



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

2016-2017

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Guide to the report

This year's report is the 25th consecutive annual report published in Wales since the Education (Schools) Act 1992 required its production.

The report consists of three parts:

- The Chief Inspector's foreword
- Section 1: a thematic section focusing on progress with key education policies over the last seven years
- Section 2: individual sector reports about inspection findings in 2016-2017

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.

For more details about the report or inspection findings, please visit:

- Chief Inspector's introduction
- Estyn's online data tool

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Foreword



Foreword

The end of an inspection cycle is a good time to consider long-term trends. 2016–2017 was the last year of our 2010–2017 cycle and a new approach began in September 2017. Looking back over the last seven years shows how much education has changed in Wales and is continuing to change. The most significant trend is a shift in educational culture, which is now more collaborative. This is most clearly seen in how a new curriculum is being developed with the involvement of the profession. There has also been a change in how school improvement and staff development are now increasingly based on school-to-school working and on consortia of local authorities working together. Overall, there has been a noticeable shift towards a 'self-improving system'.

Over the seven-year inspection cycle, Estyn carried out some 2,700 inspections. All education and training providers in Wales were inspected at least once. These inspections resulted in over 40,000 judgements¹. We also carried out around 1,000 follow-up visits and 100 national thematic reviews. Over the seven years and including all sectors, 77% of inspection judgements were good or better (71% good and 6% excellent) and 23% were less than good (20% adequate and 3% unsatisfactory). This overall picture shows that there is much to be proud of in the Welsh education system.

Looking back over this period helps us understand the strengths of our education system and where we most need to direct our efforts and resources. Many strengths exist in nursery settings, maintained special schools, and in further education colleges, where the quality of education is good or better in most cases. Variability however remains a challenge in most other sectors. Our ambition remains for all provision to be good or better by sharing best practice within and between providers. In all sectors there are good and excellent providers², including in areas of relative poverty.

¹ Inspection judgements for 2016–2017 were published as **official statistics** in October 2017. All inspection judgements for the 2010–2017 cycle can be explored using Estyn's interactive **online data tool**.

² See the list on page 10 of providers inspected in 2016–2017 with excellent awarded for either one or both of the overall judgements, current performance and prospects for improvement.

A major policy focus over this period has been to improve the foundations of education, including core skills, and to help more pupils be ready to learn. After these seven years, we have a more systematic approach to planning opportunities for pupils to learn, apply and practise their literacy and numeracy³ across the curriculum, using agreed national frameworks. Concerted attention to attendance and behaviour has resulted in improvements in these areas too.

National priorities have now moved from these prerequisites to a reform programme⁴ centred on transforming the curriculum and on four enabling objectives that encompass most aspects of the school education system. Improving the curriculum and the learning experiences of pupils goes hand in hand with improving the quality of teaching. Improving teaching requires better support, professional learning and staff development for current teachers as well as improved recruitment and initial education and training.

Inspection findings and research evidence show that leadership has a big influence on the quality of education, including teaching, and the establishment of a National Academy of Educational Leadership is thus welcome. Successful leaders establish a common vision and culture, and a consensus around what they want to achieve. They focus on what's most important – enriching the learning experiences of children and young people. They get the best out of their staff by prioritising professional learning and by protecting staff from unnecessary activities. In particular, they focus on improving teaching and learning, and on supporting staff to innovate. They create the conditions for staff to work together, and to discuss and share ideas openly with their colleagues, within their organisation and beyond.

There have been major changes in how professional learning is organised during this seven-year period. Regional consortia now provide school improvement services on behalf of local authorities. These consortia increasingly provide 'support' for schools, although their emphasis is still too much on accountability and on 'challenging' schools. Consortia facilitate school-to-school collaboration and have now started to use seconded school leaders more to do this. This is what is meant by a 'self-improving system' – one that builds capacity, helps to increase ownership of school improvement at school level, and moves expertise and best practice around the system. Initial teacher education and training is also changing significantly, with new accreditation arrangements⁵ for courses that emphasise the importance of schools and universities working together.

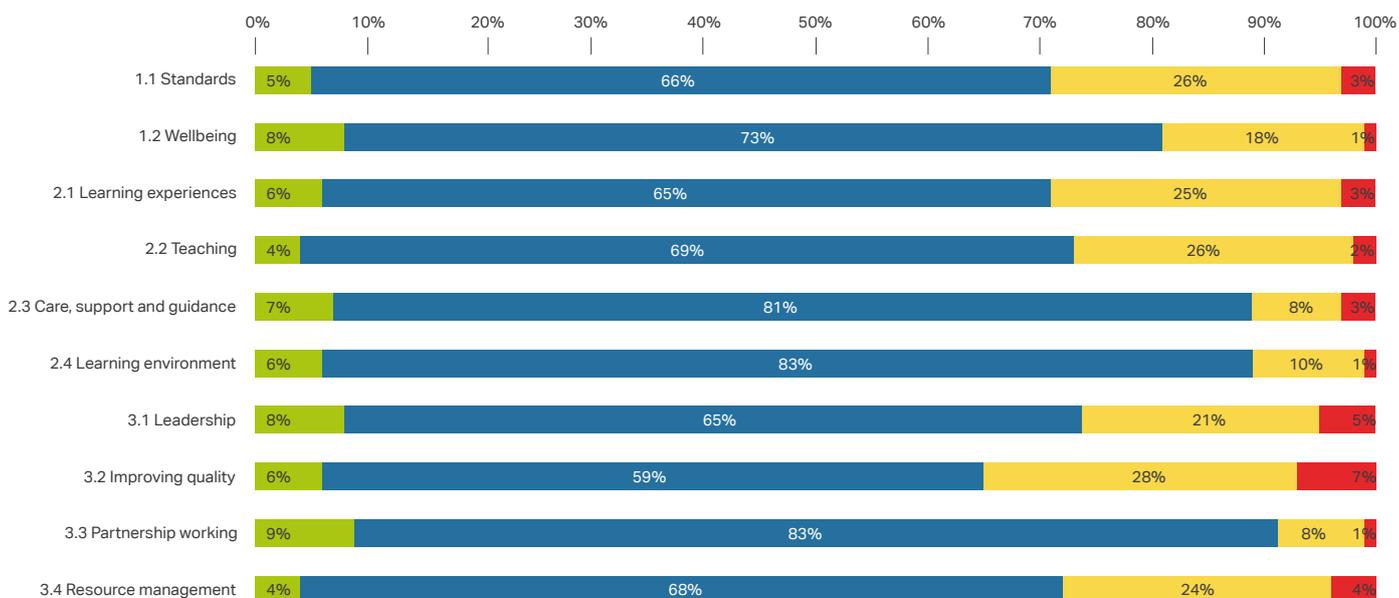
As indicated by the chart below, the areas of education that are strongest across most sectors are those relating to learner wellbeing, care, support and guidance, and learning environment (including ethos and equality), while standards, teaching and learning experiences, and improving quality (including self-evaluation) are relatively weaker. These findings are in line with those of the OECD, which suggest that equity is a strong feature of education in Wales compared with other countries.

³ See pages 18 - 23 of this report for more detail.

⁴ See 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission' <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/education-in-wales/?lang=en>

⁵ See <http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/ite-accreditation>

Differences between quality indicators for all sectors for 2010-2017



We do well in these areas because we take learner wellbeing and equity seriously. For example, much attention has been given to tackling the effect of pupil deprivation over the last seven years. Even so, although the gap in the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals compared to their peers has closed for some measures, it generally remains too wide.

The schools that are most successful at raising standards for all their pupils and are closing the poverty gap encourage greater engagement with parents and with the community. They have high expectations of their pupils and create a culture where education is respected and valued⁶. They provide nurture groups and family learning programmes for parents and carers. They work with external agencies to offer family-related services to meet the welfare needs of learners and their families that the school cannot meet on its own. Some of these community-focused schools offer 'wrap around' pre-school care and education themselves or in partnership with nursery providers. Such arrangements allow providers to work closely together, to smooth transition from nursery to school, and to identify early the specific needs of children and put preventative support in place. These arrangements help non-school nursery providers to benefit from the teaching expertise and the resources available in schools. Research indicates that high-quality early education benefits the long-term development of learners greatly.

⁶ We published '[Tackling pupil deprivation](#)' in 2014 that summarised seven thematic reviews.

Foreword

The last seven years have seen the roll out of the Foundation Phase for children aged three to seven in primary schools and funded nursery settings. There is much consensus around the benefits of the Foundation Phase. Inspectors find that, in the schools where the Foundation Phase is applied as intended, pupils make good progress, become confident independent learners, and are well-prepared for future learning. Many schools however employ more traditional teaching methods, particularly in Years 1 and 2 (for children aged five to seven), especially following the introduction of the reading and numeracy tests. Another reason why the Foundation Phase has not taken root in more schools was insufficient professional learning opportunities for staff and headteachers to understand effective Foundation Phase practice. To help achieve a better understanding, we recently published a report on **'Active and experiential learning'** in the Foundation Phase.

Inspection findings this year are broadly similar to those for the cycle as a whole. Seven-in-ten primary schools inspected this year are good or excellent, similar to last year, while half of secondary schools inspected are good or excellent, a bit better than last year. In last year's annual report, I discussed possible reasons why primary school inspection outcomes are better on average than those for secondary schools. One of the main differences between primary and secondary education is the effect that external examinations have on secondary education. Banding and categorisation arrangements introduced during this period, the 'challenge' role required of the newly-formed regional consortia, and new performance indicators, all contributed to an accountability system linked strongly to examination results. The danger of this approach is that examination entry policy and the advice given to pupils on which qualifications to study may be driven by accountability pressures.

As a result of this culture, some secondary schools focus too much on teaching examination techniques rather than on providing a broad education that better serves the long-term interests of learners. The best schools develop learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to learning by capturing their interest and commitment through engaging learning experiences. They develop the confidence of learners so that they become well-rounded individuals, ready for further study and employment, and for contributing to society, as well as doing well in examinations. That schools that 'teach to the test' may achieve relative examination success also raises questions about whether current qualifications examine the right skills and whether they reward learners' broader understanding and critical thinking enough. Later this year, Estyn will report on the new examination specifications, including the Wales-only GCSE qualifications for Welsh, English and mathematics, as well as on changes to the Welsh Baccalaureate and to A levels.

Over the last seven years, there have been major changes to the governance and funding of further education colleges and work-based learning providers. Mergers have resulted in a smaller number of large providers. In 2010, there were 22 further education institutions and 78 work-based learning providers. Now, there are 13 and 19 lead providers, respectively. The new leadership teams emerging from these mergers often benefited from the strengths of the constituent institutions, and built on the advantages of the increased critical mass provided by these large institutions. As a result, inspection outcomes have improved overall in these sectors over the cycle.

Foreword

During this time, the Welsh Government has commissioned reviews by Professor Hazelkorn and Professor Weingarten into the purpose of post-compulsory education and training, as well as from Professor Reid into developing research and innovation activity in Wales. Strengthening the link between higher and further education should help Welsh learners gain the high-order skills and knowledge required to meet global employment needs within the context of rapidly changing technologies. Education policy and practice for post-compulsory sectors are now also beginning to take better account of compulsory education (school) developments, for example regarding curriculum reform and professional development.

Overall, a coherent education reform programme exists for compulsory education, which addresses our main challenges and avoids the dangers of unintended consequences arising from piecemeal reform. A collaborative and inclusive approach is needed for long-term success, but this places great responsibility on schools and staff. Over the last seven years, the profession has shown resilience in maintaining performance while taking on board a wide range of changes. Recently Estyn, the Welsh Government, regional consortia, and professional associations and unions worked together to agree a workload guide⁷ for teachers that acknowledges increased expectations.

Changes to education nationally include inspection, which is why I have asked Professor Donaldson to review the consequences of education reform for Estyn. In September 2017, we introduced a new inspection approach designed to encourage more dialogue with staff and learners and provide a positive professional learning experience. We also streamlined the inspection framework so that it focuses on what is most important. Estyn will continue to identify and share best practice. This annual report draws on our inspections, follow-up visits and thematic reviews for 2016–2017, while also providing an overview of the last seven years. Throughout the report, there are links to effective practice case studies.

At all levels, improvement begins with honest self-evaluation and systematic improvement planning. This report identifies strengths as well as areas for improvement for each education sector we inspect. A separate chapter considers in detail the progress made with initiatives that have been at the centre of education policy during the last seven years. The chapter includes self-evaluation questions that I hope staff and governors will find helpful.

Meilyr Rowlands

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

⁷ <https://hwb.gov.wales/resources/resource/e625e664-e86d-4995-9c7c-5c47a3fba954/en>

Foreword

Providers inspected in 2016-2017 with excellent awarded for either one or both of the overall judgements, current performance and prospects for improvement, or an excellent judgement for an inspection area if inspected under the new inspection framework.



Non-maintained settings	Gogerddan Childcare Llandogo Early Years
Primary	Ysgol Gynradd Parcyrhun Ysgol Gynradd Saron Ysgol Gynradd Bynea Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd Ysgol Comins Coch Hendredenny Park Primary School Llanrhidian Primary School Palmerston Primary School Ysgol Cynwyd Sant Ysgol Bodfeurig Pembroke Dock CP School Ysgol Pencae Ysgol Gynradd Talysarn Ysgol Gynradd Bontnewydd Ton Pentre Infants School Llansannor C.I.W. Primary School Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth
Secondary	Bryntirion Comprehensive School Fitzalan High School Ysgol Glan-Y-Môr School Bryngwyn Comprehensive School Dŵr y Felin Comprehensive School Y Pant Comprehensive School
Maintained special	Greenfield Special School Heol Goffa School Ysgol Tŷ Coch Ysgol Pen Coch Special School
Independent	United World College of the Atlantic Ltd Oakleigh House Rougemont School
Post-16 providers	Group Llandrillo Menai Pembrokeshire College



Section: 1



Section 1:
Thematic: Professional learning

Progress with key education policies over the last seven years

In this section of the Annual Report, we consider the progress made in addressing the following key areas that have been at the centre of education policy, particularly for schools, over the last seven years.

- The Foundation Phase
- Developing literacy skills
- Developing numeracy skills
- Developing ICT and digital skills across the curriculum
- Tackling the effects of disadvantage
- Welsh language development
- School-to-school collaboration and learning
- Improving leadership

Section 1:
Thematic: The Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase



Research suggests that children do not benefit from extensive formal teaching until about the age of six or seven and the Foundation Phase framework sets out to provide an active and experiential approach to learning. The Foundation Phase approach emphasises the importance of the child being at the centre of all learning and the significance of children's wellbeing. It advocates a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities that should take place within indoor and outdoor environments.

During the inspection cycle, we published several thematic surveys about literacy, Welsh, and outdoor learning in the Foundation Phase, and about the impact of advisory teachers on funded non-maintained settings.

For more information please read our thematic reports.

Literacy and the Foundation Phase (Estyn, 2011a)

Outdoor learning: an evaluation of learning in the outdoors for children under five in the Foundation Phase (Estyn, 2011b)

Welsh in the Foundation Phase: Developing Welsh as a first language in primary schools and the non-maintained sector (Estyn 2013a)

Welsh Language Development in the Foundation Phase (Estyn, 2013b)

The impact of advisory teachers on funded non-maintained settings (Estyn, 2015a)

Active and experiential learning (Estyn, 2017a)



Section 1:
Thematic: The Foundation Phase

Strengths

In schools and settings that are committed to good Foundation Phase practice, children show increased motivation and enjoyment of learning. About three-quarters of schools have developed useful outdoor learning spaces. Where possible, these spaces link directly to classrooms to encourage free movement to the outdoors and to help promote pupils' independence and decision-making. Active learning approaches and the use of the outdoor learning environment are helping pupils, particularly boys, to be more engaged in their learning. These schools and settings develop children's literacy and numeracy skills well across all areas of learning. They do this in a creative and imaginative way, making learning active and fun. For example, when studying the theme of water, children use poetry, drama and music to plot the course of a river using specific vocabulary, such as 'meandering'. This active engagement has a positive impact on their writing, when they are ready to write, because they have built an understanding of how rivers develop and a varied vocabulary to draw upon.

The role of the adult is an important factor in making sure that children develop skills in the Foundation Phase that equip them to be successful learners in the future. In schools and settings where school leaders and their staff understand the nature of this role fully, children make strong progress in developing independent skills and in becoming thoughtful, resilient and inquisitive. In these schools and settings, staff act as facilitators who support children in their learning, but do not dominate. They know when to intervene to take learning forward and when to stand back. They use effective questioning skills to extend learning and to develop children's thinking skills. They encourage children to solve problems themselves and to take risks in their learning. They make sure that there is an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-directed tasks and that learning is through hands-on experiences, both indoors and outdoors.

The Welsh Government's Foundation Phase Grant enabled local authorities to offer non-maintained settings training about the Foundation Phase and support from a qualified teacher for 10% of the time that they operate. This support helped setting staff to become familiar with the pedagogy of the Foundation Phase and to improve their provision. This arrangement has had a positive impact on standards of literacy and numeracy in non-maintained settings since 2010. Recently, there have been changes to funding and, although the Welsh Government expects that the funding is still used to support Foundation Phase practitioners in settings, the involvement of qualified teachers in the work of settings has reduced.

Brynteg Nursery School

By focusing on pupils' literacy from an early age, teachers at Brynteg Nursery ensure that learners become confident speakers and writers.

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



Section 1:
Thematic: The Foundation Phase

Areas for improvement

Overall, the implementation of the Foundation Phase has been inconsistent across schools, and between schools and settings. Initially, nearly all schools embraced the Foundation Phase and most reorganised their nursery and reception classes effectively to facilitate its delivery. Although there is generally a strong commitment to Foundation Phase principles in nursery and reception classes, more recently there has been increasing formality.

About a quarter of schools deliver the Foundation Phase well. In about three-quarters of schools, headteachers do not fully understand the principles and pedagogy of good Foundation Phase practice. They do not make sure that its delivery focuses on active and experiential learning. As a result, many children do not develop good independent working skills. They are over-reliant on adult support and anxious about making mistakes and trying out new ways of working. In about one-in-ten schools, pupils appear to be able to write accurately, but this is because adults 'scaffold' their work heavily, and pupils are not able to write at the same level on their own, or talk knowledgably about their work. In many of these schools and settings, resources are not always available to provide opportunities for pupils to experiment with their learning and use skills independently. This lack of 'continuous provision' disallows children from practising skills that they are beginning to develop or to revisit prior learning.

Continuous Provision: This term refers to resources that are continuously available in the indoor or outdoor classroom for pupils to use independently. The resources should match pupils' interests and general stage of development, and give them the opportunity to practise, consolidate and extend their learning. Generally, teachers designate parts of the classroom to support different areas of learning, such as role-play, construction, reading and creative development. Schools refer to these areas as continuous provision. Where pupils choose the area they want to work in, and what they are going to do there freely, this is called 'child-initiated learning'.

About three-quarters of schools found adapting their practice and provision more challenging for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. Although most tried active and experiential learning approaches initially, many have now reverted to approaches that are more formal. The extent of formality ranges from discrete and prescribed literacy and numeracy for several mornings a week to condensing active and experiential learning opportunities to one afternoon a week. This return to previous practices accelerated following the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and particularly after the advent of national testing for reading and numeracy.

Section 1:

Thematic: The Foundation Phase

In many Year 1 and Year 2 classes, there is very little or no continuous provision and teachers do not have a firm understanding of its benefits. In these classes, most children work passively with adults and only a few are involved in independent learning at any one time. Teachers and support assistants spend most of their time delivering focused teaching to groups of children. Only occasionally do they interact with children involved in child-initiated tasks to extend their learning or challenge their thinking. Children do not have regular and purposeful opportunities to work outdoors. Systems to assess pupils are complicated and time consuming and do not help staff to identify the next steps that pupils need to take in their learning.

Questions for providers

- How well do all our staff understand good Foundation Phase practice?
- How well do we embrace the pedagogy of the Foundation Phase and ensure successful delivery in all Foundation Phase classes?
- Do staff use active learning well to stimulate all children in the Foundation Phase and motivate them to learn?
- Is there a suitable balance between continuous, enhanced and adult-directed activities or do adult-directed activities dominate?
- Are learning experiences exciting and fun?
- Do staff deliver literacy and numeracy sessions in line with good Foundation Phase practice?
- Do children have regular opportunities to develop their skills in outdoor areas across all areas of learning?
- Do we evaluate how well teachers deliver the Foundation Phase and its impact on the quality of learning?

Questions for local authorities and regional consortia

- How well do we support the development of effective Foundation Phase practice and evaluate the impact of the support we provide?
- Does our organisation have the knowledge and expertise to support effective Foundation Phase practice?

