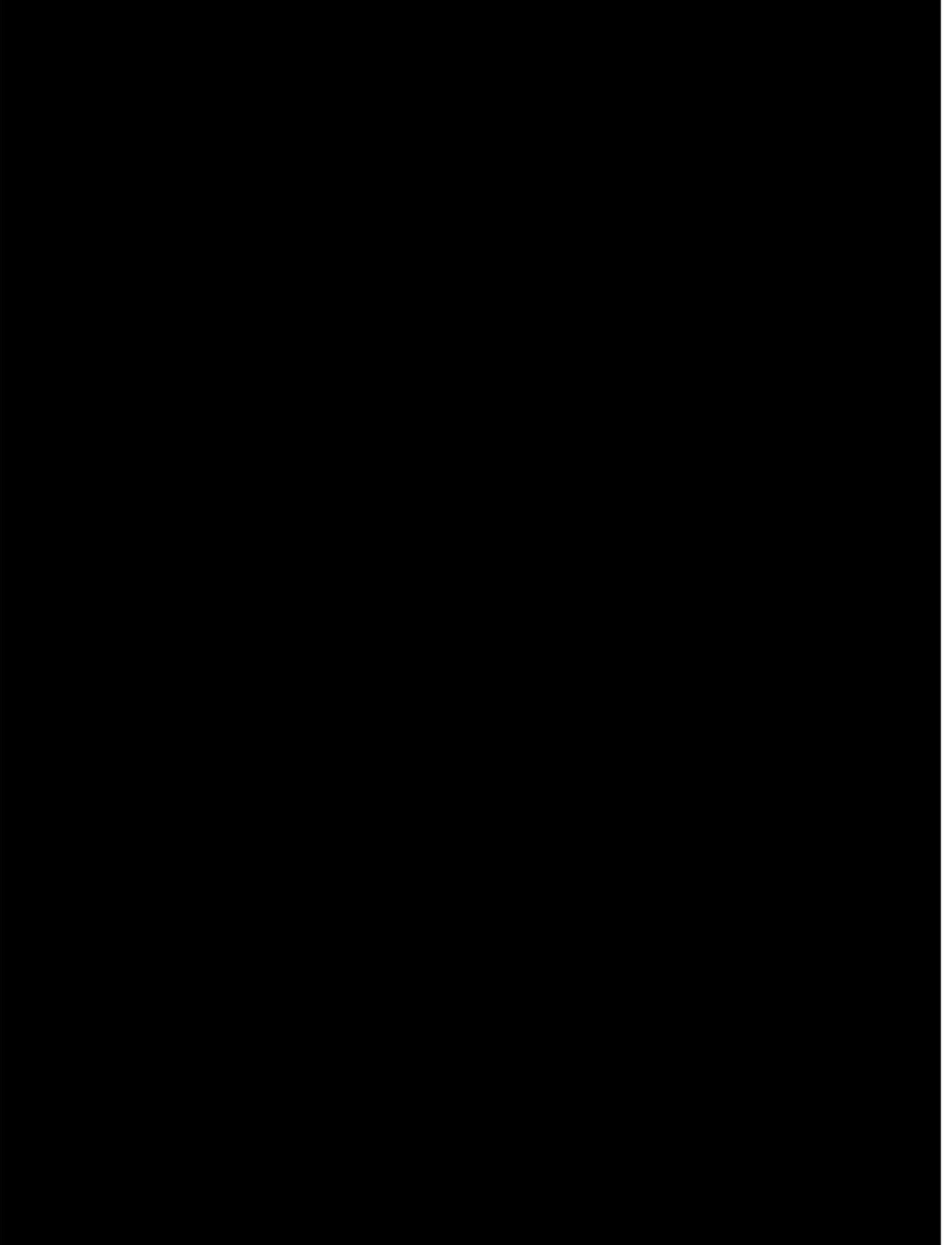
Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Sector report
Work-based learning

In January 2018, there were 19 contract holders commissioned by the Welsh Government to deliver work-based learning in Wales. The majority of these providers work in consortia or use sub-contracted training providers. Approximately 100 sub-contracted providers deliver work-based learning. This is similar to January 2017. The latest published information shows that 54,840 learners undertook work-based learning programmes in 2016-2017. Of these, approximately 16,000 enrolled on level 2 foundation apprenticeships and almost 31,000 level 3 apprenticeships or level 4 higher apprenticeships. Around 8,000 learners undertook other training, including level 1 traineeship and employability programmes (Welsh Government, 2018e).

Between September 2017 and July 2018, we inspected three work-based learning providers. The findings from these inspections have informed this report.

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Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Standards

Standards are good in two of the three providers inspected and adequate in the other. In these providers, learners develop a wide range of industry-related skills that enable them to gain or sustain employment.

Many apprenticeship learners are ambitious and determined to advance their careers. Many learners on traineeship programmes develop useful team working and leadership skills as well as developing an interest in the environment, such as when working on a diverse range of worthwhile community projects.

The majority of learners develop strong speaking and listening skills. Most achieve essential skills qualifications at levels required for the framework and a few achieve at levels above framework requirements.

Where standards are good, most learners make strong progress towards completing their training programmes successfully and achieve their training frameworks at rates generally above the national comparator. They develop a comprehensive range of work-related skills, including high levels of practical competence and theory knowledge. Learners are motivated to succeed and many are enthusiastic and keen to progress to the next level.

Where standards require improvement, there is a need to improve the rates at which learners complete their training programmes successfully, especially on higher apprenticeship programmes and among specific groups of learners such as those aged 25 and over. In addition, too few learners make enough progress in improving their literacy, numeracy and digital skills relative to their individual needs and abilities.

Figure 45:
Number of judgements awarded for standards, 2017-2018

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

| 2 | 1 | ● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement |

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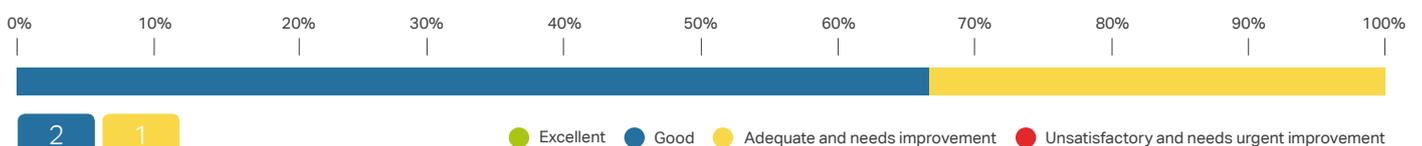
**Sector summaries: Work-based learning**

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

In the three providers, learners' wellbeing and their attitudes to learning are good. Most learners engage positively in their training, enjoy learning and improve their confidence and self-esteem, for example when overcoming barriers to learning and by recognising the value of making healthy lifestyle choices.