Section 1:
Thematic: Developing literacy skills

Developing literacy skills



Good literacy skills are essential in ensuring that young people can communicate effectively and make sense of the world around them. Pupils need well-developed literacy skills in order to access the whole curriculum successfully. Improving pupils' literacy skills has been a priority in Wales throughout the 2010-2017 inspection cycle.

In order to support schools in raising standards of literacy, over the last seven years the Welsh Government has introduced a number of initiatives. These initiatives include the language, literacy and communication area of learning for the Foundation Phase (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008a), and the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (Welsh Government, 2013a). In addition, the Welsh Government introduced National Reading Tests for pupils from Year 2 to Year 9 in 2013, and new GCSEs for English and Welsh in September 2015.

Estyn has reported on standards and provision in literacy in all inspections since 2010.

During the inspection cycle, we published several thematic surveys about literacy.

For more information please read our thematic reports.

- Literacy and the Foundation Phase** (Estyn, 2011a)
- The impact of family learning programmes on raising the literacy and numeracy levels of children and adults** (Estyn, 2012a)
- Literacy in key stage 3** (Estyn, 2012b)
- Literacy in key stage 3: An interim report** (Estyn, 2015b)



Section 1:

Thematic: Developing literacy skills

Strengths

Over this inspection cycle, the provision for literacy has improved and overall this had a positive impact on pupil standards, particularly oracy and reading. An evaluation of standards in literacy is given in the sector sections of this report. In 2010, only two-in-five primary schools and one-in-eight secondary schools planned systematically to develop reading and writing across the curriculum. By 2017 this had increased to around seven-in-ten primary and secondary schools.

In the better schools, senior leaders ensure that the development of pupils' literacy skills is a key priority. Leaders at all levels drive and support a co-ordinated and consistent approach to developing literacy across the curriculum. They ensure that teachers and support staff access professional learning that helps them gain a sound understanding of how to develop pupils' literacy skills. Teachers plan for pupils to develop these skills progressively, year-on-year. They use effective strategies to develop pupils' reading, writing and oral skills and provide well-planned opportunities for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum.

In the most successful schools, there are many imaginative learning experiences for pupils to apply their literacy skills in relevant and motivating real-life situations. Leaders and teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and, where appropriate, implement targeted strategies and intervention programmes for pupils in need of additional support. As a result, pupils acquire very good literacy skills and apply these confidently at a consistently high standard across all curriculum areas.

A notable feature of schools that are successful in raising standards in literacy is an emphasis on partnership working, particularly with parents, the local community and with other schools. For example, the schools offer workshops that develop parents' understanding of the school's approach to teaching literacy. This enables parents to support their children's learning at home and has a positive impact on pupil attainment. This approach happens more often in primary schools than in secondary schools.

Areas for improvement

The standard of pupils' writing in many primary and secondary schools remains weaker than other aspects of their literacy. In some schools, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or independently across the curriculum. In others, weak spelling and punctuation and careless errors continue to be a feature of pupils' work because they are not encouraged to proof read their work to improve its content and accuracy.

In three-in-ten schools, leaders and teachers do not co-ordinate strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills well. As a result, the curriculum does not provide planned, progressive opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their skills. These schools also tend not to plan to meet the needs of different groups of learners. For example, they do not provide enough challenge to enable more able pupils to reach their potential. In other schools, although plans are in place to develop pupils' literacy skills, teachers do not implement these well enough in the classroom. As a result, the plans have little or no impact in raising pupils' literacy attainment. Raising standards in literacy remains a priority for most schools.

Ysgol Cynwyd Sant

Ysgol Cynwyd Sant plans exciting creative learning activities to develop pupils' literacy skills.

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



Cydnabod
Rhagoriaeth
Recognising
Excellence

Fitzalan High School

The curriculum at **Fitzalan High School** is tailored according to the potential, progress and ability of each learner. The flexible nature of the curriculum means that staff can respond to learners' needs throughout the year.

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



Cydnabod
Rhagoriaeth
Recognising
Excellence

Section 1:

Thematic: Developing literacy skills

Questions for providers:

- Is there a clearly understood whole-school strategy for developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum and from year to year?
- Do our senior leaders place a high enough priority on improving pupils' literacy skills?
- How well do we plan to develop pupils' literacy skills through an approach that integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing?
- Does our curriculum planning ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop their literacy skills in meaningful and real-life contexts across the curriculum?
- How well do we ensure progression in pupils' literacy skills acquisition?
- Are there worthwhile opportunities for professional learning to ensure that all members of staff can teach literacy well?
- Do we support parents to enable them to help their children acquire good literacy skills?
- How well do we support all pupils, including those who are more able and those that need additional help, to develop good literacy skills?

Section 1:

Thematic: Developing numeracy skills

Strengths

Over the 2010–2017 inspection cycle, the quality of provision for numeracy has generally improved in schools, particularly since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework in 2013 (Welsh Government, 2013a). Towards the end of the cycle, in two-thirds of primary schools and two-fifths of secondary schools, the provision to help ensure that pupils use and build on their numeracy skills across the curriculum is good or better. An evaluation of standards in numeracy is given in the sector sections of this report.

In high-performing schools, leaders place a strong emphasis on whole-school planning to develop pupils' numeracy skills systematically as they progress through the school. They ensure that strategies to develop numeracy feature strongly in school and department improvement plans and they allocate time, training and resources to support its development. These schools use the numeracy aspects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (Welsh Government, 2013a) to generate their own systems for developing and monitoring pupils' progress. They make sure that pupils master basic number skills thoroughly in their mathematics sessions and have effective strategies to recall essential number facts quickly and accurately. They adapt schemes of work so that pupils have enough opportunities to apply the numeracy skills they have learned in mathematics sessions to a range of real-life and challenging contexts across the curriculum.

In the most effective practice, schools have robust arrangements to ensure progression when developing pupils' numeracy skills across classes and key stages, and between primary and secondary phases. These schools undertake regular evaluation of all aspects of their numeracy work, informed by first-hand evidence from lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work. These self-evaluation arrangements also include detailed analysis of test data and outcomes of catch-up programmes to support pupils with weaker numeracy skills. This information is used to identify common limitations in pupils' numeracy skills and common pupil misunderstandings across the school, which are shared with staff to help with lesson planning.

Leaders in successful schools ensure that there are regular professional learning opportunities for teaching and support staff to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to improve pupils' numeracy skills. Where appropriate, the learning opportunities also include improving the mathematical skills and understanding of staff. In these schools, staff share good practice and discuss and agree consistent methodologies that they will use for numeracy across the school. They also have valuable working relationships between cluster primary schools and their partner secondary school. These local schools participate in joint activities such as sharing their experiences and ideas about effective teaching strategies for mental and written calculations. This type of collaboration helps to support consistency and progression in pupils' numeracy skills as they move from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

Working within and between schools, the most knowledgeable and passionate numeracy co-ordinators often produce "how to do" resources for staff to support their individual planning. This level of support helps all staff to understand their role and to be clear about how they can contribute to the development of pupils' numeracy skills. It leads to a more consistent approach with teaching numerical processes, and it helps to develop pupils' confidence and numerical fluency.

Ysgol San Sior

At **Ysgol San Sior**, the school's farm provides a range of learning experiences that develop independent learners and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For more information read our **case study**.



Oldcastle Primary School, Bridgend

Oldcastle Primary School's mathematics intervention has transformed the subject for the lowest achieving learners and raised standards for all. The school is also the first in Wales to use a new system to support pupils' speech and language therapy. For more information read our **case study**.



Section 1:

Thematic: Developing numeracy skills

Areas for improvement

In about a third of primary schools and three-fifths of secondary schools, there are shortcomings in the way that schools plan for and ensure that pupils use and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. In these schools, planning is superficial and pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and use their numeracy skills in real-life contexts across the curriculum. Intervention programmes to support pupils with the greatest difficulties with numeracy are usually not monitored or evaluated well enough, and more able pupils are not challenged.

Where there are shortcomings in the quality of teaching to develop numeracy, often this is because teachers lack the mathematical knowledge and confidence to address pupils' misunderstandings. In all schools, where teachers lack the relevant mathematical knowledge to develop pupils' numeracy effectively, pupils make limited progress and in a few cases become more confused.

Although improvements have been made in provision and in the development of pupils' numeracy over this inspection cycle, raising standards in numeracy remains a priority.

Questions for providers:

- How well do we ensure that pupils master important number skills in their mathematics sessions?
- Do we plan effectively for a common approach, continuity and progression for developing pupils' numeracy skills within mathematics lessons and across the curriculum?
- How successful are the links between our primary and secondary school numeracy co-ordinators and secondary school mathematics departments in ensuring continuity and progression in pupils' numeracy?
- Are there enough suitable and challenging opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and numerical reasoning skills within mathematics lessons and across the curriculum?
- How effective are our senior leaders in planning to raise standards in numeracy in mathematics lessons and across the curriculum?
- Are systems to track the progress of pupils' numeracy skills reliable and do teachers use them effectively for planning purposes, particularly for pupils involved in intervention programmes?
- Do we as leaders monitor the quality of provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills rigorously enough?
- Are procedures for evaluating numeracy strategies robust and do they contribute effectively to improvement planning?

Elfed High School

Elfed High School created Learning Director posts for the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and to support staff in consolidating these across the curriculum. There is now increased confidence in planning and delivering effective activities.

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



Section 1:

Thematic: Developing ICT and digital skills across the curriculum

Developing ICT and digital skills across the curriculum



Improving pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum has been a goal for schools since the publication of the 'Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales' in 2008 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008b). The framework was developed with the aim of providing guidance about continuity and progression in thinking, communication, ICT and number for learners from 3 to 19 and beyond. The Welsh Government identified these as skills that need to be embedded in the experience of learners across all their learning. Literacy and numeracy became statutory through the Literacy and Numeracy Framework in 2013 (Welsh Government, 2013a), but ICT remained non-statutory and was perceived by many schools as less of a priority.

As part of preparation for a 'Curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life', (Welsh Government, 2015), a digital competence framework (DCF) was developed during 2015–2016. The DCF focuses on developing digital skills that can be applied to a wide range of subjects and scenarios. Since September 2016, schools and settings have been expected to familiarise themselves with the DCF and plan for its implementation. The planning phase includes setting the vision from senior leadership, reviewing the skills needs of all staff, arranging training and delivering it to develop greater understanding and confidence.

Estyn has reported on standards and provision for ICT in all inspections since 2016. Previously we reported by exception.

During the inspection cycle, we published two thematic reports on ICT.

For more information please read our thematic reports.

The impact of ICT on pupils' learning in primary schools

(Estyn, 2013d)

ICT at key stage 3: The impact of ICT on pupils' learning at key stage 3 in secondary schools (Estyn, 2014b)



Section 1:

Thematic: Developing ICT and digital skills across the curriculum

Strengths

Most pupils are confident in their use of basic ICT programmes, such as for word processing and to create presentations, across the curriculum. In a few secondary schools and a majority of primary schools, leaders plan effectively for progression in pupils' ICT skills as they move through the school. In the schools that use ICT well, this has a positive impact on teaching and learning by motivating and engaging pupils. In these schools, staff make effective use of ICT to enthuse pupils and raise their self-esteem. The teachers recognise the value of ICT to inspire pupils and improve their understanding, as well as the potential that ICT has to help pupils to develop their independent learning skills. This positive culture helps pupils to become active digital creators as well as competent users.

In schools that have successfully created conditions where digital learning is fully integrated into subjects and topics across the curriculum, leaders across the school have a clear vision for ICT and a determination to capitalise on its potential. In these schools, senior leaders make developments in ICT a whole-school priority to enable pupils to communicate effectively and collaborate more widely, including on a global scale, and to develop their creativity. In addition, they support teachers in using ICT tools better to plan and deliver lessons that meet the needs of their learners and to give pupils access to meaningful digital contexts across a range of subjects that will encourage independent learning.

These schools have learnt about what works well from their experience of implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (Welsh Government, 2013a). They have audited their ICT provision, and staff skills, mapped it against the DCF to identify any gaps, and aligned their schemes of work to the Framework. They have targeted resources carefully, with a strong focus on developing staff expertise. They enable pupils to take on digital leadership roles and responsibilities and use their knowledge to support the learning of staff, as well as their peers. These activities help schools to become learning communities in which teachers' professional knowledge is deepened and enables them to use their own digital skills to improve classroom teaching and learning.

Section 1:

Thematic: Developing ICT and digital skills across the curriculum

Areas for improvement

Despite significant advancements in technology over the inspection cycle, pupils' progress in ICT has not advanced at the same rate. Generally, pupils do not apply their ICT skills well across the curriculum and their ICT skills are often limited to a narrow range of applications.

The opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum are limited in many secondary schools and a third of primary schools. In these schools, teachers lack knowledge and confidence. There is insufficient planning of opportunities to develop ICT skills progressively and a lack of a clear vision about ICT from senior leaders. As a result, these schools do not provide pupils with relevant contexts across the curriculum to apply the skills they develop in ICT lessons.

The expectations of the DCF for schools are significantly higher than for ICT across the curriculum currently, yet too few primary or secondary schools have carried out audits of how well ICT is developed across their curriculum. Nor have many schools audited the digital competence of staff, so that they can plan training to ensure that they have the knowledge and confidence to deliver the DCF.

Currently, initial teacher training centres do not equip trainee teachers with the skills needed to deliver the breadth and range of ICT required by schools. The ICT areas weakest in schools, such as using databases and spreadsheets, are also the areas least well covered in initial teacher training.

Questions for providers:

- Have senior leaders enough understanding of and commitment to the DCF? How well is this commitment being communicated to all staff?
- Have we identified a member of staff to lead and support the implementation of the DCF? Does this member of staff have the necessary skills and experience?
- Have we undertaken an audit of:
 - staff competence against the DCF to identify training needs?
 - opportunities provided for the meaningful application of digital skills across the existing curriculum and within emerging Areas of Learning and Experience?
 - the school infrastructure (internet speed and Wi-Fi capability) and hardware to gauge whether they are sufficient for the DCF?
- Do we have a costed three-year plan for the implementation of the DCF that includes:
 - the training of staff, following a thorough audit of their individual training requirements?
 - identifying pupils as trainers and training them, as appropriate?
 - ensuring that the infrastructure and hardware are fit for purpose?

Section 1:

Thematic: Developing ICT and digital skills across the curriculum

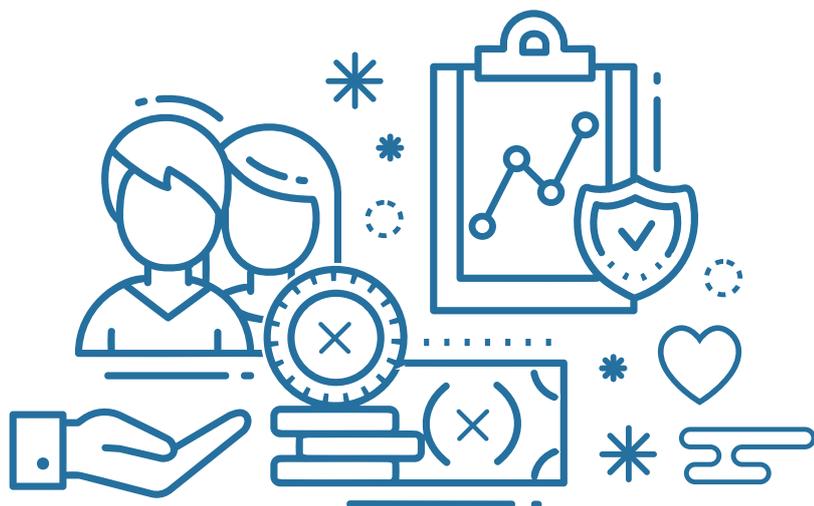
Questions for local authorities and regional consortia

- Are we providing enough training for school staff on the DCF and how to implement it in classrooms?
- What advice and support can we provide schools in carrying out audits of staff competence, infrastructure, hardware and their curriculum?

Section 1:

Thematic: Tackling the effects of disadvantage

Tackling the effects of disadvantage



Over the past seven years, reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment has been one of the Welsh Government's main priorities for schools. It has funded several initiatives and strategies to improve learners' attainment and wellbeing such as the primary school free breakfast initiative and the pupil development grant. Other developments during this time, which include the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (Welsh Government, 2013a), aim to improve outcomes for learners living in poverty as part of provision for all pupils.

Estyn has evaluated the standards, progress and wellbeing of learners living in poverty in all inspections since 2010 and the effectiveness of the pupil development grant since 2014(1).

During the inspection cycle, we published a series of thematic reports about this aspect of schools' work.

For more information read our thematic reports.

Tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools: working with the community and other services (Estyn, 2011c)

Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools (Estyn 2012c)

Working together to tackle the impact of poverty on educational achievement (Estyn, 2013e)

Pupil deprivation (Estyn, 2014c)



Section 1:

Thematic: Tackling the effects of disadvantage

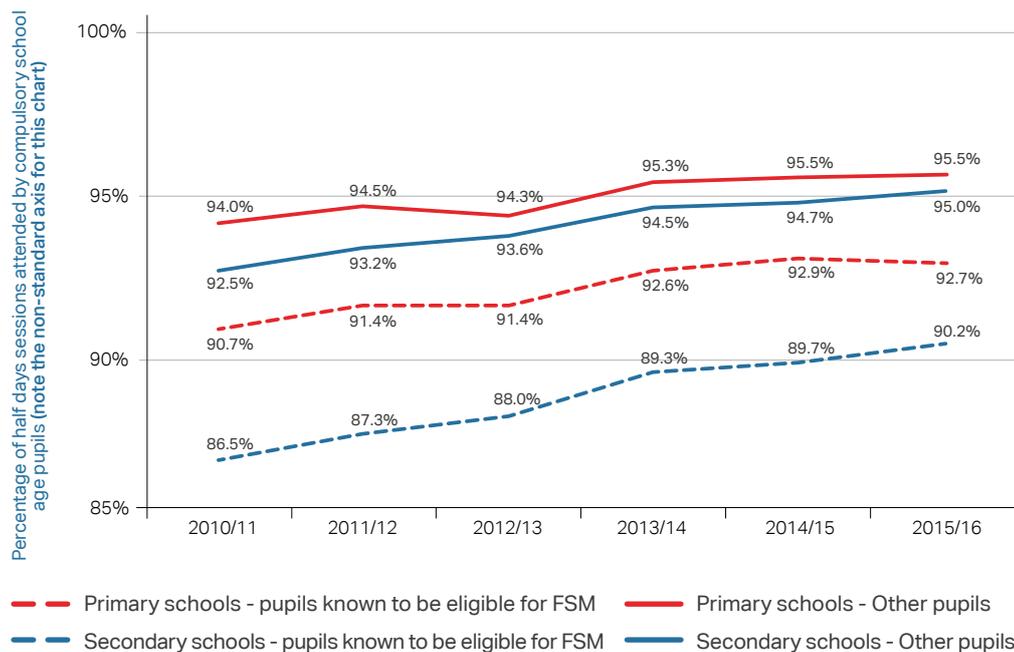
Strengths

Overall, schools across Wales now have a stronger focus on reducing the impact of poverty than at the beginning of the inspection cycle. This work is steadily improving outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals at each phase of education. For example, the proportion of key stage 4 pupils eligible for free school meals who achieved five A*-C grades including English or Welsh and mathematics increased year-on-year from 22% in 2011 to almost 36% in 2016, although results in 2017 were lower, falling to 29%. The results for pupils not eligible for free school meals were also lower in 2017 than in 2016 (Welsh Government, 2017g).

The attainment and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils are strongest in schools that tackle the impact of poverty with persistence and tenacity over the long term. In these schools, leaders do not use poverty as an excuse for under-attainment, but have high expectations of pupils and staff in all aspects of their work. Leaders make sure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better for all pupils. A few schools tailor the curriculum and support to meet the individual needs of disadvantaged learners particularly well and this helps learners to make strong progress.

During the current inspection cycle, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved more quickly than the attendance of other pupils in both primary and secondary schools (Welsh Government, 2017e ; Welsh Government, 2017i).

Figure 1.1:
Attendance of pupils in maintained primary and secondary schools, by free-school-meal (FSM) eligibility



Source: Welsh Government (2017e, 2017i)

Fitzalan High School

Curricular provision is a significant strength of **Fitzalan High School**. The school provides an extensive range of learning experiences that meet the needs of all pupils exceptionally well. This has a substantial impact on pupil standards and wellbeing.

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



Ysgol Gynradd Bynea

Pupils at **Ysgol Gynradd Bynea** led a project to develop an outside learning village. Learners developed a range of skills from designing architectural models to budgeting and placing orders.

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



Section 1:

Thematic: Tackling the effects of disadvantage

Many schools make effective use of educational welfare officers and work well with parents to emphasise the importance of regular attendance at school. They develop useful reward schemes for pupils. In a few schools that have been particularly successful, the culture of the school nurtures resilience among learners and the provision on offer is engaging and attractive.

Successful schools intervene early, in a few instances even before a child has joined the school, to provide timely and effective support, including that provided by partners such as Flying Start. These schools use the pupil development grant strategically to improve their provision. For example, they employ staff to lead and co-ordinate all aspects of provision for disadvantaged pupils and evaluate the impact of their actions, so that they know what works and what does not.

Successful leaders understand that schools alone cannot overcome all the challenges that poverty and social disadvantage present. They work hard to build relationships with parents, the local community and specialist services to meet the needs of pupils and their families. This work has a very positive impact on pupils' standards and wellbeing. Generally, these arrangements for working with families and local communities are stronger in primary schools than in secondary schools.

Areas for improvement

Despite recent improvements, there is still a need to raise standards for this group of pupils because children living in poverty still do not achieve as well as their peers. For example, the performance gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and others has not narrowed much for the proportion achieving five A*-C grades including English or Welsh and mathematics.

Tredegarville C.I.W Primary School

Tredegarville C.I.W Primary has developed partnerships with local businesses and community organisations to provide a range of activities that enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' and parents' aspirations.

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



Ysgol Gynradd Talysarn

Ysgol Gynradd Talysarn has helped parents to overcome obstacles in supporting their children's learning. Another project has developed the bilingual skills of pupils and their parents.

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

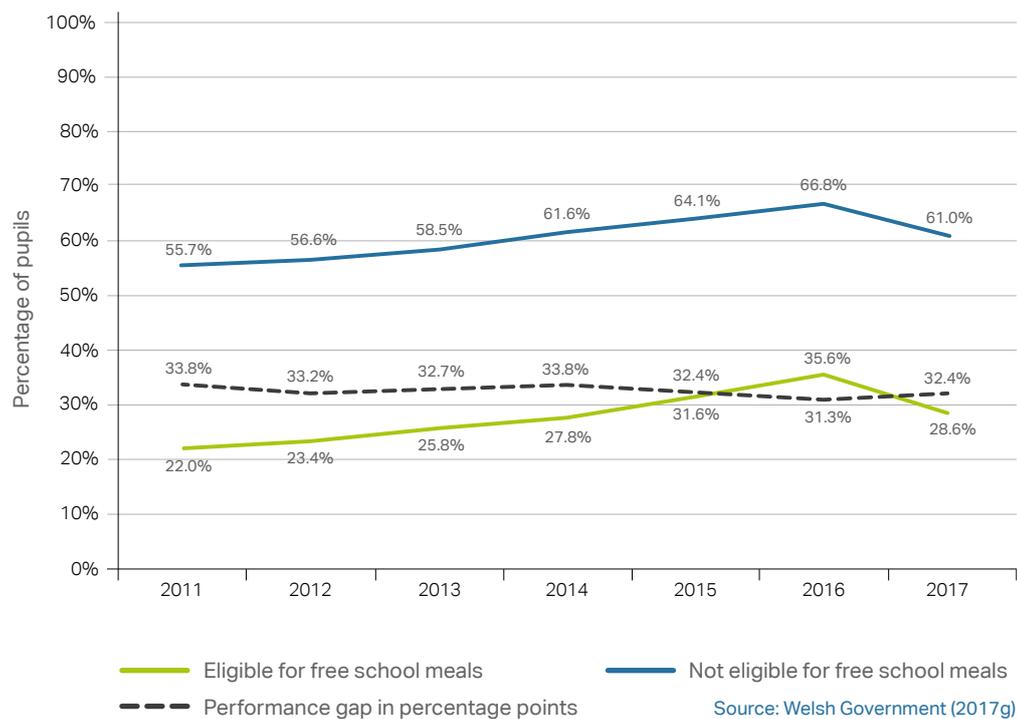


Section 1:

Thematic: Tackling the effects of disadvantage

Figure 1.2:

Percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics at key stage 4 by free-school-meal eligibility 2011-2017



Section 1:

Thematic: Tackling the effects of disadvantage

Again, despite some improvements, the attendance of pupils that are eligible for free school meals continues to be a concern at all phases. Over the last three years, around 25% of pupils eligible for free school meals in key stage 2 attend for less than 90% of the time (9% of other pupils) and only 45% attend for 95% or more (65% of other pupils) (Welsh Government, 2017e). By key stage 4, in secondary schools, around 40% of pupils eligible for free school meals have less than 90% attendance (16% of other pupils) and only 35% attend for 95% or more of the time (60% of other pupils) (Welsh Government, 2017i). Schools will not succeed in narrowing the performance gap until this situation improves.

	Free school meal pupils	Non free school meal pupils
Key stage 2 (primary)	25% attend for less than 90% of the time (equivalent to missing over 2 terms of primary school) 45% attend 95% or more (equivalent to over 1 term of primary school)	9% of pupils miss less than 90% 65% attend 95% or more
Key stage 4 (secondary)	40% have less than 90% attendance 35% attend 95% or more	16% have less than 90% attendance 60% attend 95% or more

The attendance of pupils that are eligible for free school meals continues to be a concern at all phases. Over the last three years, around 25% of pupils eligible for free school meals in key stage 2 attend for less than 90% of the time (9% for other pupils) and only 45% attend for 95% or more (65% for other pupils) (Welsh Government, 2017e).

In secondary school around 40% of pupils eligible for free school meals have less than 90% attendance (16% for other pupils) and only 35% attend for 95% or more of the time (60% for other pupils). It is unlikely that schools will succeed in reducing the performance gap unless this situation improves (Welsh Government, 2017i).

Section 1:

Thematic: Tackling the effects of disadvantage

Figure 1.3: Attendance over the course of one school year

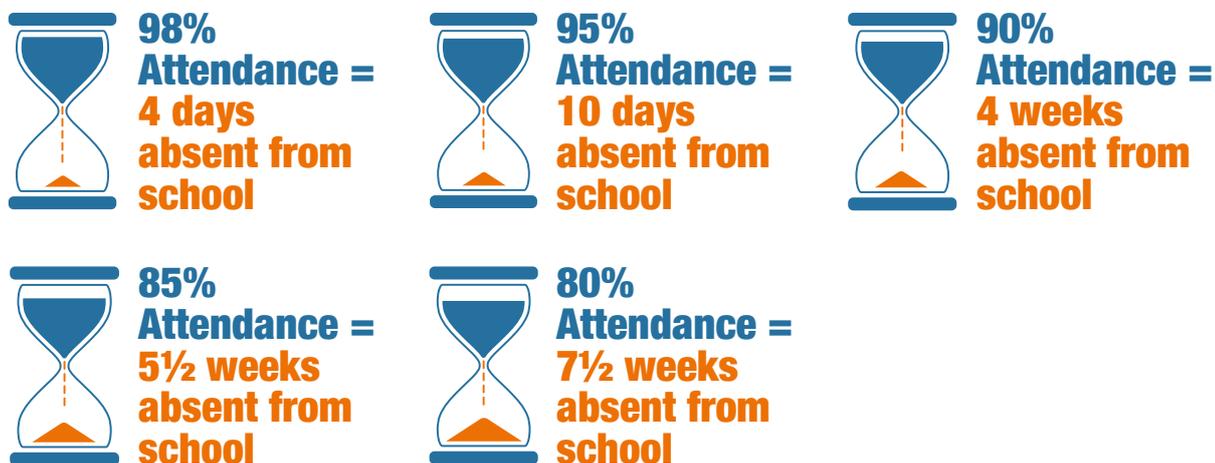


Figure 1.4: Attendance over 5 years (Year 7 to Year 11)



Section 1:

Thematic: Tackling the effects of disadvantage

Since 2014, Estyn has reported on how well schools make use of the pupil development grant. Nearly all schools now target the pupil development grant to support those eligible for free school meals. The proportion who make effective use of the grant to improve outcomes for these pupils has remained at around two-thirds of primary and secondary schools. Less successful schools often adopt many of the strategies used by their more successful counterparts, such as programmes to improve pupils' literacy skills. But they do not adapt or tailor the delivery of these strategies well enough to meet the particular needs of their pupils or evaluate the difference that these initiatives make to pupils' outcomes. In particular, too many secondary schools use the funding for 'catch-up' programmes at key stage 4 rather than developing pupils' skills throughout all the stages of their secondary education.

The relative lack of progress in reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment provides a strong case for the need for continued education and curriculum reform.

Questions for providers:

- Do learners disadvantaged by poverty make good progress from their individual starting points and achieve as well as they should? If not, what do we need to change to ensure better outcomes?
- How effectively do we monitor attendance and implement strategies to improve attendance? Are our expectations in relation to all pupils' attendance high enough?
- How effectively is the pupil development grant used in a sustainable way to improve the achievement and wellbeing of pupils disadvantaged by poverty?
- Do we make effective use of relevant research to improve the achievement and wellbeing of pupils disadvantaged by poverty?
- How well do we engage with families, the community and specialist services? What difference does this engagement make to pupils' outcomes?
- Do we have a whole-school strategy to improve the achievement and wellbeing of learners disadvantaged by poverty?
- How well do we monitor and evaluate provision for pupils disadvantaged by poverty and the standards that they achieve? How well do we use the findings of evaluation to refine, adapt and improve provision?

Question for local authorities and regional consortia:

- Does our organisation have sufficient knowledge and expertise to support schools in the effective use of strategies to tackle the effects of disadvantage?
- How well do we evaluate the impact of the support we provide?

(1) The pupil development grant replaced the pupil deprivation grant from April 2017.

Section 1:
Thematic: Welsh language development

Welsh language development



During the last seven years, the Welsh Government has introduced a number of strategies aimed at increasing the number of people who speak Welsh. Its 'Welsh-medium Education Strategy' (Welsh Government, 2010a) set out its aspiration that 'all learners develop their Welsh-language skills to their full potential and encourage sound linguistic progression from one phase of education and training to the next'. This strategy, allied to 'laith fyw laith byw – Strategaeth y Gymraeg 2012-17' (A living language: a language for living – Welsh language strategy 2012 to 2017) (Welsh Government, 2012a), commits to improving Welsh language provision. Successful Futures (Donaldson, 2015) builds on 'Qualified for Life' (Welsh Government, 2014b) in recognising Wales' development as a 'bilingual nation with the strength and assurance to nurture both languages'. Welsh is compulsory for every pupil until age 16 years and 'A Curriculum for Wales – A Curriculum for Life' (Welsh Government, 2015a) makes it a priority 'that all learners can develop their Welsh language skills and use the language confidently in different contexts'.

Estyn has reported on standards and provision for Welsh in all inspections since 2010.

Section 1:

Thematic: Welsh language development

During this cycle, we published a series of thematic reports about a broad range of aspects of Welsh-medium education. For more information read our thematic reports.

Welsh in the Foundation Phase: Developing Welsh as a first language in primary schools and the non-maintained sector (Estyn, 2013a)

Welsh Language Development in the Foundation Phase (Estyn, 2013f)

Linguistic progression and standards of Welsh in ten bilingual schools (Estyn, 2014d)

Local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Estyn, 2016a)

Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching and learning in further education (Estyn, 2017b)

A review of the work of the National Centre for Learning Welsh (Estyn, 2017c)



Strengths

In the Foundation Phase in nearly all Welsh-medium primary schools and settings, there is a strong emphasis on developing Welsh by using it consistently every day across all areas of learning. In many of these schools and settings, practitioners are good language role models and develop children's vocabulary well. They place a high priority on creating a strong Welsh ethos and enriching children's language. Overall, pupils' standards in Welsh are good. Most pupils develop their speaking, listening and reading skills effectively in a wide range of contexts, whatever language they speak at home.

In the majority of English-medium primary schools, pupils make a good start when learning to speak and listen in Welsh. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards learning the language and make good progress during whole-group sessions.

Many Welsh-medium schools plan effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and command of the language. Leaders in these schools set ambitious targets to ensure that pupils develop their Welsh language skills from one year to the next. Pupils make good or better progress in developing their Welsh language skills in many Welsh-medium secondary schools. They speak, read and write well in Welsh and many use their language skills confidently across the curriculum.

In general, pupils who follow the greatest number of GCSE courses through the medium of Welsh are more able to use their Welsh to discuss and write in a range of different genres. Pupils in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools achieve a little better at key performance indicators that include Welsh, English or mathematics than those in English-medium schools whatever the language spoken at home.

Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni

Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni has improved pupils' oracy skills by re-visiting assessment procedures, teaching strategies and the opportunities that pupils have within the curriculum.

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



Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw

Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, Torfaen, strives to create completely bilingual individuals who take pride in their identity as Welsh people. Staff emphasise that speaking Welsh is an integral and natural part of school life and pupils are encouraged to use their Welsh skills both inside and outside of school.

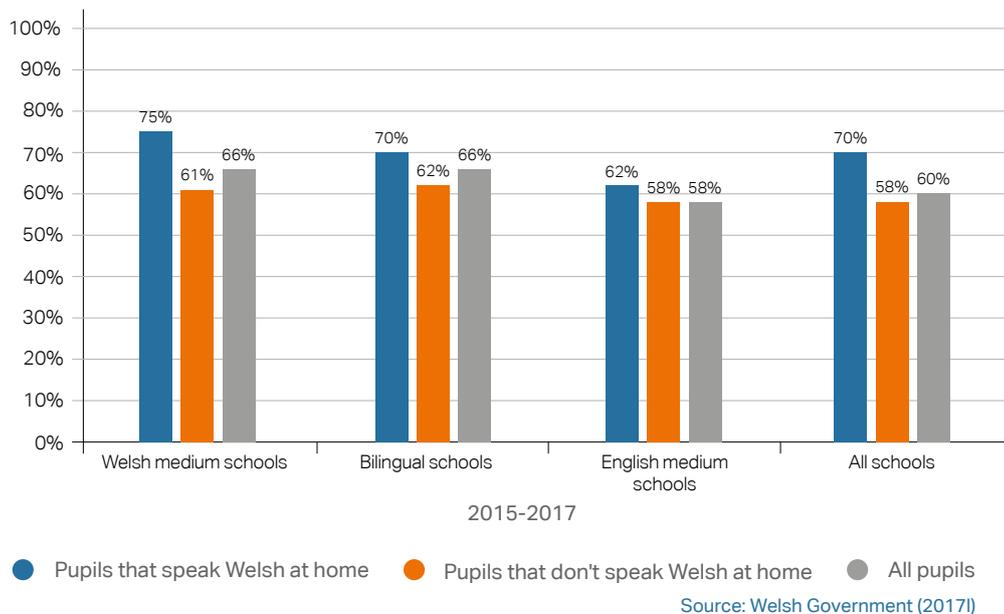
For more information read our **case study**.



Section 1:

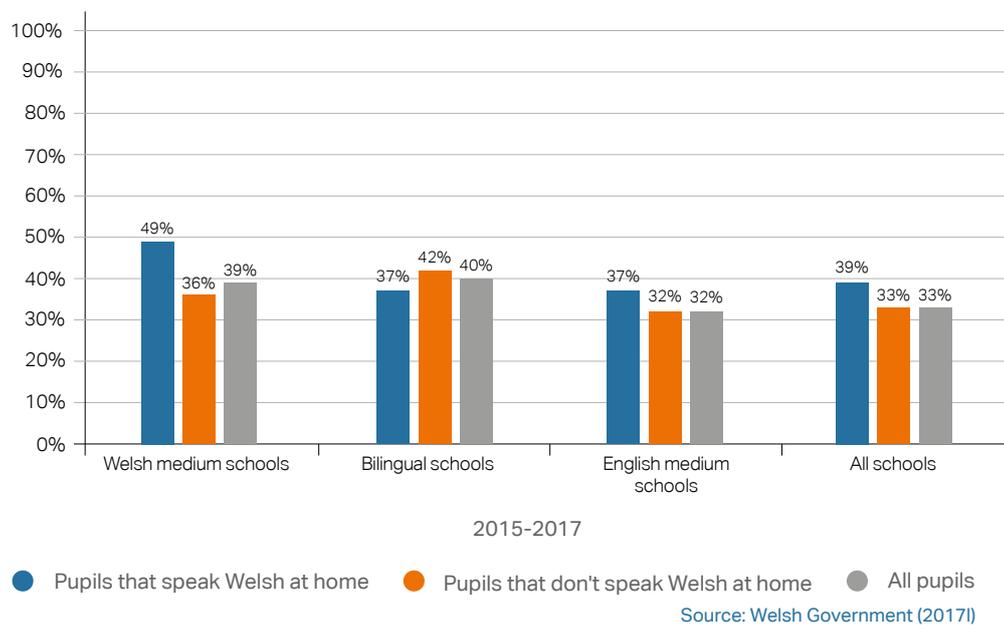
Thematic: Welsh language development

Figure 1.5:
Percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics – all pupils



This is also the case for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Figure 1.6:
Percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics – pupils eligible for free school meals



Section 1:

Thematic: Welsh language development

Standards of Welsh in many English-medium secondary schools are improving, with the numbers achieving qualifications in Welsh at the end of key stage 4 increasing by over 12 percentage points between 2010 and 2016. During this period, a majority of pupils have gained their qualification in the GCSE Welsh second language short course.

Standards are excellent in a very few English-medium secondary schools. In these instances, schools develop pupils' understanding of the Welsh language and culture through a wide range of informal activities, as well as through a well-planned approach across the curriculum. A substantial proportion of curriculum time is allocated to Welsh language provision and pupils are encouraged by nearly all teachers to develop their use of Welsh in Welsh lessons and other subjects as well. Many pupils enter full course GCSE Welsh second language. However, in general, pupils do not practise their Welsh language skills enough outside of lessons or in more social settings.

From a low starting point, there has been an increase in the number of Welsh or bilingual learning activities in further education colleges in recent years. Welsh Government targets for the proportion of learning activities carried out by learners aged 16–19 through the medium of Welsh or bilingually have been met in schools, further education institutions and in work-based learning.

The Welsh Government's Welsh-language Sabbatical Scheme courses have made a positive contribution to improving the quality and capacity of Welsh-medium provision in local authorities across Wales. In most cases, the information gathered by local authorities about the linguistic skills of their teaching workforce has been used appropriately to inform continued professional development and training programmes. These are generally well tailored to improve practitioners' Welsh-medium teaching skills.

During the inspection cycle, standards in three-quarters of Welsh for Adults providers were judged good or better. These provided good teaching and all provided good or better learning experiences for their learners. The recently-established National Centre for Learning Welsh is developing its role well as a national voice for the sector and made progress in improving and harmonising approaches to curriculum development, data collection, professional development and assessment. The National Centre has focused on helping providers to increase provision in key target areas, in particular increasing intensive provision and better progression between levels.

The Welsh Government requires local authorities to develop local plans to deliver its national strategies for Welsh-medium education. Estyn reviewed the effectiveness of local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) in 2015 (Estyn, 2016a). We found that the WESPs are providing a useful framework for local authorities to plan their Welsh-medium education provision. In the small number of local authorities where good progress is made against targets, there is a strong commitment by strategic leaders, elected members and senior officers to support Welsh-medium education. In these local authorities, the emphasis placed on delivering the WESP is high and improving Welsh-medium provision is a strategic priority. Most local authorities take appropriate steps to promote and raise awareness of Welsh-medium education provision in their area.

Treorchy Comprehensive School

Treorchy Comprehensive School links Welsh language to heritage and culture to enrich and accelerate pupils' learning.

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



Section 1:

Thematic: Welsh language development

Areas for improvement

There are weaknesses in the way many local authority WESPs are being developed and implemented. This is reflected in the slow progress made against many of the targets in the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium education strategy (Welsh Government, 2016a). For example, the proportion of Year 2 learners being assessed through the medium of Welsh has remained at around 22% over the last six years (Welsh Government, 2017m). Across Wales, despite the small increase in the proportion of pupils who are being assessed in Welsh at Year 9, around 13% of learners who are in Welsh-medium education in Year 6 do not continue in Welsh-medium education in Year 7 (Welsh Government, 2015b). These learners do not have the opportunity to develop their Welsh language skills to best effect. The percentage of pupils in Welsh-medium primary schools has remained at around 24% of the total number of pupils over the last seven years. In the same period, the percentage in Welsh-medium secondary schools has remained at around 20% (Welsh Government, 2017n).

In a few local authorities, developing Welsh-medium provision is not a strategic priority. Welsh education does not feature prominently in strategic planning, progress is not scrutinised robustly at a high enough level, and improvements against targets are slow. In a minority of authorities, the information available to parents is limited and does not explain the longer-term provision from the early years to key stage 4. A few authorities lack systematic approaches to measuring demand for Welsh-medium education. These local authorities tend to be reactive and are slow to respond to increases in the demand for Welsh-medium education, resulting in provision having to catch up with the demand.