Nearly all learners feel safe, secure and free from harassment in their workplaces and when attending training centres. They demonstrate a strong knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are able to identify potential health and safety issues with confidence. Most learners apply this knowledge well and can explain clearly how their learning has had a positive impact on their working practices. Many learners understand the value of fairness, equality, respect and tolerance for their peers, training advisers and employers and recognise how they can apply these attitudes and values in the workplace.

Most learners are enthusiastic and motivated to complete their training programme. Many are keen to continue their training and progress to the next level. They demonstrate a positive attitude to learning, take pride in their work and feel valued by their employers. Nearly all learners enjoy their learning and value the opportunity to earn while they learn. Many learners feel that the training will benefit their long-term career plans.

Figure 46:
Number of judgements awarded for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, 2017-2018

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

3

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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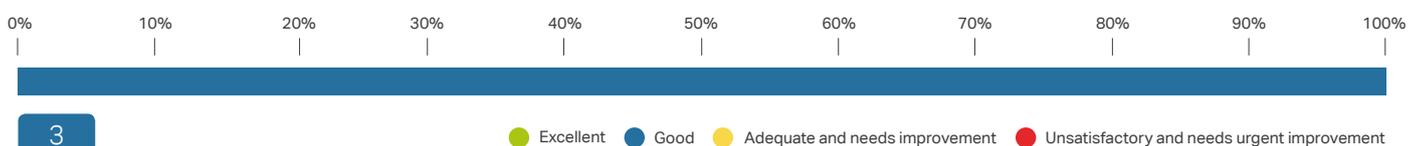
Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Teaching and learning experiences

Teaching and learning experiences are good in two of the three providers inspected and adequate in the other.

Where teaching and learning experiences are good, assessors provide consistently strong teaching, training and assessment to learners. Assessors give learners particularly effective personal support. The majority motivate and encourage learners to make suitable progress. In these providers, teachers, trainers and assessors give learners strong support that enables them to make good progress towards achieving their training frameworks and other qualifications.

Most teachers, trainers and assessors are well qualified and experienced. They prepare and deliver off-the-job sessions well. Assessments and progress reviews are routinely undertaken and assessors maintain detailed records of the performance of learners. However, assessors do not always plan assessments well enough and not all learners make enough progress.

This year, we published a thematic report on higher apprenticeship programmes in work-based learning (Estyn, 2018i). Most work-based learning providers in Wales deliver higher apprenticeship programmes. Higher apprentices work towards completing a nationally recognised qualification at, or comparable to, a higher education certificate, higher education diploma, foundation degree or degree level. For more information about our findings on higher apprenticeships in work-based learning, please read the **report**.

Where teaching and learning experiences are good, providers offer and deliver a comprehensive range of programmes across many learning areas at different levels. These providers have clear and comprehensive procedures and practices for the development of learners' skills. However, planning to develop learners' digital competency is at an early stage of development. Where teaching and learning experiences require improvement, short-term target setting for literacy, numeracy and digital skills is limited. Very few practitioners promote the benefit of the Welsh language as an employment skill. In particular, they do not encourage Welsh speaking learners to use and develop their language skills in the workplace.

Figure 47:
Number of judgements awarded for teaching and learning experiences, 2017-2018

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

2   1

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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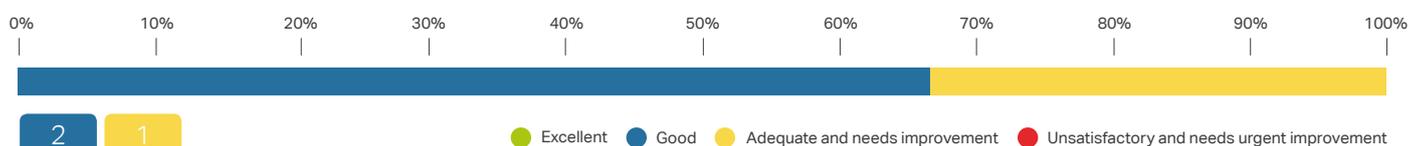
Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Care, support and guidance

Care, support and guidance for learners are good in two providers and adequate in the other. Where care, support and guidance are good, nearly all assessors use their learner visits effectively to motivate learners and monitor their progress towards their learning goals closely and systematically. This ensures that they know their learners' individual needs well. Assessors identify promptly if learners are struggling to make progress. They provide purposeful support, such as mentoring to help learners to overcome potential barriers to learning.

Providers use comprehensive and effective tracking systems to monitor the progress of learners. Nearly all learners are aware of the progress they are making and they understand what they need to do to achieve their training frameworks and other qualifications.

The training providers give learners good levels of personal support, including enabling access to external specialist support agencies such as social services, the Royal National Institute of Blind People and bereavement counselling.

Providers deliver useful training on safeguarding and radicalisation to their staff. Nearly all assessors are clear about safeguarding procedures. However, assessors' understanding of radicalisation often lacks depth and they often lack confidence and competence in discussions and so miss opportunities to develop learners' understanding.

Where care, support and guidance require improvement, the provider does not have strong enough tracking systems to evaluate learner progress and learner support well enough and to plan improvements.

Figure 48:
Number of judgements awarded for care, support and guidance, 2017-2018

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

2	1

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Adequate and needs improvement   ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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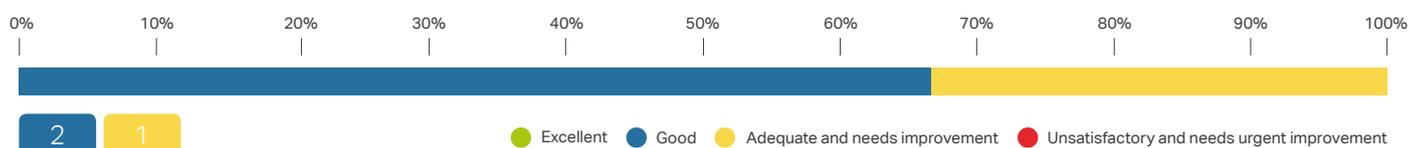
Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good in two of the three providers and adequate in the other. Where leadership and management are good, providers have clear leadership and management structures that have a strong focus on learner outcomes and the quality of learner experience. In these providers, quality improvement is a key driver across the lead provider and its partners, directed by effective leaders and managers. They work particularly well with sub-contractors and partners to develop an ethos and culture of openness. For example, one provider has set up a range of internal network groups to support consultation and encourage the sharing of best practice with partners. This has helped the provider to improve and sustain its performance.

A key feature of these good providers is their sound processes for self-evaluation. These are used consistently well across partnerships. There are effective opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the self-evaluation process. As a result, these providers have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development.