In a few Welsh-medium nursery settings, practitioners do not have high enough expectations of children's speaking skills. In these settings, practitioners are often not confident enough in their own Welsh language skills and do not make enough effort to use the language consistently during sessions. A few local authorities and regional consortia do not provide enough support or training to improve the language skills of these practitioners or their understanding of language teaching methodology. As a result, the progress made by children in these settings, from Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking homes, is too slow.

Standards of Welsh continue to be an area for development in a third of English-medium primary schools and settings. In a minority of schools, not enough time is devoted to teaching Welsh. As a result, pupils do not build on the Welsh that they learn in the Foundation Phase and do not use the language confidently outside formal Welsh lessons. Many teachers lack confidence in teaching Welsh and there are not enough opportunities for them to improve their skills.

There is considerable variation in the emphasis given by schools and local authorities to increasing the proportion of learners taking GCSE subjects through the medium of Welsh. Only a minority of local authorities see this as a priority. Although half of the local authorities track the number of Welsh-medium courses in key stage 4, only a very few set targets for individual schools to increase the number of pupils who follow them.

Section 1:

Thematic: Welsh language development

Two-thirds of English-medium secondary schools do not plan well enough to develop pupils' Welsh language skills. As a result, most pupils do not practise their Welsh often enough outside Welsh lessons and lack confidence in speaking the language. Planning for progression at important transition points between key stages is weak. This is an important shortcoming in the majority of schools across Wales.

The proportion of learners taking both A level Welsh first language and Welsh second language, in comparison to the take up of their respective GCSEs, has declined since 2011. Welsh Government targets for 2015 for both A level qualifications have not been met (Welsh Government, 2015b).

Too few Welsh-speaking learners continue their studies in Welsh or bilingually in further education colleges and in work-based learning. In the majority of further education colleges, leaders have not developed their plans well enough to increase and improve Welsh language provision. A shortage of Welsh-speaking staff is a significant obstacle to expanding Welsh-medium provision in the majority of colleges. Despite increased opportunities, many work-based learning providers do not do enough to encourage bilingual learners to undertake training or assessment through the medium of Welsh and the number of learners who undertake aspects of their training in Welsh is still very low.

Recruiting staff who are confident and capable of teaching their subjects through the medium of Welsh is a challenge across many areas of Wales. Attracting well-qualified Welsh specialists is a particular challenge for many English-medium secondary schools. Almost a quarter of teachers who are employed to teach Welsh are not trained to teach the subject.

In all three teacher education centres in Wales, Welsh language provision for English-medium trainee teachers is underdeveloped. The quality of training is too variable in all three centres. For much of the provision for secondary subjects, two of the three centres employ part-time staff to support trainees teaching through the medium of Welsh.

Section 1:

Thematic: Welsh language development

Questions for providers:

- Do pupils display positive attitudes and enjoy learning Welsh?
- How well is Welsh taught? Are all Welsh teachers qualified to do so?
- Do pupils receive enough opportunities to develop their use of Welsh in a range of situations outside Welsh lessons?
- Are pupils making good progress in Welsh and in subjects through the medium of Welsh across the curriculum?
- Are pupils continuing to develop their Welsh language skills when they transfer between the different key stages and phases of statutory education?
- Does curriculum planning allow pupils to make and sustain good progress in Welsh?
- Do we plan strategically for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills across the curriculum?
- Do we have an accurate understanding of what is needed to raise standards and improve provision for Welsh?
- Do we have an ethos that promotes the Welsh language and the benefits of being bilingual?

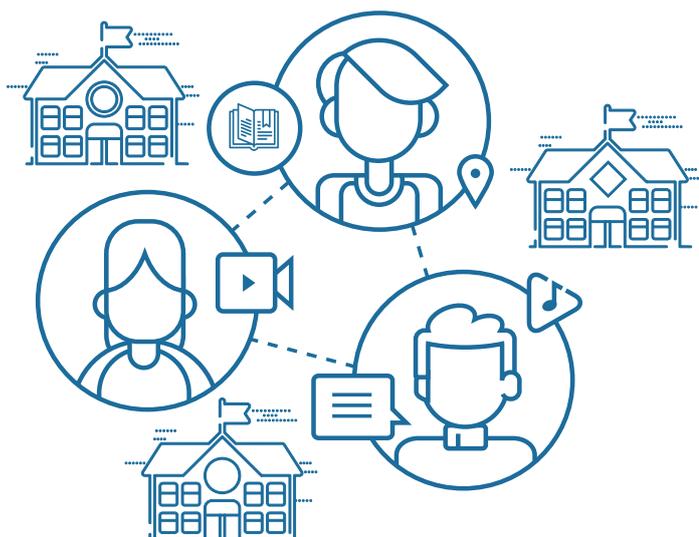
Questions for local authorities

- To what extent are the WESPs a strategic priority?
- To what extent are we working with providers to explain the benefits to pupils and parents of Welsh-medium education and of following courses through the medium of Welsh?
- To what extent are we working with providers to set targets to increase the proportion of pupils in key stage 4 who continue to study Welsh as a first language and follow specific subject areas through the medium of Welsh?

Section 1:

Thematic: School-to-school collaboration and learning

School-to-school collaboration and learning



Since 2010, there has been an increasing drive at local and national level to encourage collaborative working and the development of a self-improving system. There have been Welsh Government initiatives to encourage collaborative practice. For example, this was an explicit aim of the Lead and Emerging Practitioners Project (2013 to 2016) and was implicit in Schools Challenge Cymru (2014 to 2017). This direction of travel was supported by a report by the OECD, published in January 2014 (OECD, 2014). The report said that school-to-school collaboration is 'one of the most effective options for developing professional capital and especially social capital among teachers and leaders' (OECD, 2014 p.77.). The report also stated that:

'School-to-school collaboration provides the means of circulating knowledge and strategies around the system; it provides an alternative way of supporting struggling schools to that of exercising top-down intervention; and it develops collective responsibility among all schools for all students' success.' (OECD, 2014 p.77.)

In February 2014, the National Model for Regional Working was published by the Welsh Government (Welsh Government, 2014a) and established regional consortia to challenge and broker support appropriate to the needs of each school. In October 2014, Welsh Government published 'Qualified for Life – an education plan for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales' (Welsh Government, 2014b). The plan includes the strategic objective for leaders of education at every level to work together in a self-improving system, providing mutual support and challenge to raise standards in all schools. This is reaffirmed in 'Education in Wales: Our national mission' published in October 2017 (Welsh Government, 2017a). The OECD rapid policy assessment report in 2017 provided further support for this objective restating that:

'greater collaboration and trust among stakeholders are essential for realising the country's objective of a self-improving school system.' (OECD, 2017, p.49)

Section 1:

Thematic: School-to-school collaboration and learning

Estyn has reported on how well schools work with others when evaluating leadership and the quality and impact of strategic partnerships in all inspections since 2010.

Between 2013 and 2015, we published a series of thematic reports considering the value of collaborative working.

For more information read our thematic reports.

Twelve secondary school improvement journeys (Estyn, 2013g)

School-to-school support and collaboration (Estyn, 2015e)

Leadership and primary school improvement (Estyn, 2016b)

School-to-school support and collaboration – a summary and discussion paper (Estyn, 2017d)



Strengths

Nearly all schools are involved in some form of partnership working with other schools. Only around a tenth of schools do not work with schools other than those in their cluster. At the start of the cycle, this partnership working tended to be pastoral support to help pupils make the transition between schools or to extend curriculum provision. There are now far more examples of schools collaborating to improve other aspects of provision, such as literacy and numeracy projects, improving teaching and developing leadership.

In the most successful schools, there is effective collaboration between staff within the school and with staff from other schools. In these schools, there is a strong culture of professional learning, and staff are reflective and work effectively as a team. They are willing to share their practice with, and learn from, others. Leaders identify the issues that need to improve and actively seek out effective practice. They show a strong commitment to collaborative working and develop ways of working that make shared responsibility for professional learning possible. Building a culture of school-to-school collaboration involves a genuine commitment to being open to learning from others and is most effective when practitioners have the opportunity to work together to achieve a specific goal. Successful school-to-school learning arrangements also require trust and transparency. It is important that those working together have clearly identified strategic objectives and precise success criteria for such collaboration. The focus of the collaborative work must be on the impact on pupils.

High-performing schools work closely with their linked cluster schools, networks of other providers, and other schools. This helps them to understand the different factors that contribute to effective practice and to assess the quality of their teaching and learning accurately. They benefit from working with other schools on activities such as joint scrutiny of pupils' work or joint lesson observations with advisers from the local authority or regional consortium. These joint activities help staff to reflect on their practice and build their confidence.

Ysgol Bodfeurig

Ysgol Bodfeurig works in partnership with another local school, and both senior leadership teams work together very effectively as a committed professional learning community. Excellent examples of this are the way in which both schools plan learning experiences, have developed assessment for learning structures and evaluate each other's work.

For more information see the inspection report for **Ysgol Bodfeurig**.



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Tredegar Comprehensive School

Tredegar Comprehensive School has worked in partnership with local primary schools to secure consistent learning and teaching practice. This helps pupils to settle quickly and they benefit considerably from effective continuity and progression in learning.

For more information see the inspection report for **Tredegar Comprehensive School**.



Section 1:

Thematic: School-to-school collaboration and learning

There are examples of highly-successful school-to-school learning that have evolved over time as a result of the determination of school leaders to support each other and each other's schools. For example, special schools in Wales have a long tradition of collaborative working. Given their wide geographic spread, their specialist nature and the fact that they are small in number, they have felt a need to support each other. Much of the resource, advice and guidance that are generally available to mainstream schools on teaching, curriculum and assessment issues are not always easily applicable to their circumstances. A great deal of the expertise to do with practice in the sector lies within the special schools themselves. As a result, the leadership and staff of special schools are very open to collaborative working. This collaboration extends to providing advice and guidance to mainstream schools to develop their expertise in support of pupils with additional learning needs.

Over recent years, there has been an increase in the number of federated schools and in the most successful of these arrangements staff from the different schools work particularly well together, learning from each other and improving outcomes for pupils.

Areas for improvement

The majority of schools are often unable to identify whether or how school-to-school learning has had an impact on standards. Effective self-evaluation focuses on the core business of teaching and learning and the progress of pupils. Without this focus, schools lack a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Developing a reflective and evaluative approach makes it possible to know and accept when there is a need to change. The best school-to-school collaboration is based on a clear identification of need, a well-argued rationale, and precise objectives. All collaborative activity needs to be evaluated for the impact on core business and to be mutually beneficial.

There are specific areas for improvement. Most pupil referral units do not collaborate well enough with either primary or secondary schools in their area. Only a minority of primary and secondary cluster schools work effectively on joint planning of the curriculum. Collaboration between different phases, different sectors (apart from primary and secondary collaboration) and between different language-medium schools is less common.

In almost all cases, schools that are placed in a statutory category (in need of significant improvement or requiring special measures) struggle to engage in effective collaborative relationships. These schools struggle to benefit from working with others because there is ineffective leadership that has not created a culture of professional learning based on trust and openness. In many cases, the leadership and their staff have become inward looking and do not have a realistic view of their schools' outcomes and the quality of their teaching and learning. They struggle to identify the weakest areas and priorities in order to plan for sustainable improvement. Often the leaders of these schools use pupils' backgrounds to excuse poor performance because they have not visited schools in similar situations that perform much better. In addition, when a school is placed in a category they can become overwhelmed by the amount of advice they are offered and the number of people giving that advice.

Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn

Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn

is the regional centre for autism in North Wales. It engages closely with parents, carers and with schools and colleges to share its expertise through support, guidance and a wide range of training courses.

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



Section 1:

Thematic: School-to-school collaboration and learning

In each regional consortium there is a strategic approach to changing culture and to making sure that there is a strong commitment to and understanding of what it means to be part of a self-improving system. They have set up structures to encourage and support schools to work in partnership. The approaches taken in the different consortia vary and it is too early to assess fully the strengths, weaknesses and impact of the different strategies. Inspection of the regional consortia in 2016 found that all are working toward a self-improving system, although a common understanding across consortia of what this means has yet to emerge. The most effective challenge advisers understand the particular circumstances and the developmental needs of their schools. Consortia with robust approaches to identification of the best practice are best placed to create suitable collaborative pairings and to broker effective school-to-school working. Another finding in the initial inspections of consortia was that school-to-school learning is not monitored or evaluated carefully enough to ensure that the support provided is having the intended impact and does not have a detrimental impact on the school providing the support.

Questions for providers:

- Do we have a culture within our school that supports collaborative working?
- How do we adapt practice from other schools to suit our context?
- Are we clear about the focus of any proposed school-to-school learning?
- How will this work support our priorities and local and national priorities?
- How will we identify who to work with? Who or what can help us to do that? What are the required outcomes and how will we evaluate impact?
- What are the resources required for this work (time, staff etc.)?
- What can we do to build leadership skills and capacity to generate continued progress?
- Do we have practice that we could share? How will we let others know about this practice?

Questions for local authorities and regional consortia

- Do we know where the practice worthy of emulation is?
- Where is support needed, what nature of support will be most appropriate, and how will its impact be evaluated?
- How do we support the professional development of teachers and leaders to create a learning culture and self-improving system?
- How will we ensure that the schools that provide the greatest levels of support to others are not disadvantaged?
- If a specific school-to-school learning activity has not had the required impact, can we identify why not? What were the barriers and how can we learn from these?

Section 1:
Thematic: Improving leadership

Improving leadership



Inspection findings and thematic reports all strongly suggest that successful leadership is the key factor in achieving the best possible outcomes for learners. Over the inspection cycle, nearly all providers that had good or excellent leadership had good or excellent overall judgements (current performance and prospects for improvement).

Figure 1.7

Key Question 3: Leadership and management

	● Excellent	● Good	● Adequate	● Unsatisfactory
● Excellent	4%	0%	0%	0%
● Good	3%	62%	4%	0%
● Adequate	0%	6%	16%	2%
● Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	1%	2%

84% of providers – same grade for Current performance and Leadership

Of the 75% of providers with Good or Excellent in Key Question 3, 92% also had Good or Excellent current performance.

Section 1:
Thematic: Improving leadership

Figure 1.8

Key Question 3: Leadership and management

	● Excellent	● Good	● Adequate	● Unsatisfactory
● Excellent	7%	1%	0%	0%
● Good	0%	66%	1%	0%
● Adequate	0%	1%	20%	0%
● Unsatisfactory	0%	0%	0%	4%

97% of providers – same grade for Prospects and Leadership

Of the 75% of providers with Good or Excellent in Key Question 3, 99% also had Good or Excellent prospects for improvement.

During the inspection cycle, Estyn published the following thematic reports:

- Twelve secondary school improvement journeys** (Estyn, 2013g)
- Best practice in leadership development in schools** (Estyn, 2015f)
- Leadership and primary school improvement** (Estyn, 2016b)



During the cycle, inspections focused on the impact of four aspects of leadership and management on learners' standards and wellbeing: strategic leadership, improving quality, partnership working, and resource management.

Section 1:

Thematic: Improving leadership

Strengths

The overall quality of leadership has been good or better in around three-quarters of primary schools and around a half of secondary schools. These proportions have changed little over the cycle.

Where leadership is particularly successful, senior leaders are highly skilled and confident. Their main focus is on improving the quality of learning and teaching and they have high expectations of themselves, their staff and pupils. They have a clearly-defined vision for the strategic direction of the school, which they share successfully with all stakeholders. They are a visible presence, modelling professional behaviours and setting the tone for the school's work.

The most successful leaders are effective leaders of change and are skilful at managing people and the workload of those they manage, and obtaining support from stakeholders. They demonstrate a strong moral imperative to improve their own school and support other schools. They ensure that roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear, that professional values are fostered, and that improving teaching, learning and the wellbeing of all pupils is at the heart of their work.

Since 2010, many leaders have responded positively to the increasing expectation to work collaboratively and provide better professional learning opportunities for their staff. Successful leaders also understand the importance of developing leadership capacity from within their own organisations. They develop leaders at all levels effectively, and provide them with opportunities to lead change in their areas of responsibility. The most successful leaders are particularly effective in encouraging their staff to take part in coaching and mentoring activities that enable them to explore approaches to improving teaching and support the sharing of best practice. They share effective practice and support, coach and mentor less experienced leaders, especially in federations and in the increasing number of all-age schools.

The most successful leaders have robust procedures for collecting a wide range of first-hand and other evidence that gives them a clear view of strengths and areas for improvement. They use this evidence objectively to analyse and identify priorities. Thorough analysis enables them to gain a strategic view of what needs to be improved and how the improvements required can be achieved. They make efficient use of resources to target areas for improvement, including specific grants and support from other providers. They work in partnership with a range of agencies, including parents and carers, to ensure that pupils have the best possible experiences.

The work of governors has improved over the cycle. At the start of the cycle, governors knew about the relative performance of their school in some three-quarters of schools. By the end of the cycle, this has increased to four-fifths of schools. Governors in successful schools generally receive clear and honest analyses of how well the institution is performing. They understand and use this knowledge to challenge any underperformance. Since 2010, many governors have improved their understanding of how the effectiveness of provision can be measured and hold leaders to account more robustly than they did at the start of the inspection cycle.

Llansannor C.I.W. Primary School

At **Llansannor C.I.W. Primary School**, clear strategic objectives, defined roles and responsibilities for staff and governors and effective performance management processes have resulted in improved standards across the school.

Please read our **case study**.



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Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd

Staff at **Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd** use a highly developed improvement strategy to help deliver good quality teaching.

Please read our **case study**.



Section 1:

Thematic: Improving leadership

Areas for improvement

In a quarter of primary schools and four-in-ten secondary schools, leadership requires improvement. In these schools, there is a lack of strategic direction that focuses on improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders have not established a culture of professional learning where staff have open and honest discussions about their own practice and its impact on pupil learning and outcomes. Leaders in these schools do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of what good quality teaching and professional practice look like. As a result of these shortcomings, leaders are not well prepared for their role in supporting teachers to improve their practice.

Throughout the cycle, the weakest aspect of leadership has been self-evaluation and planning for improvement. In a third of primary schools and half of secondary schools, leaders do not make sure that self-evaluation and school improvement planning are ongoing processes, focused on improving teaching and learning. These leaders do not evaluate outcomes or measure the impact of provision well enough. In these cases, there is an over-reliance on data analyses at the expense of gathering first-hand evidence by listening to learners and scrutinising their work. These leaders do not make sure that evaluative activities assess the quality of teaching and its impact on the standards that pupils achieve. For example, they carry out scrutiny of pupil work that does not focus on progress and standards. As a result, self-evaluation does not result in school improvement planning that is precise about what needs to improve. The shortcomings in self-evaluation also make it difficult for leaders to identify specific aspects of professional practice that require improvement at whole school or individual level. As a result, teachers do not receive enough professional development opportunities to meet their needs or improve the quality of their work.

In the few instances where leadership is unsatisfactory, leaders do not have high expectations of themselves, their staff or their pupils. They do not provide sufficient direction or communicate a vision of collective responsibility for improving standards, pupil progress and wellbeing. These leaders do not establish within their school a clear understanding of what effective teaching and professional practice look like. Accountability and communication are not robust. Teaching is weak and staff are inconsistent in the way they respond to matters to do with pupil wellbeing. In these schools, leaders at all levels are not supported to improve teaching and learning.

In 2016, in recognition of the importance of improving the quality of school leadership, the Welsh Government announced its intention to establish a National Academy of Educational Leadership.

The federation of Bryngwyn School and Glan-y-Môr School

The leadership of the federation of **Bryngwyn School** and **Glan-y-Môr School** has made a significant contribution to securing high standards and strong levels of pupil wellbeing. It has enabled both schools to make rapid improvements to many aspects of their provision. Senior leaders have been particularly effective in planning the transition to federation working and have managed the considerable challenges of this process exceptionally well.

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



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Section 1:

Thematic: Improving leadership

Questions for providers:

- How clear is our strategic vision for how we can improve standards and outcomes for pupils?
- How do we communicate our expectations of ourselves, staff and pupils?
- How do we make sure that staff have firm professional values and display appropriate behaviours, based on improving teaching and learning?
- Do we have a clear and shared understanding of what effective teaching and learning look like?
- Are self-evaluation activities focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and do they provide a clear view of strengths and areas for improvement?
- Are roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability clear, equitable and transparent?
- Are our improvement plans based on precisely what needs to improve? Do the plans make clear what actions we will take and how we will measure success?

Questions for regional consortia

- How do we use best practice in leadership to support system improvement?
- How do we support the professional development of leaders to create a learning culture and self-improving system?
- How can we best support school leadership to bring about improvement in teaching and learner outcomes?
- How do we evaluate the impact of strategies to improve the quality of school leadership?