In these providers, there are detailed professional development strategies that match well to the both the providers' areas for development and the needs of individual staff. However, providers do not evaluate the impact of training activities well enough.

The providers use their resources well, including specialist training facilities and classrooms. Most workplaces give learners good opportunities to develop their skills and complete practical assessments. Where leadership and management require improvement, self-evaluation processes lack rigour and important aspects of development planning are ineffective.

Follow-up activity

This year, we placed one provider in Estyn review.

In September 2017, four providers required follow-up activity. This year, two of these providers received a monitoring visit. In both visits, inspectors found key aspects of the providers' work that still need improvement and the providers remain in Estyn review.

Figure 49:
Number of judgements awarded for leadership and management, 2017-2018

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

| 2 | 1 |

● Excellent ● Good ● Adequate and needs improvement ● Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

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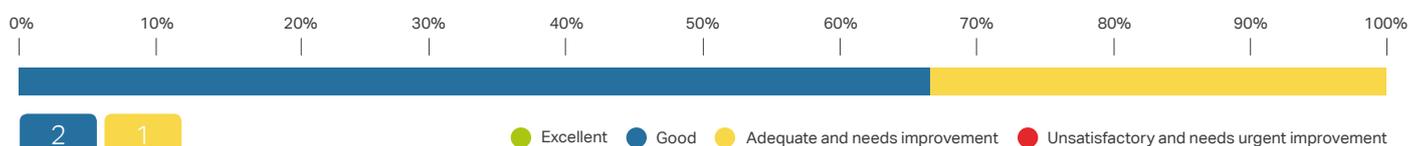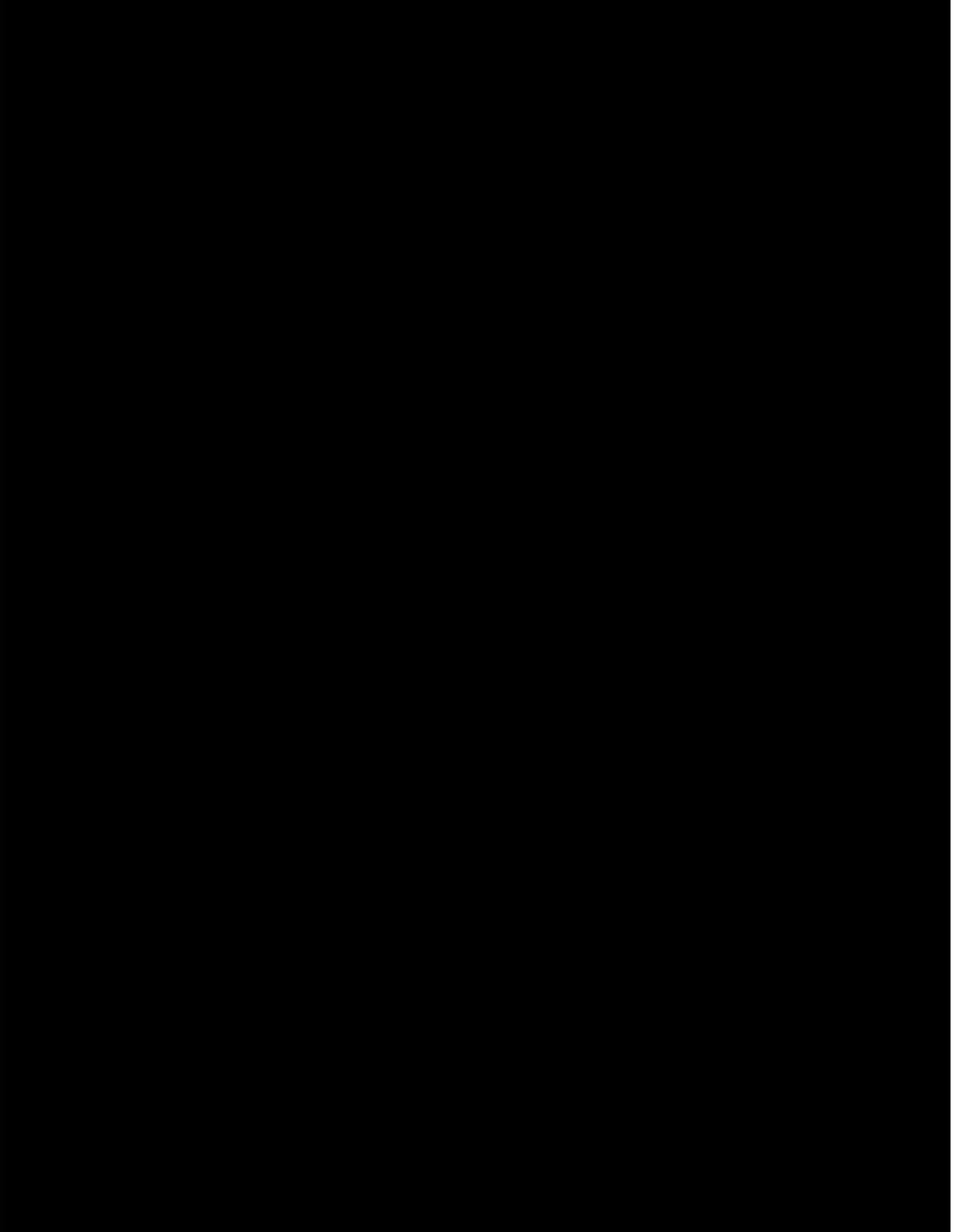
Sector summaries: Adult learning

Sector report
Adult learning

Fifteen partnerships across Wales and Adult Learning, Cymru deliver adult learning programmes (Estyn, 2016). The partnerships receive funding from the Welsh Government through the local authority. Membership of the partnerships differs from area to area, but most include provision offered by the local authority, further education colleges and third-sector organisations.

This year, Estyn has monitored adult learning activity and provision through stakeholder meetings and questionnaires, and by attending whole Wales adult learning partnership meetings and conferences.

Adult partnerships across Wales work successfully with one another to reduce duplication of courses in their local areas and to develop progression routes for learners. They take good account of the changing needs of learners and they make effective alliances with other organisations, such as voluntary organisations, to meet as great a range of learners' needs as possible. Most importantly, this includes working with learners whose previous education has been limited or who suffer deprivation.

Most adult learning partnerships provide an adequate range of courses despite financial constraints over the last few years. In many cases, partnerships provide classes to develop adults' skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and English as an additional language free of charge, but learners pay the full cost for courses in art and languages, for example. Partnerships have reduced the number of venues in which they offer courses to ensure that the provision of these is cost effective. This results in less affluent learners having fewer opportunities to attend classes that contribute to their wellbeing.

This year, we worked with a range of stakeholders to develop new inspection arrangements for adult learning. These will be piloted during the next academic year.

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Sector report
Initial teacher education

There are currently three regional centres of initial teacher education (ITE) in Wales that, together with the Graduate Teacher Programme and the Additional Graduate Training Programme (called 'Teach First'), provide routes to becoming a qualified teacher. Last year, 640 primary school student teachers and 505 secondary school student teachers completed ITE programmes and achieved Qualified Teacher Status in the centres in Wales (Welsh Government, 2018f).

Recruitment to initial teacher education is an issue. Recruitment to primary programmes in 2017 was around 90% of the target number, and secondary programmes attracted only around 60% of the target (Welsh Government, 2018f).

This year, Estyn has continued to work closely with the Welsh Government and the Education Workforce Council (EWC) to advise on the reform of ITE in Wales. From September 2019, the EWC Accreditation Board must accredit all initial teacher education programmes in Wales. EWC announced the outcomes of the accreditation process in June 2018. A link to the provisional list of programmes accredited by the EWC Accreditation Board is **here**.

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Sector summaries: Initial teacher education

Estyn will inspect the newly accredited programmes from September 2019. In the interim, Estyn will continue to monitor the existing provision for initial teacher training, and will carry out thematic survey work to gather evidence in specific areas of teacher education.

In autumn 2018, we published a thematic report on the use of mentors in initial teacher training (Estyn, 2018j). The report focuses on the development of student teachers' critical thinking, reflection and evaluation as vital skills for professional learning, the mentor's role in developing these skills, and how involvement in mentoring in ITE impacts on and relates to professional learning in schools more generally. For more information, please read the **report**.

The most successful mentoring takes place in schools where there is an established culture of learning and a strong focus on developing effective teaching. Supporting student teachers to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding is seen as part of a continuum of professional learning where the practice of developing student teachers is part of the same process as developing practising teachers. However, in many schools, even where there is an emphasis on developing and coaching teachers, mentors do not apply the skills they have learnt through strategic professional development activities to their mentoring of student teachers.

The mentor training currently provided by the centres of ITE places too much emphasis on completion of documentation rather than developing the skills, knowledge and understanding required to mentor successfully. In addition, ITE quality assurance procedures focus too heavily on consistency and conformance at the expense of ensuring quality. As a result, ITE centres do not have robust enough processes to identify the strengths and weaknesses in mentoring, nor do they share best practice effectively enough.

In general, mentors view their role as supporting students to meet the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Very few mentors see themselves as teacher educators engaged in the pedagogy of ITE, or identify specifically the approaches that they take to teaching students how to teach, including developing subject knowledge and developing pedagogy.

The few most effective mentors build students' knowledge and experience incrementally, starting with more structured and supported learning activities and developing students' independence, reflection and criticality as they become more experienced. They build students' resilience well. These mentors are actively engaged in professional learning activities, research, or higher-level study. They are good role models of career-long professional learning. These mentors use their skills of reflection and critical analysis to develop student teachers. They teach their students using 'learning conversations' that help students to improve their own skills of critical analysis, and to make links between their teaching and educational theory.

Very few students are able to identify the skills and behaviours that they need for career-long professional learning. Generally, students do not develop their skills of critical analysis, reflection and evaluation well enough over the duration of their programmes. They do not engage well enough with research and professional dialogue with their tutors and mentors to make the crucial links between theory and practice.

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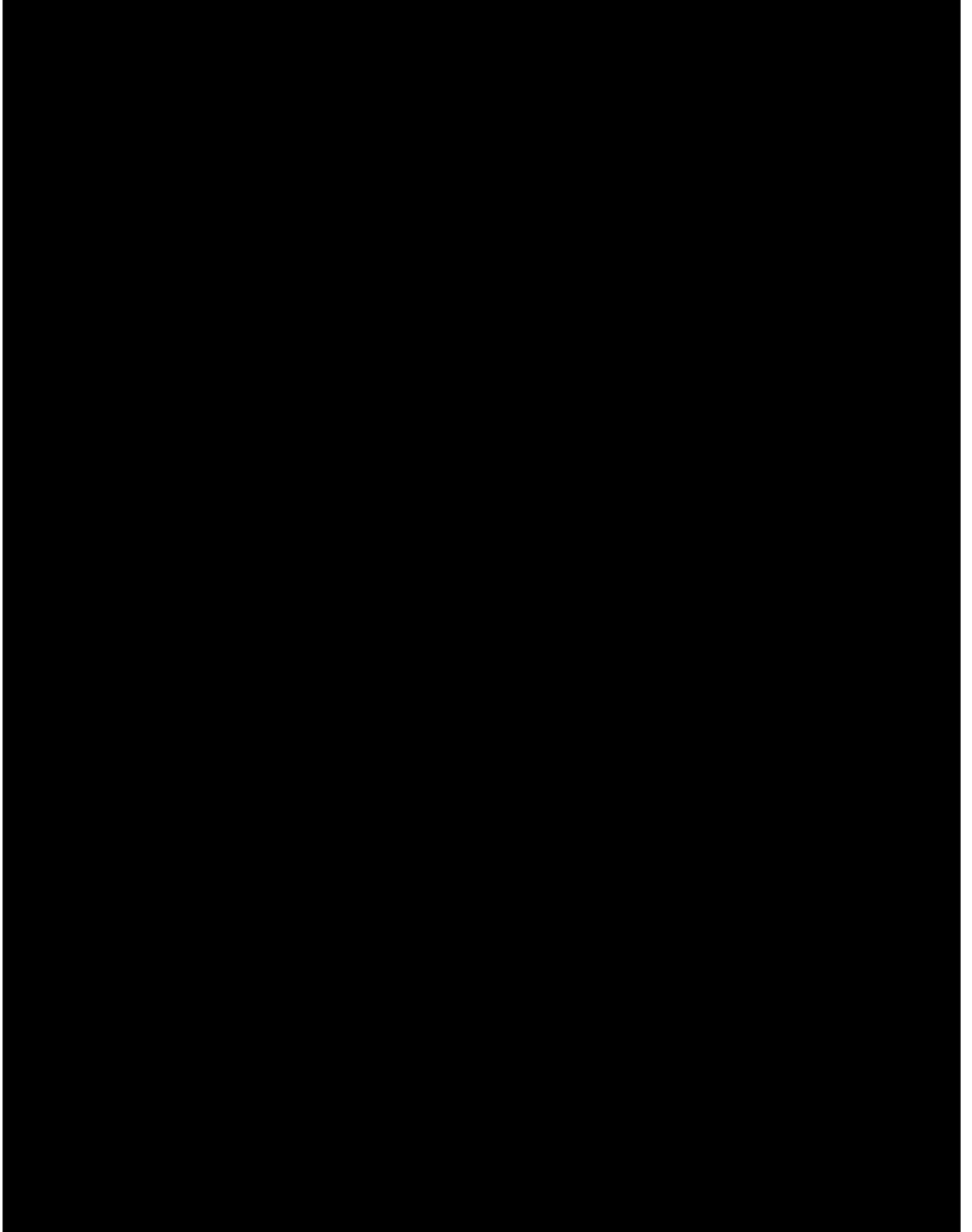
Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

Sector report
Welsh for Adults

On 1 August 2016, the Welsh Government transferred responsibility for the Welsh for Adults sector to the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The National Centre restructured provision across Wales, replacing the six regional centres and their 20+ sub-contractors with 11 providers. The National Centre for Learning Welsh allocates funding and provides strategic direction and quality assurance in the sector. In 2016-2017, the Centre met its target to provide mainstream and supplementary learning opportunities for 16,845 adult learners (Welsh Government, 2018g).