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Sector report

Non-school settings for children under five

Nearly all local authorities in Wales provide funded education for three-year-old children and a very few four-year-olds in non-school settings as well as in schools. Local authorities do not maintain these settings, but they are responsible for ensuring that they provide funded early education of good quality, including offering advice and support from a qualified teacher. We have seen a reduction in the number of settings offering education, from 737 in 2010 to 613 this year.

This year, we inspected 90 settings. Over the 2010-2017 inspection cycle, we undertook 789 inspections. This includes 15 joint pilot inspections with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) between 2015 and 2017. The findings from all inspections have informed the report below, but findings from the pilot inspections are not included in the charts. In small settings, with fewer than six children funded for part-time education, inspectors report on provision and leadership only in order to avoid identifying individual children.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Outcomes: Non-school settings for children under five

Standards

Throughout the inspection cycle, standards have been consistently good or better in around nine-in-ten settings where we inspected standards. Settings have maintained good standards in literacy and numeracy, and there has been a gradual improvement in standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in Welsh.

Each year, in most English-medium and in many Welsh-medium settings, many children develop their speaking skills well. They talk freely with each other and make themselves understood to adults. Many children listen attentively to stories. They know how to hold books correctly and show an interest in the pictures and text. Many use a variety of tools confidently to make marks with growing control. Increasingly, they develop their mark-making skills well in different contexts, such as when they 'write' lists and menus in a role-play café. A few more able children write recognisable letters. For example, they write their names when signing in on arrival.

Throughout the inspection cycle, many children count to ten confidently. They count objects accurately, such as how many wheels are on different vehicles. Many talk about size and weight naturally in their play, for example when they find big and small spiders outdoors. They sort and match toys and name simple two-dimensional shapes confidently. Where practice is strong, children develop their thinking and problem-solving skills well. For example, children suggest what a frog needs to stay alive in hot weather. Children's thinking skills have improved across the inspection cycle.

Figure 2.1:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?
(2016-2017)

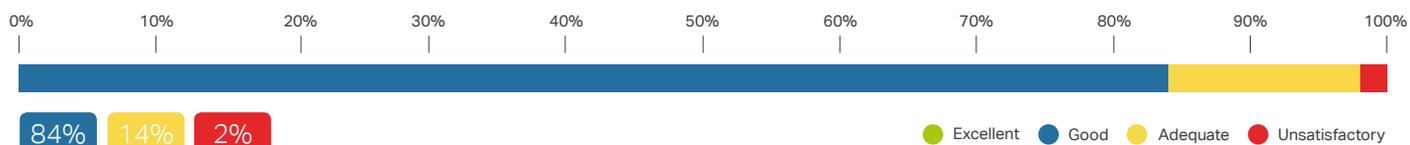
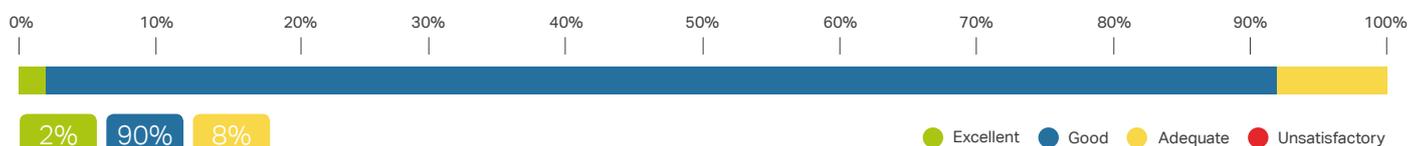


Figure 2.2:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

In a growing number of settings, children experiment with an increasing range of ICT resources competently, but only a few children use the equipment confidently to help them learn. Over the cycle, standards in Welsh in English-medium settings have improved. Still, in too many settings, children's use of Welsh is limited to short adult-led sessions and standards of Welsh continue to be a frequent area for development. In around a third of Welsh-medium settings where we have reported on standards, inspectors have identified shortcomings in children developing spoken Welsh.

Wellbeing

Over the inspection cycle, we have seen settings offer greater choice of activities and children becoming more confident in making decisions. For example, children regularly decide in which area of the setting they want to play and learn and which resources they will use. Many children develop positive attitudes towards learning, and persevere to complete tasks. In most settings, children understand the rules and follow the daily routine well. They develop valuable social skills, such as learning to take turns when watering flowers in an outdoor area.

Across the sector, many children now develop their self-help skills well, such as when they pour their own drinks and learn to put on outdoor clothes and aprons. Increasingly, children take on appropriate responsibilities, such as handing out plates at snack time and helping tidy up at the end of the session.

In the very few settings where wellbeing is adequate, too many children lose concentration, do not listen to or follow instructions, and have poor self-help and decision-making skills.

Figure 2.3:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing
(2016–2017)

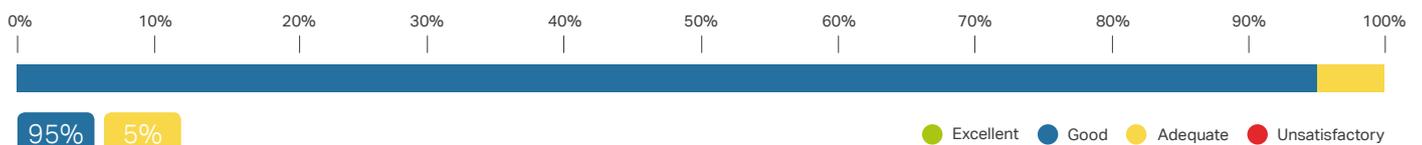
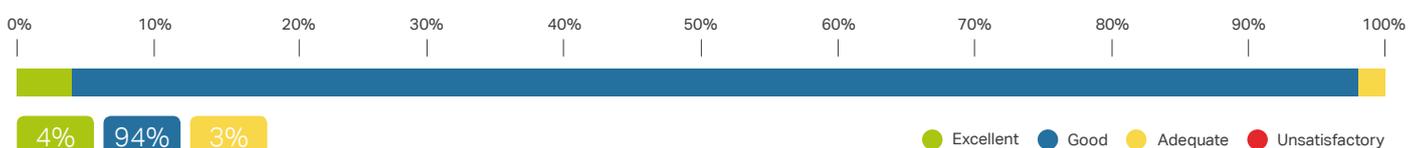


Figure 2.4:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing
(Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Provision: Non-school settings for children under five

Provision has been consistently good or better in almost nine-in-ten settings over the inspection cycle. There have been improvements in the quality of planning and experiences offered as practitioners focus more on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. However, in too many settings, planned activities do not help children to progress systematically or do not challenge children who are more able enough. There has been an improvement in the range and quality of ICT resources in settings, but in general practitioners do not plan carefully enough for children to use these resources purposefully.

Increasingly, practitioners in English-medium settings use songs, simple phrases and greetings to help children learn Welsh as part of their regular routine. However, in a few Welsh-medium settings, practitioners do not plan carefully enough to help children develop their language skills progressively or to stretch children from Welsh-speaking homes.

Practitioners' use of visits and visitors to bring learning to life and develop children's thinking and problem-solving skills has improved over the cycle. For example, children develop their confidence and curiosity when they take a shopping list to a local supermarket to buy ingredients to make cakes for a fundraising event.

Figure 2.5:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(2016-2017)

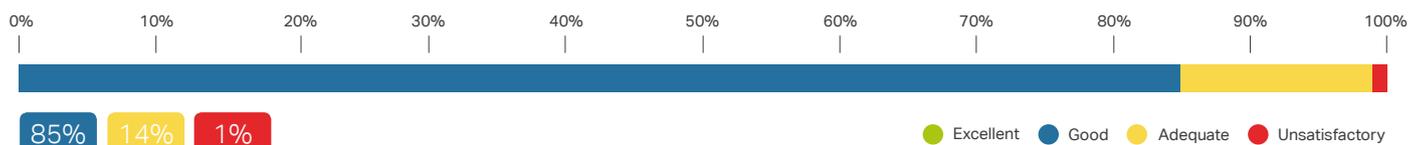
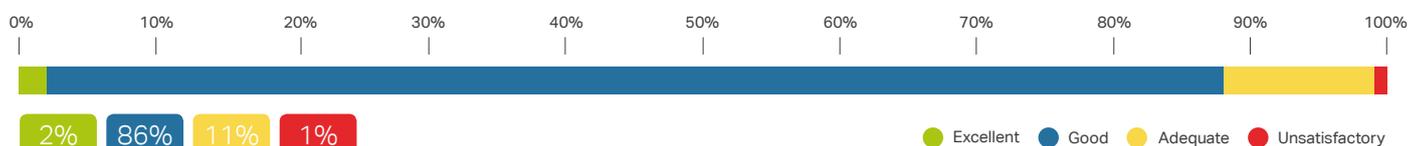


Figure 2.6:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Teaching is good or better in around eight-in-ten settings. In these settings, practitioners have become better at asking questions that develop children's thinking skills. They step-in more skilfully to help children learn while they play, and use consistent strategies to support good behaviour. However, practitioners are less successful at providing opportunities for children to solve problems. In a few settings this year, adults have tended to lead too many activities and this has a negative impact on children's independence, thinking and problem-solving skills. In Welsh-medium settings where practice is strong, practitioners create a rich Welsh ethos and model a high standard of spoken Welsh. However, over the inspection cycle, the standard of spoken Welsh modelled is not accurate enough in a few settings. Assessing children's progress effectively and linking this to planning continue to be an area for development. In too many settings, the systems used are complicated and time-consuming, and they do not help practitioners to understand what skills children need to learn next.

Almost all settings provide high standards of care and have suitable arrangements to keep children safe. Learning about healthy foods and good hygiene has become a useful part of the daily routine in most settings and there have been improvements in opportunities for children to make decisions, to take on responsibilities and to develop their self-help skills. Many settings provide captivating moments that inspire children's sense of awe and wonder at the world around them. This is particularly strong in the outdoors, for example when children delight in pulling up the radishes they have grown. In general, outdoor provision has improved over the cycle, with a very few settings developing exceptionally vibrant outdoor areas. However, careful planning to develop children's skills outdoors is still an important area for development in the sector.

This year, there are concerns relating to safeguarding in a very few settings. In these settings, practitioners do not carry out risk assessments rigorously enough, policies do not contain the most recent information, and practitioners do not have a good enough understanding of procedures or follow these appropriately.

Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery

The outdoor provision at **Mrs Tiggywinkles Day Nursery** provides learners with regular opportunities to practise and consolidate a range of skills. This helps them to achieve good Foundation Phase outcomes.

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



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

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

Standards of leadership and management are good or better in almost nine-in-ten settings over the inspection cycle. However, even in settings where leadership is generally good, systems to evaluate standards and to identify and address priorities for improvement are often too complicated and time-consuming to be effective, and leaders do not understand the purpose of evaluating their work well enough. This remains a significant area for development in the sector.

Where leadership is good, leaders focus on the standards that children achieve. They build strong teams, communicate effectively and help practitioners improve through honest performance management discussions. They welcome advice from partners, and their management committees support them well. Where leadership is excellent, leaders have an ambitious vision to achieve the highest standards of Foundation Phase practice, setting high expectations and inspiring practitioners, parents and children. Across the sector, less successful leaders do not focus well enough on what the children learn. They lack a vision and do not help practitioners to improve or involve them enough in planning and in self-evaluation.

Plas Gogerddan Day Nursery

Strategic leadership at **Gogerddan** Childcare has embedded outdoor learning in the nursery's provision. As a result, there have been improvements in children's confidence and language development.

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



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Figure 2.7:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
(2016-2017)

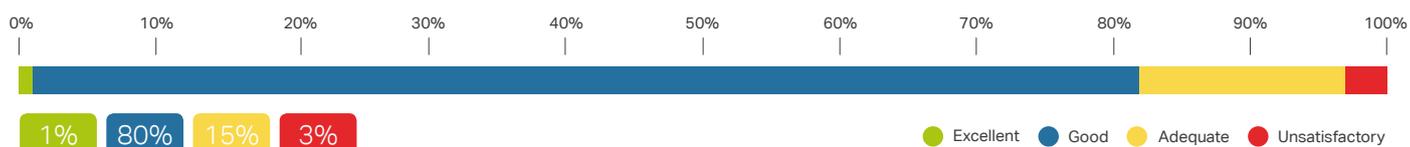
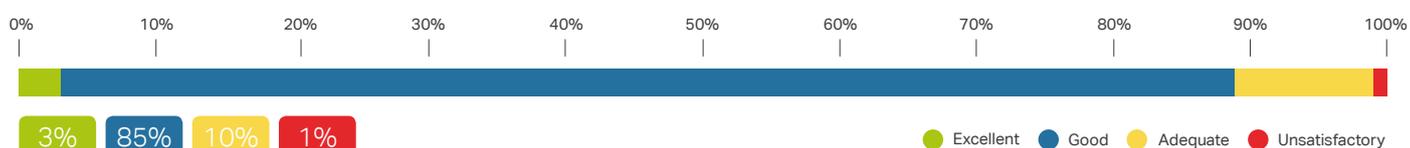


Figure 2.8:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Most settings develop effective partnerships. Over time, communication with parents and partnerships with schools has improved. Many settings use social media increasingly well to share information about daily activities, involving parents more in their children's learning. There has been an increase in constructive partnerships with the local community, with more settings inviting visitors to talk to the children and arranging trips to the local area to enrich their learning experiences.

In many settings, practitioners benefit from training to develop their understanding of Foundation Phase practice, leading to improvements in standards and the quality of provision. Only a few practitioners visit other settings to learn from others. Since the beginning of the inspection cycle, the quality and range of resources that settings provide have improved, with a stronger focus on providing resources to develop specific skills. The local authority and consortium have often provided these as part of their package of support. Where settings have well-established finance committees, these generally manage the setting's finances well. In a very few settings, finances are not managed carefully enough to ensure accountability. This year, in a majority of settings inspected, the local authority continues to retain the Early Years Pupil Development Grant to provide training and resources.



Llandogo Early Years Nursery

Staff at **Llandogo Early Years Nursery** carefully monitor children's play to assess which skills are stronger and which require additional development.

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



Sunflower Tots

At **Sunflower Tots**, the childcare co-ordinator monitors staff regularly to give her a good understanding of the playgroup's strengths and areas for development. This allows her to identify the new resources and training needed to improve provision.

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



Section 2:

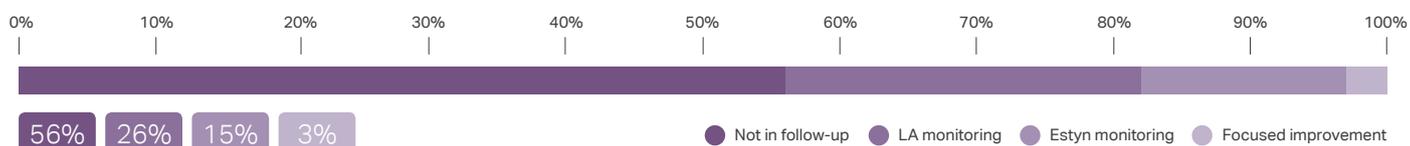
Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

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

This year, we identified excellent practice in a very few settings, where leaders support practitioners exceptionally well and develop inspiring learning environments indoors and outdoors. Around four-in-ten settings inspected need a follow-up visit from the local authority or from Estyn and we placed a very few settings in the focused improvement category.

Settings requiring monitoring by the local authority tend to need to improve arrangements for evaluating and improving their work. This includes developing effective action plans and involving all practitioners constructively in assessing how well they are progressing. In many of these settings, practitioners need to refine their planning to focus on developing children's skills effectively and making sure that all children make good progress. Where settings require monitoring by Estyn, procedures for improving standards and the quality of the provision are underdeveloped. Leaders do not have a strong enough understanding of the purpose of planning and assessment. They do not make sure that these develop the full range of children's skills at an appropriate level. In a few of these settings, practitioners are not skilful enough in helping children to learn to follow instructions and develop their speaking skills, and they do not provide enough opportunities for children to work in the outdoors. Three settings require focused improvement this year. This is more than in previous years. In these settings, leaders do not provide a strong enough sense of direction, they do not focus well enough on what and how the children learn and they do not apply the setting's policies rigorously.

Figure 2.9:
Non-school settings for children under five placed in follow-up in
2016-2017



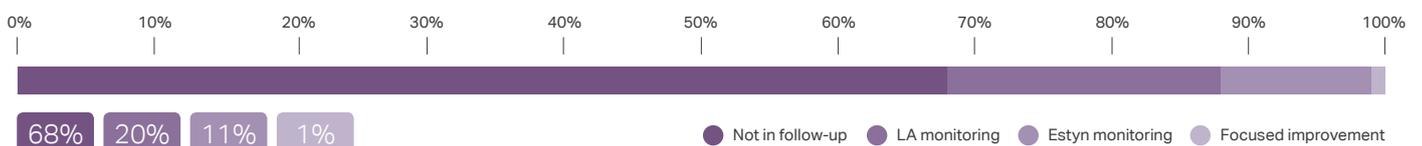
Section 2:

Sector summaries: Non-school settings for children under five

Over the inspection cycle as a whole, we identified excellent practice in around one-in-ten settings. Overall, inspectors found the strongest practice in leadership, partnerships with parents, and high-quality learning experiences. Around one-third of settings inspected need a follow-up visit from the local authority or Estyn. A very few settings inspected need focused improvement. Settings that require visits from the local authority generally need more time to refine the way they plan to develop children's skills, or embed their self-evaluation procedures. Settings requiring monitoring by Estyn have underdeveloped processes for identifying and following through priorities for improvement and for managing staff performance. This leads to weaknesses in standards and provision. Overall, most settings make good progress and come out of follow-up quickly. This includes a very few settings identified last year as requiring focused improvement. In these settings, leaders concentrated well on the recommendations with strong support from the management committee, and made good use of advice from other agencies, including the local authority. Each year, a very few settings do not make enough progress while being monitored by the local authority and move into the category requiring monitoring by Estyn. A very few settings previously identified as requiring monitoring by Estyn also make slow progress and require focused improvement.



Figure 2.10:
Non-school settings for children under five placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section: 2



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Primary schools

Sector report Primary schools

In January 2017 there were 1,298 primary schools in Wales. This is 160 fewer schools than in January 2011 when there were 1,458 (Welsh Government, 2017c). The number of primary pupils has risen from 259,189 in January 2011 to 276,940 in January 2017, which is similar to the number of pupils last year (Welsh Government, 2017d).

Over the 2010-2017 inspection cycle, there were 1,484 core inspections of primary schools. In 2016-2017, we completed 186 inspections. We piloted the new inspection arrangements in eight schools. The findings from all inspections have informed the report below, but findings from the pilot inspections are not included in the charts.

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Sector summaries: Primary schools

Outcomes: Primary schools

Standards

Over the inspection cycle, standards are good or better in around seven-in-ten primary schools. Standards are excellent in very few schools. The range of judgements has remained about the same throughout the period.

Between 2010 and 2017, we saw improvements in performance, particularly of boys and pupils eligible for free school meals. In most schools, pupils with additional learning needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. In around a third of schools, more able pupils do not achieve what they are capable of or use their skills at a high level.

During the last seven years, there has been a gradual improvement in pupils' literacy skills and their ability to apply these across the curriculum in both English and Welsh-medium schools.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils develop good speaking and listening skills and become confident communicators, particularly in nursery and reception when they have good opportunities to interact with adults during child-initiated learning. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about what they need to do to make a model volcano explode. By the end of the Foundation Phase they have a good understanding of the features of a wide range of texts that they use well in developing their own writing. In the best schools, they write competently and extensively across a broad range of genres, including autobiography, poetry, reports and newspaper articles. For example, pupils in one school use imaginative and engaging vocabulary in a poem describing the sounds made by a dinosaur. In around three-quarters of schools, which do not apply good Foundation Phase practice consistently, too many over-structured tasks limit pupils' ability to write creatively and independently. Most pupils have an improving understanding of letters and sounds and use this well to decode texts. Many understand what they read, are able to discuss a plot line, and make simple predictions about what may happen next.

Figure 2.11:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2016-2017)

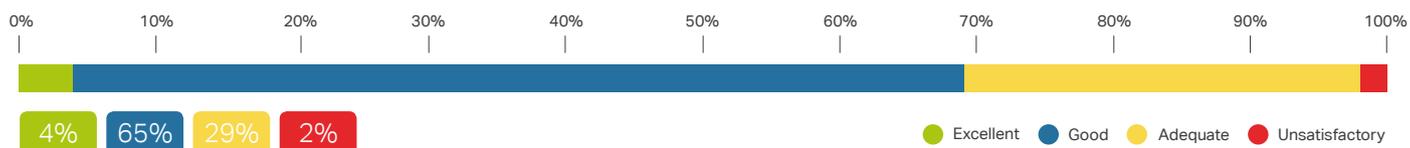
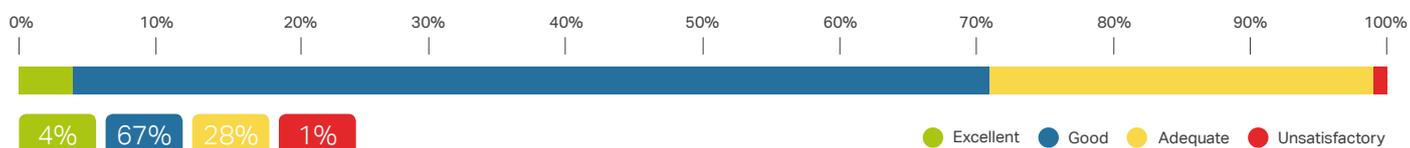


Figure 2.12:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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In key stage 2, most pupils build well on the oracy skills they have developed in the Foundation Phase. In around eight-in-ten schools, by the end of key stage 2, pupils apply their understanding of the features of different forms of texts well when writing across the curriculum. For example, they organise their sentences logically and use imaginative vocabulary when writing a spell to turn a teacher into a bat. However, in many schools, pupils struggle to write creatively and do not write at length frequently enough. Too many pupils continue to make basic errors in spelling and punctuation. In a few schools, standards of handwriting and presentation are not good enough. By the end of Year 6, many pupils talk in detail about the plot and characters in a story and use higher-order reading skills, such as inference and deduction, well. In the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, pupils' enthusiasm for literature, their knowledge of different authors and stories, and their ability to express preferences about specific books, authors or genres have declined over the cycle. This has had a negative effect on their ability to write at length or creatively.

Pupils' basic number skills have improved during the inspection cycle. In most schools, pupils use their recall of number facts well to complete simple calculations during designated mathematics lessons. Pupils' ability to solve problems and apply their skills in other subjects remains less developed.

In the quarter of schools that apply Foundation Phase principles successfully, many pupils develop effective numeracy skills in a range of contexts. For example, pupils in nursery and reception classes develop their understanding of number well when counting equipment for a picnic. In Year 1, they develop their understanding of measure and recall of simple number bonds when combining ingredients to follow a recipe in a "mud kitchen". In a few schools in key stage 2, pupils develop the ability to apply their numeracy skills at a high level in subjects across the curriculum. In particular, many pupils use and develop their numeracy skills well in science lessons. For example, they measure accurately using standard units and use database software to record and analyse their findings. In a minority of schools, pupils apply their numeracy skills in other subject areas. For example, in religious education, Year 6 pupils solve multi-step problems systematically to work out the prices of different meals and calculate percentage discounts for the customer when creating kosher menus. In too many cases, pupils in key stage 2 struggle to solve more complex real-life problems and pupils of all ages generally do not apply their numeracy skills well enough across the curriculum.

In just under two-thirds of schools, there are important shortcomings in standards of ICT. Most pupils use word processing, desktop publishing and presentation software well to present information. They know how to stay safe online, search the internet to support their studies and make useful judgements on the value of the information they access. In 2016–2017, there was a small improvement in pupils' use of databases and spreadsheets. Yet many pupils still do not develop the full range of skills required by the national curriculum. In a few schools, particularly those that have begun to adapt their teaching to the Digital Competence Framework (DCF), pupils develop skills in data management and simple coding. For example, pupils in key stage 2 build simple robots from construction kits and write programs to move them around a maze.

Ysgol Gynradd Parcyrhun

Staff at **Ysgol Parcyrhun** have created a bank of differentiated games that provide opportunities for pupils to practise their oral, reading and writing skills on a daily basis.

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



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Standards of Welsh in English-medium schools have not improved much over the inspection cycle. Around a third of schools received recommendations to improve standards of Welsh. In many schools, most pupils make good progress in the development of their skills during nursery and reception, but do not build on these skills as they move through the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. They rarely use Welsh outside of designated Welsh lessons and do not have the skills to respond to simple questions outside the context of a lesson.

Wellbeing

Standards of wellbeing have been consistently good or better in seven-in-ten schools. In most schools, pupils behave well and treat each other and adults with respect. Most pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise and make sensible choices about what they eat during snack time. Nearly all pupils co-operate well in lessons and around school and develop good life and social skills. When given the opportunity, many pupils have the skills to work independently. In the best schools, pupils take a significant role in planning what and how they learn. In a minority of schools, over-structured teacher-set tasks limit the development of pupils' ability to take responsibility for their own learning and this hinders the progress they make.

Over the inspection cycle, there has been a marked increase in opportunities for pupils to express their views on the work of their school. In addition to school councils and eco-committees, a wide range of other pupil groups now allow them to contribute to the work of the school. For example, more and more pupils in key stage 2 take part in lesson observations and make useful contributions to plans to improve pupil engagement. For example, learning 'sheriffs' seek the views of pupils on subjects such as reading and homework. In around a third of schools, adults direct the work of groups, such as the school council, too much and limit pupils' independence and the development of their leadership skills.

Attendance has improved in most schools. In 2010-2011, pupils' average attendance was 93.3% and this had risen to 94.9% in 2016-2017 (Welsh Government, 2017e).

Figure 2.13:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2016-2017)

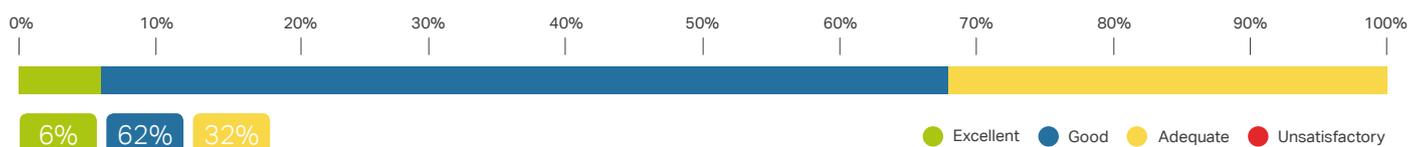
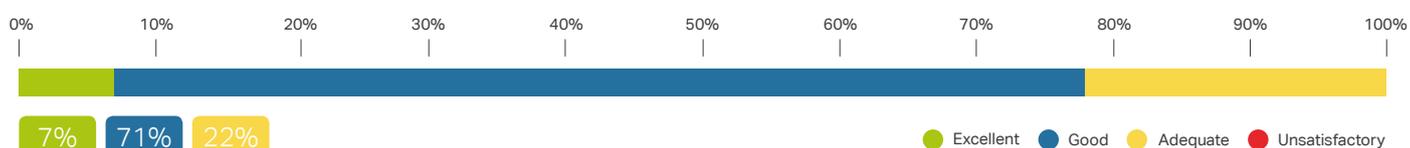


Figure 2.14:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Primary schools

Provision: Primary schools

Across the inspection cycle, provision has been good or better in eight-in-ten schools.

Learning experiences

Over the last seven years, there have been changes in the quality and range of learning experiences for pupils. Following the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, a majority of teachers planned activities that focused exclusively on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This limited the range of pupils' learning experiences and the development of other skills across the curriculum. This trend has improved towards the end of the cycle and currently many teachers plan activities that develop a wider range of pupils' skills across most subjects and areas of learning. In around seven-in-ten schools, teachers plan purposeful activities that focus on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum through 'real' and relevant first-hand experiences. For example, teachers plan activities around creating a '1945 street party' where pupils have opportunities to create timetables and schedules, convert units from metric to imperial, and work within a budget.

More recently, a growing number of teachers have encouraged pupils to contribute ideas to topics and to suggest ideas for visits and visitors. This helps pupils to take ownership of their learning and sustains their interest. In a minority of schools, too rigid curriculum planning makes it difficult for teachers to respond to children's interests.

Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd

Ysgol Gymraeg Casnewydd develops pupils' thinking skills through philosophy and encourages creativity through improvised drama activities.

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



Figure 2.15:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(2016-2017)

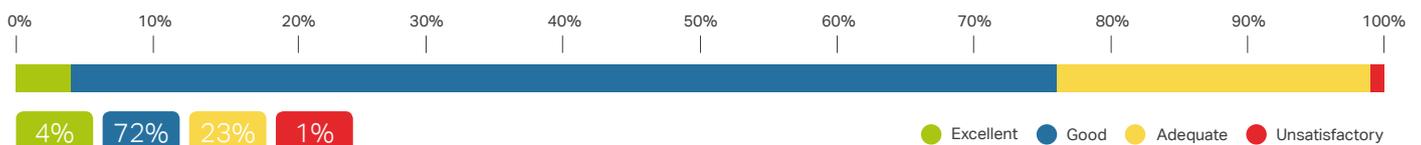
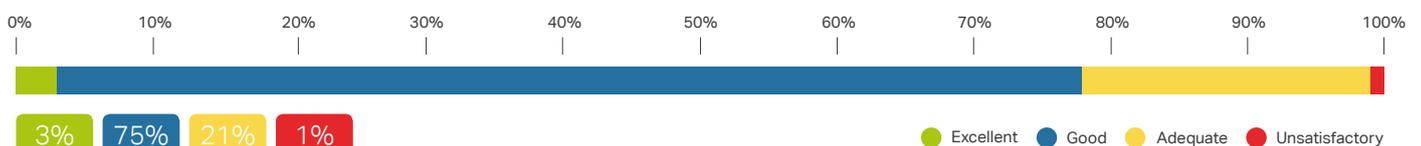


Figure 2.16:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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There are shortcomings in curriculum provision in around a third of schools this year. This is higher than last year. In these schools, planning does not build systematically on pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all areas of learning. There are limited opportunities to develop pupils' skills progressively or at the appropriate level when working across the curriculum, especially in numeracy and ICT. In around three-quarters of schools, delivery of the Foundation Phase is inconsistent and often becomes too formal, especially in Year 1 and Year 2. This limits pupils' ability to work independently and to make choices about their learning. In around six-in-ten English-medium schools, there is not enough focus on developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills in Welsh lessons, in other areas of the curriculum and during informal activities.

Teaching

The quality of teaching has varied over the cycle, but is good or better in around seven-in-ten schools. Where teaching is good or better, teachers and teaching assistants work together well to create a positive working environment for all pupils and make learning fun. Teachers plan stimulating lessons that engage and challenge pupils of all abilities, for example by setting up an archaeological dig for pupils to discover artefacts relevant to a topic. They structure learning well and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. They use skilful questioning to promote pupils' understanding and intervene at appropriate times to provide effective support. Across the cycle, teachers have provided greater opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively.

Where there are shortcomings in teaching, teachers do not plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils appropriately, especially the more able. They do not have high enough expectations of pupils and learning is often over-directed and does not allow pupils enough opportunities to work independently or to challenge their own thinking.

Over the inspection cycle, in around seven-in-ten schools, teachers have implemented assessment for learning strategies, for example by ensuring that pupils know what they need to do to reach their learning goals. The quality of feedback to pupils has remained variable over the cycle. Around one-in-five schools receive recommendations to ensure that feedback provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Ysgol Pencae

At **Ysgol Pencae**, pupils' Welsh and English skills are developed in order to ensure that they are fully bilingual by the time they attend secondary school. The school's older pupils are also given opportunities to learn French and Mandarin.

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



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Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth

At **Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth**, experienced teachers from the school worked with pupils, trainee teachers and local organisations to develop a series of activities on the theme of Welsh writer T.Llew Jones.

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



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Over the inspection cycle, most schools have developed useful systems to track and monitor pupils' progress. In a majority of schools, teachers do not use this information well enough to identify gaps in learning or to provide enough challenge for all pupils.

Care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance has been consistently good or better in over nine-in-ten schools across the inspection cycle. These schools provide purposeful opportunities to promote healthy living, for example by encouraging pupils to run the daily mile and take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Many schools have developed effective strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality. Throughout the cycle, nearly all schools have had suitable arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

In the most effective schools, staff identify pupils with additional learning needs early. They use a range of intervention programmes to support these pupils and monitor their progress carefully. Over the seven years, many schools have developed innovative approaches to support and nurture pupils' health and wellbeing including through working with specialist services. For example, therapy sessions with construction toys improve pupils' concentration skills and provide opportunities for vulnerable pupils to talk to adults about their feelings and concerns. Where care, support and guidance are less effective, the concerns are about safeguarding pupils or about provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

Pembroke Dock Community School

At **Pembroke Dock Community School**, a number of strategies have been introduced that encourage pupils to be responsible for their own learning and become more capable at assessing their own work.

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



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Palmerston Primary School

At **Palmerston Primary School**, 'Feedback Friday' provides pupils with many valuable opportunities to reflect upon their own learning and respond to comments from teachers and their peers.

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



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Learning environment

There is a welcoming and inclusive ethos in most schools. Most have a clear focus on recognising, respecting and celebrating equality and diversity. Many schools have developed worthwhile approaches to developing pupils' awareness of values and their rights as children.

Nine-in-ten schools make effective use of the physical environment to provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils, both indoors and outdoors. Most schools with limited space or challenges with the layout of the building make good use of all available areas to enhance pupils' learning. Recommendations generally focus on improving access to and the use of outdoor provision in the Foundation Phase.



Hendredenny Park Primary School

At **Hendredenny Park Primary School**, all staff use assessment for learning techniques to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Targeted interventions are used promptly to help close the gaps.

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



Ysgol Gynradd Talysarn

At Ysgol Gynradd Talysarn, there is especially effective support for vulnerable pupils. This has a positive effect on the development of individuals, and promotes their self-worth.

Please read the **inspection report**.



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Primary schools

Leadership and management: Primary schools

Leadership

Over the inspection cycle, leadership has been good or better in almost three-quarters of schools.

In nearly all schools, the quality of leadership is the most significant factor in determining a school's effectiveness. There are increasing challenges in recruiting headteachers, particularly in faith schools and small schools in rural areas. In schools where leadership is good or better, there is a well-understood educational vision and a drive for continuous improvement. These schools develop a team ethos and ensure that staff share powerful core values to achieve the best possible outcomes for all pupils. There are strong arrangements to distribute leadership responsibilities. Performance management processes raise pupils' standards by improving the quality of teaching, for example through identifying professional learning opportunities.

School governance has improved over the inspection cycle. Nearly all school governors now have at least a basic level of training that helps them to undertake their duties with growing confidence. Most have a suitable understanding of their school's strengths and priorities for improvement. In schools where governors show commitment to strengthen their roles and to develop their skills, they support and challenge schools to improve, for example by managing the performance of headteachers. In a few schools, governors do not fulfil their role as a critical friend well enough and do not exert enough influence on self-evaluation or improvement planning.

Ysgol Comins Coch

At **Ysgol Comins Coch**, staff collaboration and distribution of leadership nurture a professional learning culture that has had a significant impact on teaching and learning.

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



Figure 2.17:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (2016-2017)

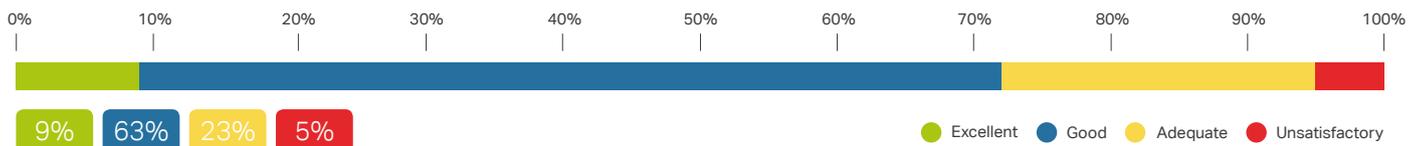
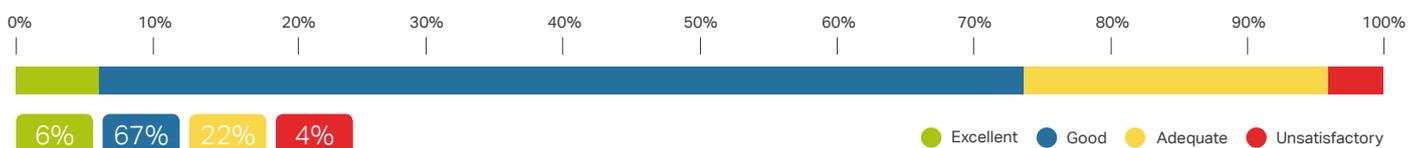


Figure 2.18:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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There have been important national priorities for school leaders to address during the inspection cycle. Many school leaders have responded positively to this challenge. For example, they have made effective arrangements to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework. They ensure that there is a strong, whole-school focus on developing pupils' skills. Most schools have sound arrangements to develop pupils' early reading skills and provide regular opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in topic work. However, in too many instances, leaders do not ensure that their school implements Foundation Phase pedagogy well enough. For example, learning becomes too formal too quickly, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and pupils do not develop effective independent learning skills. This is often due to concerns about pupils' national test outcomes or because they are 'preparing' pupils for more formal education at key stage 2. There is also a lack of understanding among many leaders of effective Foundation Phase practice.

Many of the most effective school leaders have a positive influence beyond their own schools. For example, they provide support to less successful schools by sharing their experience and best practice. These leaders contribute well to developing a self-improving system. They have the confidence to select the appropriate improvement priorities and the courage to adopt local priorities so that they match the school's needs.

Improving quality

On average, just over two-thirds of schools have good or better arrangements to evaluate and improve their own work. Leaders take appropriate account of a range of data, but are not over-reliant on this when forming judgements about their school's work. Instead, they use data analysis alongside a broader range of evaluation activities, such as lesson observations and scrutiny of work to evaluate pupils' standards in lessons and over time. This helps schools to draw valid conclusions about the quality of teaching and learning and to identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately. Leaders plan suitable actions to secure improvements and support this with useful professional learning opportunities. In these schools, self-evaluation, improvement planning, performance management and continuous professional development align well.

Increasingly, leaders consider the views of pupils as a part of their self-evaluation activities. For example, they use questionnaires to gather pupils' opinions about what they might like to change. They act upon this information appropriately. Very few schools use pupils' opinions effectively to evaluate the quality of teaching or leadership.

Around a third of schools are not good at driving their own improvement. In many of these schools, processes to gather first-hand evidence about the success of their work are ineffective. Monitoring activities are too concerned with identifying whether a teacher has worked in a particular way rather than evaluating the impact of this work on pupils' progress. In a few instances, leaders do not identify the most important priorities for improvement because their evaluation processes are weak. They do not plan strategically for change and introduce initiatives in an unplanned fashion.

Ysgol Gynradd Bontnewydd

Ysgol Gynradd Bontnewydd developed a training programme for its governors that equipped them with the knowledge and skills needed to better fulfil their role.

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



Ysgol Gynradd Saron

Ysgol Gynradd Saron pays detailed attention to the requirements of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, in addition to ICT, thinking skills and the Welsh dimension.

Please read the **inspection report**.



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Primary schools

Partnership working

Over the course of the inspection cycle, partnership working has been the strongest feature of primary school leadership. More than nine-in-ten schools have good or better strategic partnerships that improve outcomes for pupils. Partnership work with families is a growing strength, particularly where pupils face considerable barriers to learning because of their backgrounds.

Commonly, effective partnerships have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing, for example through improving attendance. Strong partnerships with specialists support pupils to access education successfully. A very few schools have developed strategic partnerships with universities to improve the quality of their provision.

Resource management

Seven-in-ten school leaders manage resources well. They ensure that spending supports school improvement priorities. Many schools have good arrangements to develop the skills of teachers and support staff. This helps them to deliver engaging learning experiences that meet pupils' needs. Senior leaders in a minority of schools do not ensure that there is enough consistency in the quality of teaching. They do not provide staff with effective support to improve the quality of their professional practice. Nearly all school leaders use grant funding for its intended purpose and a majority use these additional funds well, for example to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils.

Llanrhidian Primary School

Llanrhidian Primary School has developed a culture of continuous self-evaluation focused strongly upon improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing for every pupil.

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



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Llansannor C.I.W. Primary School

Llansannor C.I.W. Primary School's processes for self-evaluation, monitoring and planning for improvement have led to progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.

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



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Ton Pentre Infant School

Ton Pentre Infant School communicates exceptionally well with parents and the wider community using social media, the school's website, text messaging and email. It engages very well with its active parent council, acting positively on views and concerns from representatives of each class.

Please read the **inspection report**.



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Ysgol Pencae

Ysgol Pencae has built partnerships within the local community in order to offer science experiences that develop learners' skills and engagement in the subject.

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



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Oldcastle Primary School

Oldcastle Primary School has worked with businesses and universities to develop a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) week that has improved pupils' aspirations and attainment.

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



Brackla Primary School

Brackla Primary School makes families a key part of the learning process, leading to improved standards in literacy, numeracy and attendance across the school.