During the six-year inspection cycle, we aim to inspect two providers annually. We also aim to inspect the National Centre for Learning Welsh twice during the inspection cycle. Inspectors will evaluate progress against recommendations from inspections of providers during the inspections of the National Centre.

In January 2018, we carried out a pilot inspection in Learn Welsh Glamorgan, University of South Wales. All inspection areas are good or better and wellbeing and attitudes to learning are excellent.

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Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

Nearly all learners in Learn Welsh Glamorgan are very clear about their reasons for learning Welsh. They enjoy learning very much and are extremely enthusiastic. Many learners make an effort to use the language outside the classroom, and this helps them to make consistent and strong progress. They are proactive in creating these valuable opportunities. We asked Learn Welsh Glamorgan to produce a case study about this work.

Most tutors plan lessons effectively to meet learners' needs. They respond flexibly to pursue interesting themes and develop language in relevant contexts that are beneficial to their learners. Learn Welsh Glamorgan's provision includes a comprehensive range of formal and informal opportunities to practise the language. Learners become increasingly confident in the language and develop a range of linguistic skills, with an emphasis on speaking the language in varied and meaningful contexts.

Leaders and managers have a clear vision and purposeful strategic aims that are consistent with the plans of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The ethos of promoting Welshness and the Welsh language permeates throughout the attitudes and work of staff and learners.

Learn Welsh Glamorgan, University of South Wales

Learners in Learn Welsh Glamorgan are effective in influencing provision to extend their use of the Welsh language outside the classroom. This contributes to the strong progress that they make in becoming confident Welsh speakers. This links well with the aim of the provider to offer good opportunities for learners to become active Welsh speakers in their communities.

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

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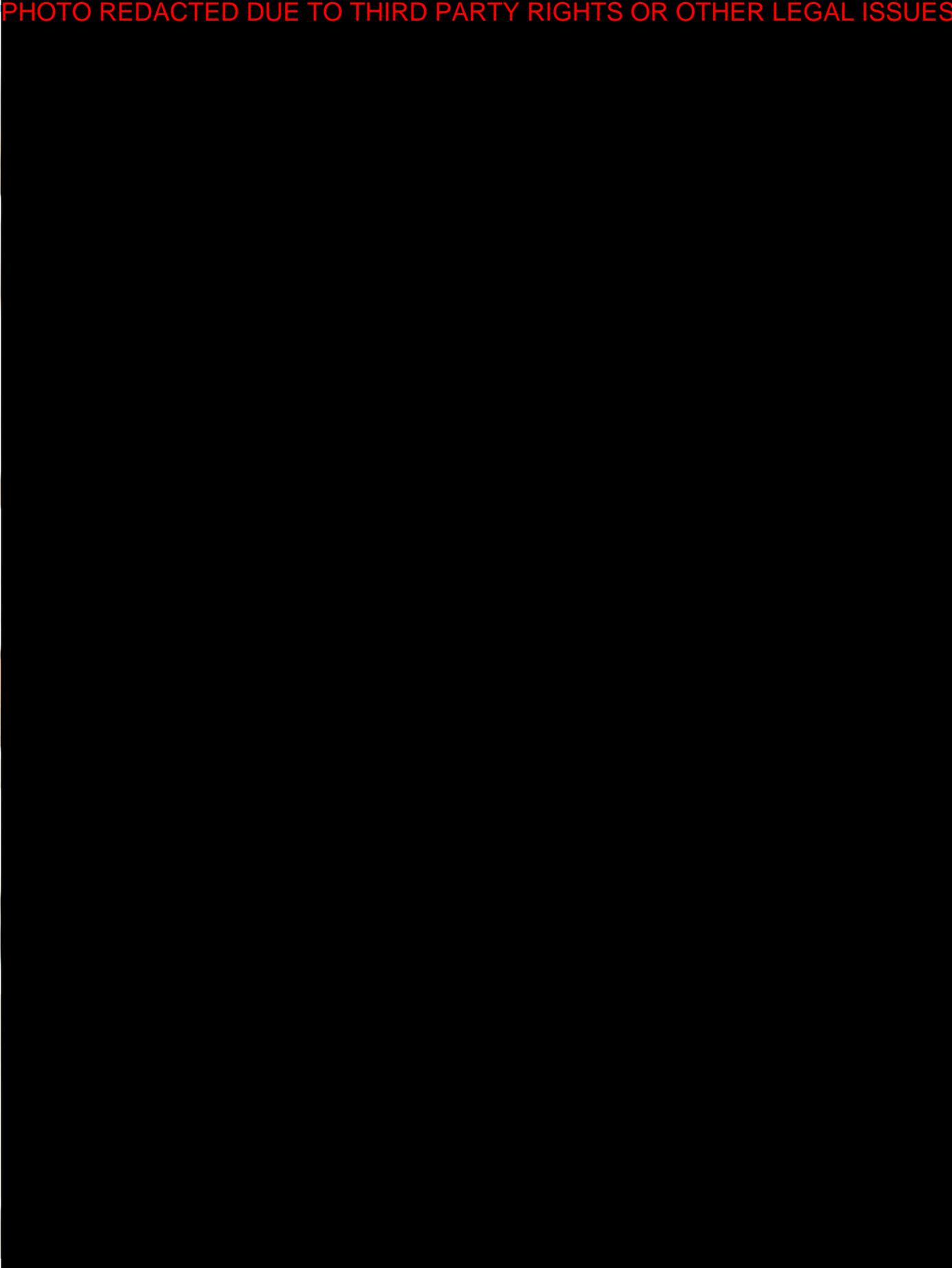
Sector summaries: Careers

Sector report
Careers

During the year, there were no inspections of Career Choices Dewis Gyrfa Ltd (CCDG), which trades as Gyrfa Cymru Careers Wales.

The company was formed in 2013. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. It provides an all-age, independent and impartial careers information, advice and guidance service for Wales.

The company delivers a remit set by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning. Gyrfa Cymru Careers Wales aims to help people to make effective decisions in planning their careers and progressing within training, further learning or employment. In this way, it aims to contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of Wales.

In the period since 2010, changes in its remit and reductions in its operating budget have led to many changes to the structure, staffing and role of the company, including its withdrawal from supporting young people to access work experience. The reduced resources available to the company have adversely affected young people's access to independent careers advice. It has also increased the importance of the role that schools have in helping young people to plan their career and study progression. Before inspecting schools and post-16 providers, we ask pupils about the quality of careers advice and guidance they receive.

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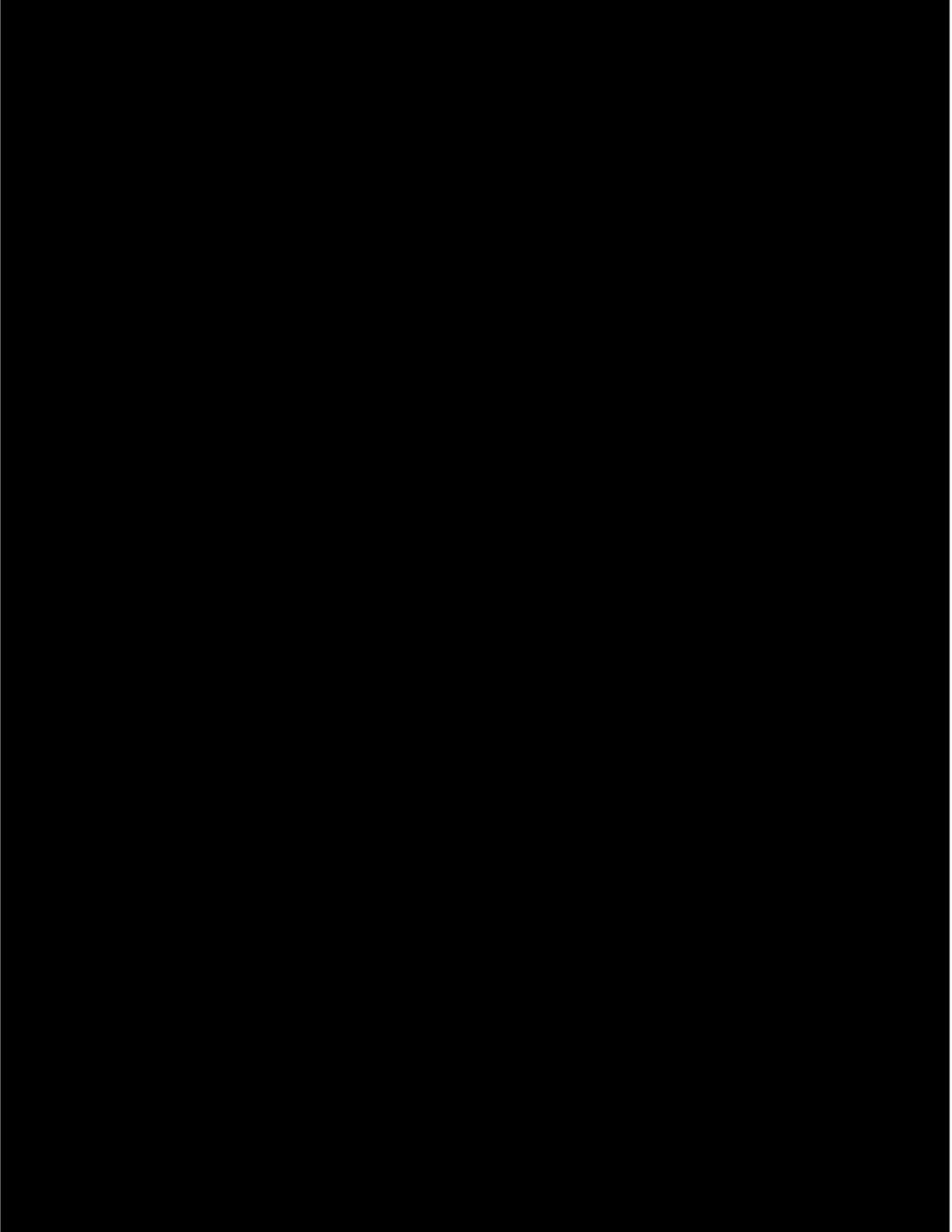
Sector summaries: Learning in the justice sector

Sector report
Learning in the justice sector

In Wales, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) of Probation leads inspections of 15 youth offending teams. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons leads on inspections of six prisons, including the young offenders' institution, and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) leads on inspections of one secure children's home. Estyn joins these teams to inspect the quality of education and training.

Prisons

This year Estyn worked with HMI Prisons to update their inspection frameworks for adult and youth prisons in Wales. The education and training content of these frameworks now reflects Estyn's Common Inspection Framework.

This year, we worked with partners to inspect Her Majesty's Prison Usk and Prescoed and the young offenders' institution in Her Majesty's Prison Parc. For more information please read the reports.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons

Probation Services

HMI Probation did not carry out inspections of youth offending teams (YOTs) in Wales last year. In response to a request in the Cabinet Secretary's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2017-2018, we published a report about the quality of education and training for young people engaged with youth offending teams (Estyn, 2018k).