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



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Primary schools

Follow-up activity: Primary schools

In 2016–2017, 20% of primary schools were judged to have excellent practice.

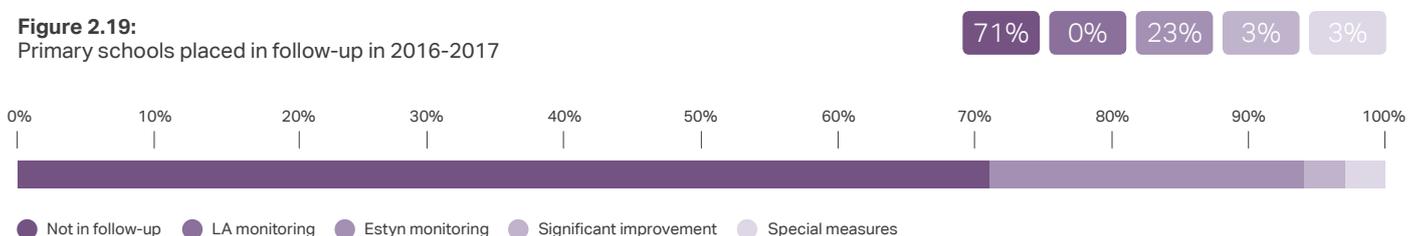
The proportion of primary schools inspected that require follow-up monitoring remains broadly similar over time.

Inspectors placed 12 primary schools (6%) in a statutory category following their core inspection in 2016–2017. This is an increase on the seven schools (4%) identified last year, but a decrease on the 20 schools (9%) identified in 2014–2015. Six schools (3%) require significant improvement, compared with four schools (2%) last year. Six schools (3%) require special measures, compared with three schools (2%) last year. In these few schools, there are serious shortcomings in the quality of leadership and management. Too often, these schools' leaders do not have a clear, shared vision or provide effective strategic direction to the school. This restricts the staff's capacity to raise standards and to improve the quality of provision. As a result, staff morale is often low. Typically, these leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, and they do not address shortcomings in pupils' progress with enough urgency.

Just under a quarter of primary schools inspected in 2016–2017 require Estyn monitoring, which is similar to the proportion identified in each of the past two years. In these schools, pupils generally achieve adequate standards and, in a few instances, standards are good. In around a half of the schools, wellbeing is good. However, there are shortcomings in self-evaluation, and planning and securing improvements. Self-evaluation is not always sharp and well-focused enough to identify whether the school's provision is consistently good, and whether pupils make the progress that they could, given their starting points.

Overall, the proportion of primary schools not in the follow-up categories of Estyn monitoring, or the statutory categories of significant improvement or special measures, remains broadly the same as in 2015–2016, at around seven-in-ten.

Figure 2.19:
Primary schools placed in follow-up in 2016–2017



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Over the cycle, 16% of primary schools were judged to have excellent practice.

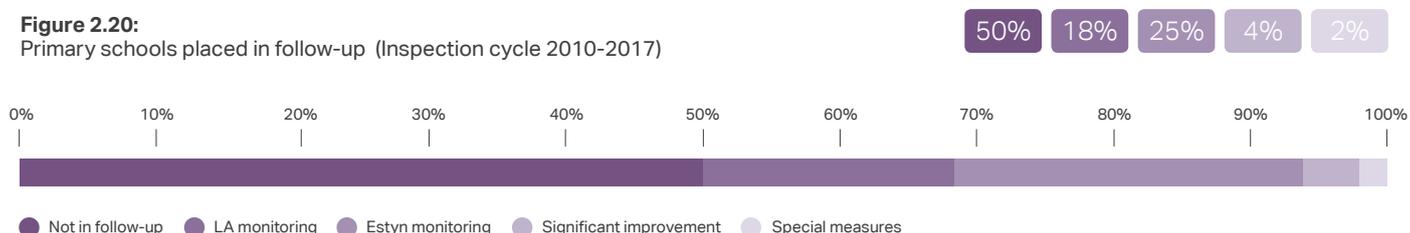
The proportion of primary schools requiring follow-up after their core inspection has remained broadly stable over the cycle, although there have been a few fluctuations in individual years. A total of 35 schools have required special measures, representing 2% of the schools inspected. The number requiring significant improvement was 57 (4% of inspections).

The time taken for schools requiring special measures to improve has increased over the cycle. Many now take around two years, and an increasing proportion take up to three years. This year, none of the primary schools that required special measures last year were removed from further monitoring activity. In addition, three of the eight schools placed in special measures in 2014-2015 require further monitoring. Generally, the additional time is because the school and local authority need time to address staffing turbulence, for example through addressing poor performance and the resultant turnover of staff. Once a stable leadership team is established, new leaders are normally able to galvanise staff and bring about steady and occasionally rapid improvements, and removal from monitoring.

Most of the schools requiring significant improvement make the necessary improvements in around a year to 18 months. For example, during this year, all of the schools placed in significant improvement last year were removed from further monitoring. Over the cycle, only a very few primary schools (two schools) have made insufficient progress in significant improvement, and have subsequently required special measures.

Since 2010, around 25% of the schools have required Estyn monitoring. Most of these have made the required improvements in around a year, although 28 schools (11%) have required a further period of time in order to address the recommendations successfully. In 18 of these schools (around 5% of those placed in Estyn monitoring following their core inspection), inspectors found on the second monitoring visit that the school had not addressed the recommendations well enough, and as a result the school required significant improvement. All of these schools improved during the extended time in follow-up, as a result of the additional support and challenge. Often there have been changes to the school's leadership during this time, which have brought about the improvements.

Figure 2.20:
Primary schools placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)





Bwyta a choginio'n iach

Mairi Benifant Jones

Awdur a Chyfarwyddwr



Section: 2



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Sector report Secondary schools

In January 2011 there were 222 secondary schools across Wales. By January 2017 there were 200 secondary schools (Welsh Government, 2017c). This reduction is the result of the establishment of ten all-age schools and of school closure and amalgamations. The number of secondary school pupils has fallen from 201,230 in January 2011 to 178,670 in January 2017 (Welsh Government, 2017d).

Over the course of the 2010–2017 inspection cycle, there have been 243 inspections of secondary schools. In 2016–2017, 31 schools were inspected, including piloting new inspection arrangements in five schools. The findings from all inspections have informed the report below, but findings from the pilot inspections are not included in the charts.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Secondary schools

Outcomes: Secondary schools

Standards

Over the inspection cycle, half of schools have good or better standards. The proportion of schools with excellent standards is much the same in 2017 as it was in 2011 and is slightly higher than the average over the cycle of inspection. In 2016–2017, 15% of schools had excellent standards compared with an average of 12% over the period 2010–2017.

The proportion of schools with unsatisfactory standards has generally increased over the cycle of inspection. This year, over two-in-ten of the schools have unsatisfactory standards. In these schools, pupils do not make enough progress from one key stage to another and their performance does not compare well with that of pupils in similar schools.

In schools with good or better standards, many pupils display a positive attitude towards their learning and sustain concentration well. In these schools, pupils are resilient when faced with challenging tasks and have strong independent learning skills. These pupils recall and apply prior learning successfully and make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of new concepts and ideas.

In many schools, pupils listen well to the teacher and to each other. When speaking, their expression is generally clear and they are able to organise their thoughts logically. On the whole, pupils have a better understanding of different reading strategies than at the start of the cycle. Many pupils are able to locate and select information successfully and apply skimming and scanning techniques. However, in many schools, only a minority of pupils are able to synthesise information from reading texts or apply the skills of inference and deduction well. In general, pupils' ability to write extended pieces has improved over the cycle of inspection and they are more adept at writing for different

Figure 2.21:

Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2016–2017)

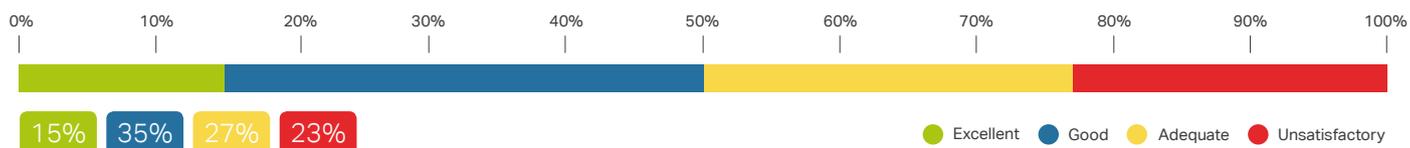
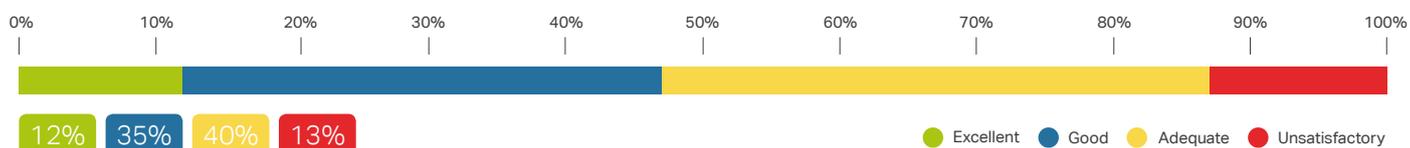


Figure 2.22:

Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



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purposes. However, boys still tend to write much less than girls. In addition, weak spelling and punctuation, and careless spelling of familiar words, continue to feature in a minority of pupils' work. These pupils fail to proof read their work to improve its content and accuracy.

In many schools, pupils' data handling and interpretation skills are sound and they complete basic calculations competently. However, in a majority of schools, a majority of pupils' graphs and charts and their use of scale are not accurate enough. Pupils' ability to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum was weak at the end of the last inspection cycle, and remains an area for improvement in many schools, as does pupils' ability to apply their numeracy skills to real-life situations.

Most pupils are confident in their use of ICT programs for word processing, creating presentations and for basic spreadsheets. However, despite significant advancements in technology over the course of the cycle, pupils do not apply their ICT skills well across the curriculum and their ICT skills are usually limited to a narrow range of applications.

Standards in Welsh in English-medium schools and English streams in bilingual schools are low and pupils generally lack confidence and fluency when speaking the language. Generally, pupils do not practise their Welsh language skills enough outside of lessons or in social settings. Since 2010, in English-medium and bilingual schools there has been an increase in the number of pupils entered for the full course GCSE in Welsh. In 2011, around 20% of the cohort achieved C grade or above in the full course and this has risen to 31% by 2017. Slight improvements are also evident in the results for the short course.

Over the course of the cycle of inspection, the proportion of pupils gaining qualifications at key stage 4 has increased (see figure 2.23).

Figure 2.23:
Percentage of pupils achieving headline key stage 4 indicators

Indicator	2011 (15 year olds)	2016 (Year 11 cohort)	2017 (Year 11 cohort)
Achieving the level 2 threshold including English and/or Welsh and mathematics	50.1%	60.3%	54.6%
Achieving the level 2 threshold	67.3%	84.0%	67.0%
Achieving the level 1 threshold	90.3%	95.3%	94.4%

Source: Welsh Government (2017f)

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However, not all of these increases are due to pupils doing better at GCSE, but rather to some pupils studying non-GCSE qualifications that are technically equivalent to a GCSE but are easier to attain and generally do not develop their skills and subject knowledge well enough.

The performance of both boys and girls has improved over the cycle of inspection. As was the case in 2011, there is little difference between boys' and girls' performance in science and mathematics, but boys continue to perform less well than girls in English and in Welsh (Welsh Government, 2017f).

Since 2010, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved well in the level 1 and 2 thresholds and the gap between the performance of those eligible for free school meals and other pupils has reduced. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has also improved in the indicators that include English or Welsh and mathematics, but to a lesser extent (Welsh Government, 2017g).

In the majority of schools, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress and achieve qualifications that reflect their ability levels (Welsh Government, 2017h).

The percentage of sixth form pupils achieving the level 3 threshold and the average wider points score has increased over the cycle. In general, girls have performed better than boys at A level but, for the first time in recent years, more boys than girls gained A* and A grades in 2017 (Welsh Government, 2017f).

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Wellbeing

Pupils' wellbeing has been a strong feature in secondary schools over the cycle of inspection. Wellbeing is good or better in almost three-quarters of schools.

One of the greatest improvements has been in pupils' attendance. Many schools have worked effectively to improve attendance and to lower persistent absence in particular. The average attendance figure for secondary schools in Wales has increased from 91.4% in 2011 to 94.1% in 2017. The percentage of pupils who are persistent absentees has fallen from 8.7% in 2011 to 4% in 2017. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved from 86.1% in 2010 to 90.2 in 2016 (Welsh Government, 2017i).

The role of the school council and pupil involvement in decision-making have developed well over the cycle of inspection. In the most effective schools, pupils run their own meetings and contribute actively to decision-making and policy development through a wide range of groups, forums and pupil voice activities. In the minority of schools, pupils also have valuable opportunities to express their opinions about teaching and learning and provision in specific subjects.

Slightly fewer schools are good or better for wellbeing this year than the average since 2010, and nearly two-in-ten have unsatisfactory standards of wellbeing. In these schools, a minority of pupils exhibit poor behaviour and negative attitudes towards their own learning and that of others.

Figure 2.24:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2016-2017)

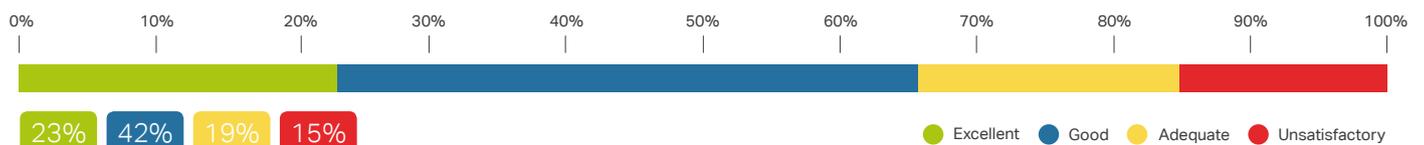
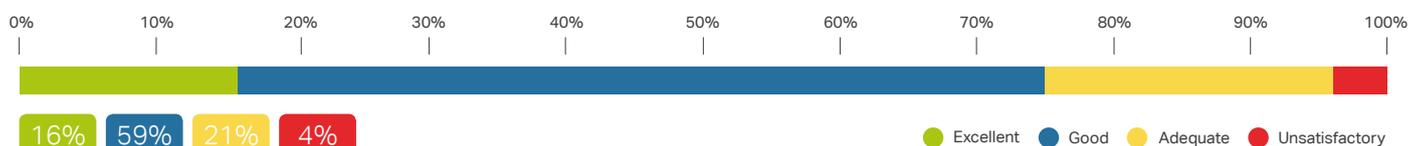


Figure 2.25:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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Provision: Secondary schools

Provision is good or better in two-thirds of schools over the cycle of inspection. The main strengths in provision are care, support and guidance, and the quality of the learning environment. Shortcomings in the quality of teaching and assessment and in the provision for skills have remained throughout the cycle.

Learning experiences

The curriculum meets statutory requirements in nearly all schools. This year, learning experiences were judged good or better in just over half of schools, which is lower than the average for the cycle. At key stage 3, a few schools offer an engaging and innovative curriculum that enables pupils to apply and develop their skills across a wide range of subjects. Similarly, at key stage 4, a few schools offer a carefully planned and flexible curriculum that caters for the interests and abilities of all pupils. However, since 2010, the range of options offered to pupils at key stage 4 has generally narrowed. In many schools, pupils have more lessons in the core subjects of English/Welsh and mathematics and less time studying other subjects than at the beginning of the cycle. This has reduced the number of examination entries for subjects such as modern foreign languages, history, music and geography.

Provision to develop pupils' literacy skills has generally improved over the cycle of inspection. Many schools provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, they practise writing reports in science and apply a range of reading strategies in history.

While there have been improvements in the provision to develop pupils' numeracy skills, in the majority of schools this provision is less well developed than that for literacy. Similarly, opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum are limited in many schools. In only a few schools, leaders plan effectively for progression in pupils' ICT skills as they move through the school.

Ysgol Glan-y-Môr School

Ysgol Glan-y-Môr School's science, technology, engineering and mathematics STEM enrichment programme has resulted in increased pupil engagement and aspirations, improvements in subject standards and the development of pupils' wider skills.

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



Figure 2.26:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2016-2017)

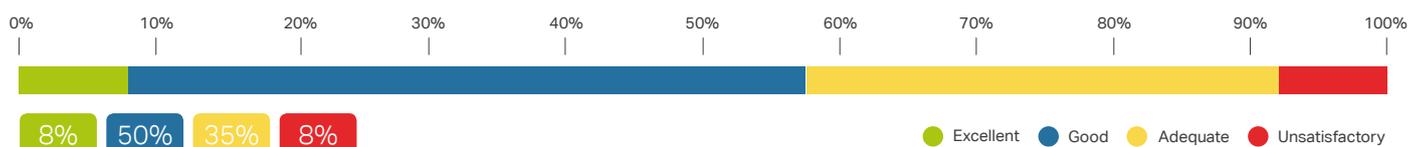
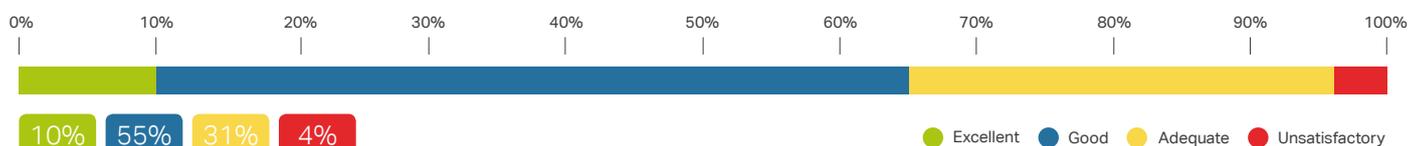


Figure 2.27:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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The range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils has been a strength in many schools throughout the cycle of inspection. In the schools where more able pupils achieve highly, teachers plan lessons that enable them to fulfil their potential and provide enrichment experiences that broaden their horizons.

Provision for developing an understanding of Welsh culture and history has been a positive feature in schools throughout the cycle of inspection. However, weaknesses in the provision for the Welsh language in English-medium and bilingual schools, particularly outside of formal Welsh lessons, has been a recurring theme.

Teaching

Around half of schools have good or better teaching. There have been fewer judgements of excellence for teaching than for any other indicator. Improving teaching is a recommendation for schools in a majority of inspection reports this year and over the whole cycle of inspection.

In the very few schools where teaching is excellent, teachers have a detailed knowledge of the abilities of individual pupils. They plan carefully-sequenced and challenging activities that enable all pupils to make rapid progress. The teachers have a secure understanding of where individual pupils are in terms of their learning and of their needs. They consider and select the most appropriate tasks and teaching methods and achieve an appropriate balance for the development of skills and subject knowledge. The schools have a clear and suitably ambitious vision as to what pupils should achieve.

In the most effective schools, teachers' feedback ensures that pupils understand their strengths and weaknesses in each subject. Where feedback is less effective, teachers write too much that is not precise enough or is overly congratulatory. In a majority of schools, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to reflect and respond to feedback.

Over the cycle of inspection, schools' tracking systems have markedly improved. Most schools now have useful tracking systems that are used well by many staff. In a minority of schools, leaders do not make effective enough use of the findings from their tracking systems to plan timely support for individual pupils.

This year in almost two-in-ten schools, and over the cycle in almost one-in-ten schools, teaching is unsatisfactory. It is ineffective because of low expectations, activities that lack sufficient challenge, and weak planning to meet the needs of different pupils. When teachers do not check pupils' understanding and progress thoroughly enough, the pace of the learning is either too fast or too slow. In many cases, when teachers ask pupils to assess their own work or that of their peers they do not provide criteria so that pupils can give a clear idea of how to improve, and often it is not possible to see the benefits of these activities.

Ysgol Bryngwyn School

Curriculum design at **Ysgol Bryngwyn School** is driven by learners' interests, aspirations and needs. This ensures that there is appropriate variety and opportunity for all.

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



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Y Pant Comprehensive School

At **Y Pant Comprehensive School**, teaching and learning have improved through an emphasis on reflective practice. The school has implemented a number of mechanisms for colleagues to share and reflect on what they do well.

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



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Care, support and guidance

High-quality care, support and guidance have been a strong feature throughout the cycle of inspection. Since 2010, care, support and guidance are good or better in eight-in-ten schools and excellent in two-in-ten schools. This year, care, support and guidance are good in two-thirds of schools and excellent in the same proportion as over the cycle.

In the schools that provide excellent care, support and guidance, there is an engaging personal and social education programme that prepares pupils well for the challenges and choices in their lives and helps them to understand the importance of physical and mental health. These schools have a strategic approach to improving the wellbeing of pupils. They work successfully with an extensive range of external agencies and specialist services to provide personalised support that meets the individual needs of all pupils.