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

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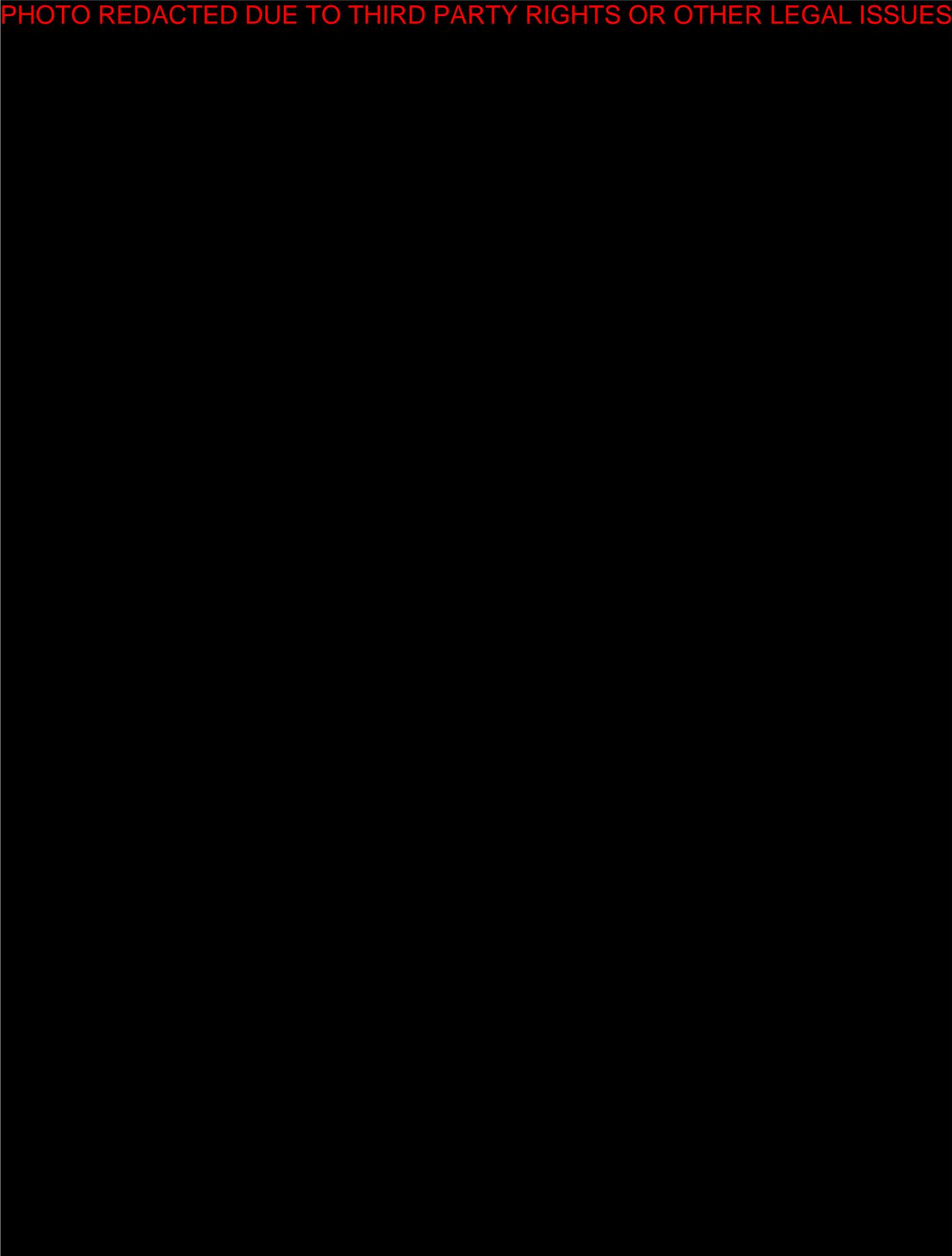
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Overview

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

Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- primary schools
- secondary schools
- all-age schools
- special schools
- pupil referral units
- independent schools
- further education
- independent specialist colleges
- adult community learning
- local government education services
- teacher education and training
- Welsh for adults
- work-based learning
- learning in the justice sector

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

In a number of sectors, we work with other regulators and inspectorates to inspect provision. We work in partnership with Ofsted to inspect work-based learning provision that operates both in Wales and England. Our inspectors liaise with CIW to inspect residential schools and local authority secure children's homes. We also take part in inspections of youth offending teams (YOTs), led by HMI Probation, and of prisons led by HMI Prisons. On occasions, we join Ofsted to inspect independent specialist colleges in England that have 10 or more Welsh learners. We may also join inspections of prisons in England where there are significant numbers of Welsh prisoners. In addition, we include inspectors from the Wales Audit Office when we inspect local government education services.

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

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

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

www.estyn.gov.wales

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The Common Inspection Framework and judgement descriptors used over the period of inspection 2010-2017

When we inspected education and training in Wales between 2010 and 2017, we used our Common Inspection Framework for education and training. In 2017-2018, this framework was used for the inspections of two of the three further education colleges and all inspections of non-maintained settings for children under five. This framework covers three key questions and ten quality indicators organised as follows:

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?
1.1   Standards
1.2   Wellbeing

Key Question 2: How good is provision?
2.1   Learning experiences
2.2   Teaching
2.3   Care, support and guidance
2.4   Learning environment

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
3.1   Leadership
3.2   Improving quality
3.3   Partnership working
3.4   Resource management

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

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

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

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The Common Inspection Framework and judgement descriptors for the cycle of inspection from September 2017

The framework will apply for the inspection of further education institutions from 2018.

This framework covers five inspection areas and 15 reporting requirements.

1 – Standards
1.1 Standards and progress overall
1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups
1.3 Standards and progress in skills

2 – Wellbeing and attitudes to learning
2.1 Wellbeing
2.2 Attitudes to learning

3 – Teaching and learning experiences
3.1 Quality of teaching
3.2 The breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum
3.3 Provision for skills

4 – Care, support and guidance
4.1 Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support
4.2 Personal development
4.3 Safeguarding

5 – Leadership and management
5.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers
5.2 Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning
5.3 Professional learning
5.4 Use of resources

The Local Government Education Services Inspection Framework

1 – Outcomes
1.1 Standards and progress overall
1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups
1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

2 – Quality of Education Services
2.1 Support for school improvement
2.2 Support for vulnerable learners
2.3 Other education support services

3 – Leadership and management
3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers
3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning
3.3 Professional learning
3.4 Safeguarding arrangements
3.5 Use of resources

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

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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Follow-up

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

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

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

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Category	Explanation
Excellent practice	If a provider gains any excellent judgements, they will be invited to write a case study to share with other providers. The case study may be published on the Estyn website.
Estyn monitoring	Normally, this level of activity will be required when at least one of the overall judgements for a provider is adequate, but it is not causing concern to the extent of requiring significant improvement or special measures. If a monitoring visit is required, a small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the provider to judge progress around a year to 18 months after the publication of the report. From September 2017, this category has only been applied for inspections of non-maintained settings for children under five.
Estyn review	Normally, this level of activity will be required when at least one of the overall judgements for a provider is adequate, but it is not causing concern to the extent of requiring significant improvement or special measures. All schools in this category will receive a team desk-based review. The review will take place in October/November, after provisional KS4 data has been published. As a result of the desk-based review, schools who demonstrate clear evidence of progress will be removed from this category. Schools who have not demonstrated clear evidence of progress will either remain under Estyn Review for a further 12 months or they will receive a monitoring visit at some point during that academic year.

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Category	Explanation
Focused improvement	If a non-maintained setting is identified as requiring focused improvement, Estyn will inform the Welsh Government of its concerns. The setting's management committee / proprietor must send their action plans to Estyn for approval. An Estyn inspector will visit the setting every term for up to three terms following the publication of the inspection report. If the setting does not make enough progress, Estyn will contact the local authority to suggest that funding is withdrawn from the setting as it is failing to provide an acceptable standard education.
In need of significant improvement	Estyn will inform the Welsh Government that the provider has been placed in a statutory category. The provider must send its action plan to Estyn for approval. A small team of Estyn inspectors will usually visit the provider to judge progress around a year to 18 months after the publication of the inspection report. If progress is insufficient, the team will consider whether the provider requires special measures.
Special measures	If a provider is identified as requiring special measures, Estyn will inform the Welsh Government that it has been placed in a statutory category. The provider must send its action plan to Estyn for approval. A small team of Estyn inspectors will usually visit the provider every term following the publication of the inspection report. Inspectors will focus on the progress the provider has made towards addressing the recommendations highlighted in the report. Estyn will continue to carry out monitoring visits until the Chief Inspector decides that the provider has improved enough to remove it from special measures.

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Category	Explanation
Estyn review: post-16	If a post-16 or initial teacher training provider is identified as needing Estyn review or monitoring, a small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the provider to judge progress around a year later. If inspectors judge that insufficient progress has been made, this may result in a full re-inspection. Following Estyn monitoring, if inspectors judge that sufficient progress has been made, a letter will be published on the Estyn website.
Re-inspection	If a post-16 or initial teacher training provider is identified as needing a full re-inspection, the inspectorate will write a letter to the provider, copied to DfES, and, in the case of initial teacher training, to the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCW) identifying the areas that require improvement, and will carry out a full re inspection of the provider within a year to 18 months. After the re-inspection, Estyn will publish a full report evaluating the progress made by the provider. If the team judges that insufficient progress has been made at the end of a re-inspection, this will be reported to DfES, and to HEFCW in the case of initial teacher training, as part of their contract management procedures.
Causing significant concern	This level of activity will be required where inspectors judge that local government education services require follow-up activity. Around three months after the inspection, we will chair an improvement conference with senior leaders and other key stakeholders. Around a year after the post-inspection improvement conference, Estyn will facilitate a progress conference. We will consider how likely it is that the authority could be removed from follow-up in a year's time. If we think it is likely that the authority will be able to demonstrate enough progress to be removed from follow-up, then we will plan a monitoring visit. However, if Estyn thinks that the authority will require more time, then we will facilitate a second progress conference in a year's time.

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Explanation of words and phrases used to describe our evaluations

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

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

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Notes about the data used in this report

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

When analysing inspection outcomes, it is important to note that there can be difficulties in comparing trends in outcomes between years. Each year, we inspect a proportion of providers in each sector. For example, during 2017-2018 we inspected 200 (16%) primary schools and 27 (14%) secondary schools.

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

We published our inspection outcomes for 2017-2018 as official statistics. The statistics were pre-announced and published on the Estyn website and prepared according to the principles and protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Our interactive data website provides summaries of our inspection outcomes and questionnaire responses from pupils and parents. Users can apply filters to customise their data views and download the results. The website includes data for inspections carried out between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2018.

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

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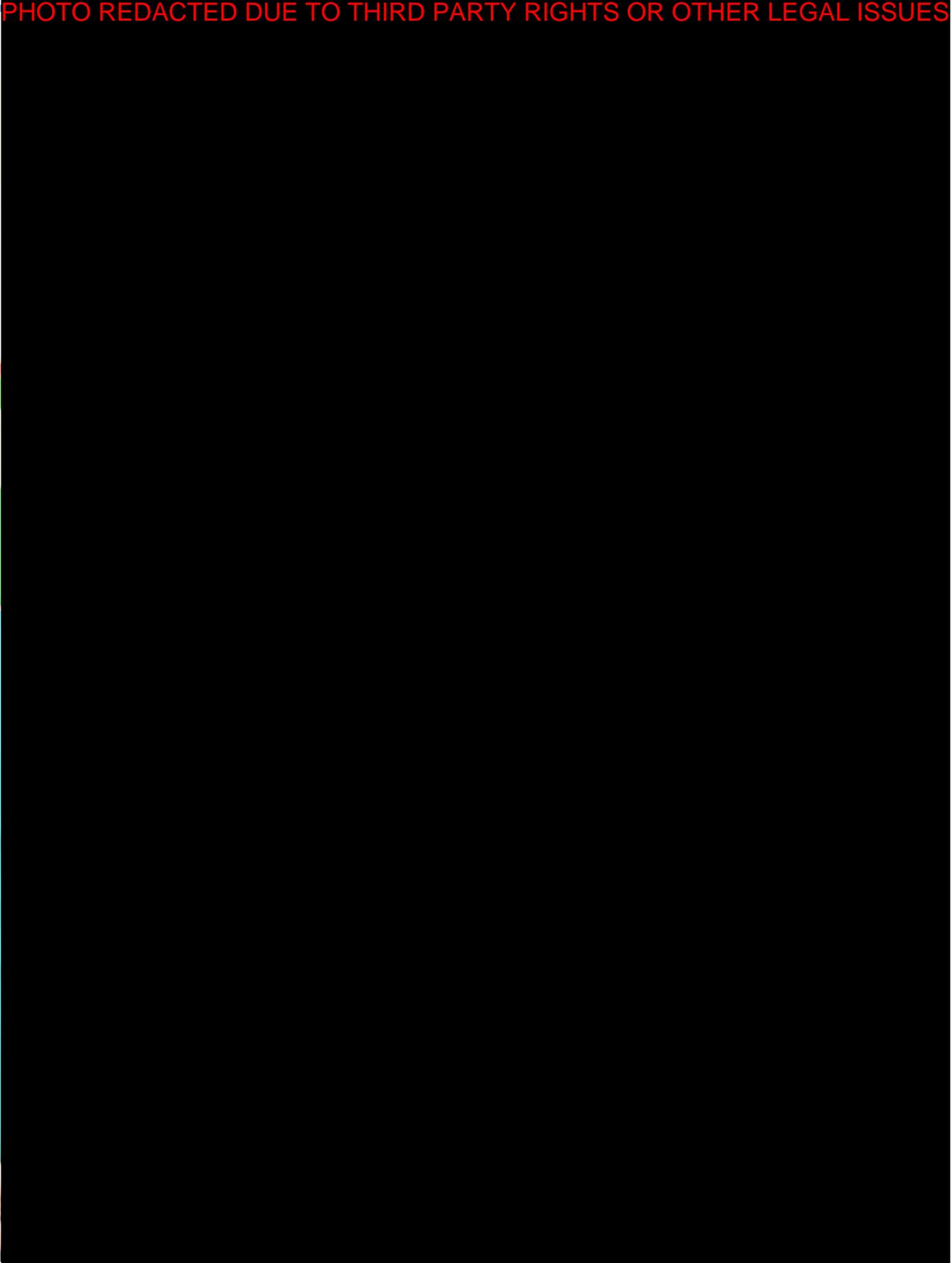
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