Many schools provide effective support that enables pupils with additional learning needs to make good progress. In these schools, individual education plans identify appropriate learning targets, and pupils and parents are fully involved in the process. These plans are helpful in providing specialised support for pupils, but are often not used well enough by classroom teachers. In a minority of schools, targets for pupils with additional learning needs are too general and do not help teachers to plan suitable provision in lessons or to monitor their progress well enough.

In 2016–2017, care, support and guidance are unsatisfactory in one-in-ten schools. This is higher than over the cycle where only a very few schools were unsatisfactory. In these schools the systems to promote good behaviour and attendance are ineffective. As a result, a minority of pupils feel unsafe in school and attendance is low. In these schools, the personal and social education programme is limited and pupils do not feel well supported to make choices about their future.

Learning environment

The learning environment is good or better in eight-in-ten schools over the cycle of inspection. Many schools create a sense of community and foster an inclusive, welcoming ethos. The best schools enable pupils, staff and governors to feel a strong sense of pride in themselves and their school. In the very few schools where the learning environment is unsatisfactory, the ethos around the school is not positive, there are not enough learning resources, and buildings are in a poor condition.

Ysgol Bryngwyn School

At **Ysgol Bryngwyn School**, teaching is highly effective and makes an important contribution to the excellent outcomes of pupils.

For more information read the **inspection report**.



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Leadership and management: Secondary schools

Leadership

This year, leadership is good or better in over half of schools. Over the cycle leadership is good or better in six-in-ten schools. In 2016-2017, and over the cycle, leadership is excellent in almost two-in-ten schools. In nearly all schools, the quality of leadership is the most significant factor in determining a school's effectiveness.

In all the schools where leadership is excellent and in many where it is good, leaders at all levels understand their own roles and responsibilities and work together to create an ethos and culture where improving standards for all learners is the main priority. Leaders make sure that there are high expectations of all pupils and that improving teaching and assessment is seen as the key process contributing to improving and maintaining high standards. As a result, in these schools, there is regular professional dialogue about teaching and learning. All staff have a clear understanding of their shared responsibility and are committed to help pupils achieve their potential and their role in making that happen.

Although schools recognise that leadership has the greatest impact on school effectiveness, addressing the variability in the quality of leadership is not a high enough priority for leaders in a majority of schools. In three-in-ten schools, leadership is of inconsistent quality. These schools struggle to maintain standards. Often key priorities are not understood by all staff and a minority of leaders do not prioritise the most important aspects of their work well enough. Where pupils' achievement is variable within subjects and across subjects, it is because not all with a leadership responsibility focus consistently on the core business of improving the quality of teaching.

Ysgol Bryngwyn and Ysgol Glan-y-Môr School

Distributed leadership at all levels across the federation of **Ysgol Bryngwyn** and **Ysgol Glan-y-Môr School** has secured improved pupil outcomes and wellbeing.

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



Figure 2.28:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (2016-2017)

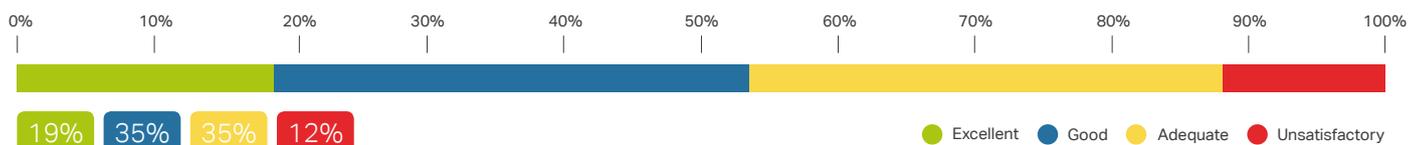
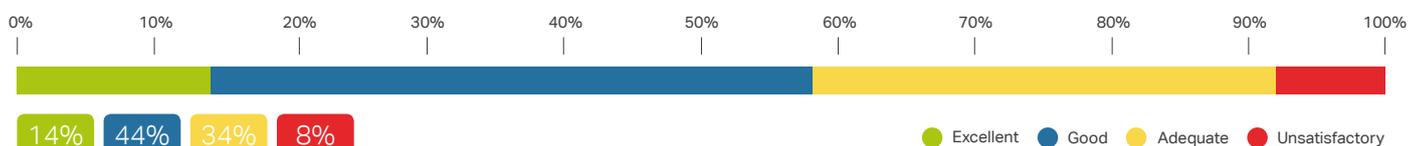


Figure 2.29:
Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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In the one-in-ten schools where leadership is unsatisfactory, leaders do not make sure that the ethos and culture are focused on improving quality and on a consistently high standard of provision. The school's line management and performance management systems are not effective in identifying shortcomings and taking the necessary actions to make the necessary improvements. In these schools, performance management objectives are too vague and there is not enough focus on teaching and learning.

Since 2010, many governors have improved their understanding of performance data and hold leaders to account more robustly than they did at the beginning of the cycle.

Improving quality

Throughout the cycle of inspection, improving quality has been one of the weakest aspects of schools' work. This year, improving quality is good or better in four-in-ten schools, which is a higher proportion than last year but similar to the proportion since 2010. The proportion of schools where improving quality is unsatisfactory has increased since the start of the cycle of inspection and now stands at one-in-ten schools.

In the most effective schools, there is a strong culture of continual improvement. In these schools, self-evaluation activities are used to provide an honest, objective and current appraisal of strengths and weaknesses, so that leaders have an accurate understanding of the performance of their school. For example, leaders make use of the findings from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, pupils' views, analysis of data and a range of other quality assurance activities to identify the right areas on which to focus their energies and secure sustained improvement in teaching and learning.

In many schools, the weakest aspects of self-evaluation are the evaluations of pupils' skills and progress, and of teaching. Many leaders do not make best use of the evidence they gather from observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work and a minority focus too much on compliance with policy. For example, evaluation of pupils' work is often about whether books are marked regularly and according to school policy rather than on the standard of pupils' work and the impact of assessment on improving pupils' learning and skills.

Self-evaluation is weakest when it is a paper-based exercise designed to portray the school in the best light. This approach does not help leaders to understand the school's main shortcomings. As a result, improvement planning is often not strategic and there are too many activities to complete and these are not prioritised well enough.

Pupils and parents are now more able to voice their opinion about schools than they were at the beginning of the cycle of inspection, and schools are making increasingly effective use of this information to inform their self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Dŵr-y-Felin School

Dwr-y-Felin School

has a well-established and effective cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures.

For more information read the **inspection report**.



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Partnership working

Partnership working has been the strongest aspect of leadership over the course of the cycle of inspection, and is good in seven-in-ten secondary schools and excellent in one-in-ten. In the schools where partnerships are excellent, high quality partnerships with a wide range of partners make a significant contribution to provision and pupils' outcomes.

Partnerships between primary and secondary schools on pastoral matters have been a particular strength, enabling Year 7 pupils to make a smooth transition from primary school. However, only a minority of schools also work effectively on joint planning of the curriculum. As a result, there is unnecessary overlap between the curriculum at the end of key stage 2 and the start of key stage 3.

Pupils have benefited from schools working together or with other providers to extend the range of courses and other learning opportunities available. This has been particularly valuable in providing vocational courses and extending the range of courses available in Welsh-medium schools. In many schools, there are comprehensive arrangements for joint planning and quality assurance of this provision.

Successful partnerships with external agencies have contributed well to the strength of the care, support and guidance provision seen in schools. Partnerships with parents have improved over the cycle of inspection but remain an area of improvement in a minority of schools.

Resource management

Resource management is good or better in around half of schools this year and over the cycle of inspection as a whole. Since 2010, schools have increasingly worked collaboratively to improve quality and to provide professional development and training. In the few schools where resource management is excellent, there is a strong culture of professional learning. Leaders in these schools create a strong professional learning community where all staff are supported by an extensive range of development opportunities. These allow staff in these schools to examine carefully aspects of their practice and its impact on pupil learning and outcomes. They take collective responsibility for improvement and share openly what works and what does not.

In many schools, headteachers and governing bodies are supported well by school business managers and bursars to monitor spending. A majority of schools manage their finances well and target grants such as the pupil development grant appropriately. However, the proportion who make effective use of the grant to improve outcomes for these pupils has remained at around two-thirds of secondary schools. Often secondary schools use the funding primarily for catch up programmes at key stage 4 rather than to develop pupils' skills sustainably throughout their secondary education.

Bryntirion Comprehensive School

A review of the senior leadership team enabled **Bryntirion Comprehensive School** to develop a strong strategic vision and direction. This strategic approach was supported by the development of a strong middle leadership team and the creation of an inclusive ethos for students and staff alike.

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



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Follow-up activity: Secondary schools

In 2016–2017, 35% of secondary schools were judged to have excellent practice.

This year, 27% of secondary schools inspected required monitoring by Estyn. This is around half of the proportion identified last year. These schools have strengths and leaders have appropriate strategies for improvement, but these plans have not yet had an impact on pupil outcomes or in improving the quality of teaching.

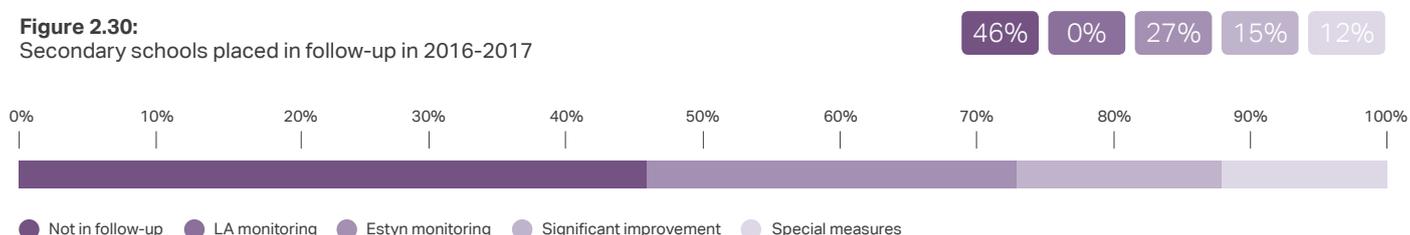
Eight schools were placed in a statutory category following a core inspection this year, three more than in 2015–2016. Five of these schools were identified as requiring significant improvement and three were placed in special measures. In these schools, leaders have not demonstrated the capacity to secure satisfactory outcomes for pupils, and there are important shortcomings in aspects of their provision, especially teaching and the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These schools do not have robust arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

This year, two-fifths of the secondary schools that required or remained in Estyn monitoring made good progress and were removed from follow-up. Five schools showed limited progress against the recommendations from their core inspection and were judged to be in need of significant improvement. The remaining 11 schools showed some progress, but had not improved enough. We will continue to monitor these schools.

At the start of this year, 12 schools were in need of significant improvement. During 2016–2017, seven of these schools demonstrated that improvements to provision and the strengthening of leadership arrangements had resulted in improved outcomes for pupils. As a result, these schools were removed from this category. One school had made insufficient progress and was placed in special measures. The remaining schools, although making some progress, have not made enough. Estyn will continue to monitor their progress.

There were six schools in special measures at the start of this year. In three of these schools, leaders have demonstrated the capacity to plan and bring about substantial improvements in teaching and learning, and these schools were consequently removed from follow-up. The other three schools have not made enough progress and remain in special measures.

Figure 2.30:
Secondary schools placed in follow-up in 2016–2017



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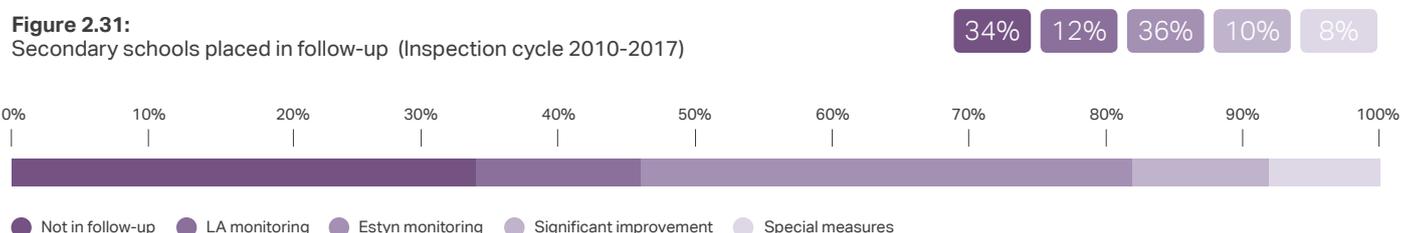
Over the last seven years, Estyn has carried out core inspections of 243 secondary schools. Twenty-seven percent of secondary schools were judged to have excellent practice. Around half of schools required follow-up activity. About a sixth of schools were placed in a statutory category and a further third of schools were monitored by Estyn after their core inspection.

Between 2010 and 2017, Estyn placed 24 schools in special measures. Six of these schools had previously been monitored by Estyn or had been identified as requiring significant improvement; the remainder were placed in this category following a core inspection. These schools were not giving pupils an acceptable quality of education and their leaders were not demonstrating the capacity to make the necessary improvements. At the beginning of 2017-2018, 12 schools remain in this category. Over the last seven years, three schools in special measures either closed or merged with another school. The remainder were removed from this category because leaders put in place a range of effective strategies to bring about improvements. In particular, these schools focused closely on developing the quality and consistency of teaching. These improvements were supported by the strengthening of leadership at all levels to ensure robust self-evaluation, improvement planning and line management arrangements.

Over the last seven years, 25 schools were identified as requiring significant improvement following a core inspection. Estyn monitored these schools by carrying out a monitoring visit around a year to 18 months after the core inspection. In the majority of cases, these schools made sufficient progress for them to be removed from this category. However, the pace of improvement in three was too slow, and they were placed in special measures. At the beginning of 2017-2018, 12 schools remain in this statutory category.

During 2010-2017, 86 schools required monitoring by Estyn following a core inspection. In the majority of cases, these schools made sufficient progress so that they no longer required monitoring by Estyn. Nine schools made limited progress against their recommendations following their core inspection, and were placed in a statutory category. Six of them were identified as needing significant improvement; three were causing serious concern and were placed in special measures. At the beginning of the academic year 2017-2018, 22 schools were continuing to be monitored by Estyn.

Figure 2.31:
Secondary schools placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools

Sector report

Maintained all-age schools

All-age schools provide education for pupils from age three or four to 16 or 18 years old. In September 2016, there were ten maintained all-age schools in Wales. In 2010 there was one all-age school (Welsh Government, 2017c). The sector continues to grow with a further eight schools due to open in 2018.

This year, we inspected two all-age maintained schools in rural settings where the predominant language is Welsh. One school caters for over 1,000 pupils on one site and has over 13% of pupils with English as an additional language. The other school has approximately 500 pupils on two sites around a mile apart. Both schools receive around a half of their Year 7 pupils from other partner primary schools and have been open as all-age schools for five and three years respectively. One school is good for all quality indicators with a particular strength in their primary phase provision. The other school has adequate standards and leadership, largely due to weakness in planning for improvement, and requires Estyn monitoring.

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

Ysgol Bro Hyddgen
Ysgol Bro Pedr



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools

Over the cycle, Estyn has inspected four all-age maintained schools. Three have required follow-up activity with two in Estyn monitoring and one in significant improvement. One of the four schools inspected did not require any form of follow-up. The main strengths in this sector are in the primary phase, including the quality of teaching and assessment that impacts positively on the standard of pupils' work. Three schools were judged to have many strengths in their wellbeing and offered good care, support and guidance. In three of the schools, the main shortcomings in standards were poor performance over time in the secondary phase. Often the quality of pastoral transition in the all-age schools has been sound, but the schools have not built on the opportunities available to them to develop strong curricular links across age phases.

Figure 2.32:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)

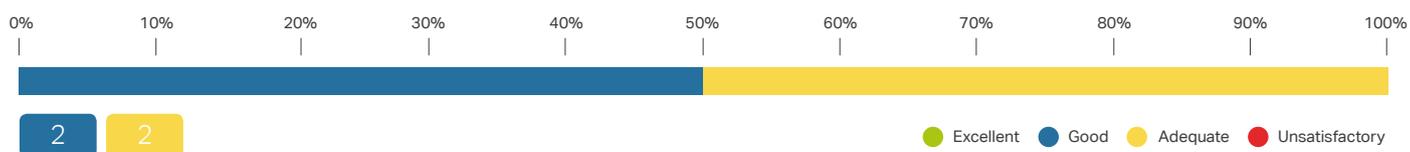


Figure 2.33:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)

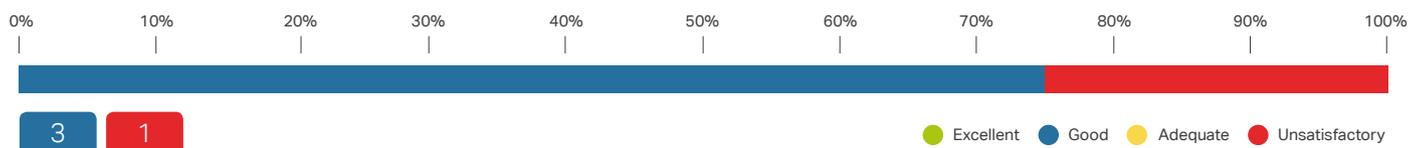
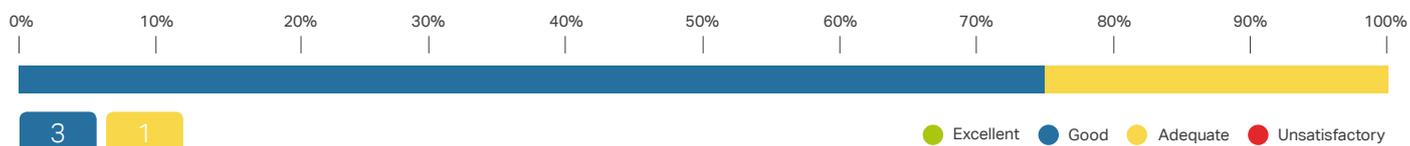


Figure 2.34:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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Sector summaries: Maintained all-age schools



Figure 2.35:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)

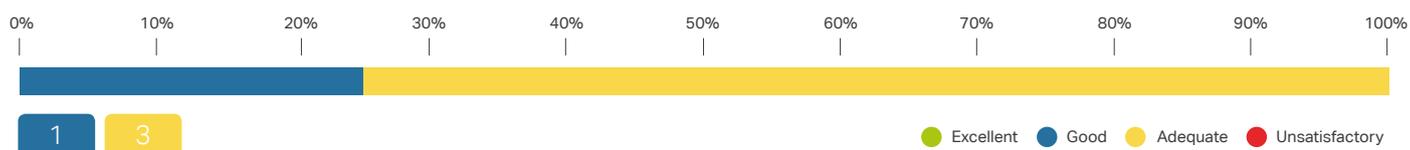
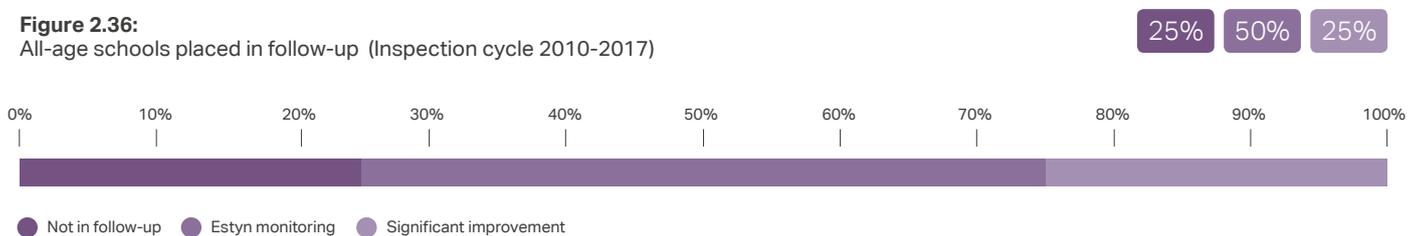


Figure 2.36:
All-age schools placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



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Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Sector report

Maintained special schools

In January 2017, there were 39 maintained special schools in Wales, the same as last year, but four fewer than in 2011 (Welsh Government, 2017c). These schools provide for a range of needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils attending maintained special schools continues to increase. In January 2017, the number of pupils in special schools across Wales was 4,727 compared with 4,542 last year and 4,181 in 2011 (Welsh Government, 2017d).

During the 2010-2017 inspection cycle, we carried out 48 special school inspections. In 2016-2017, we inspected seven schools. Estyn piloted the new inspection arrangements in one of these schools. The findings from all inspections have informed the report below, but findings from the pilot inspections are not included in the charts.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Outcomes: Maintained special schools

Standards

Over the inspection cycle, standards were good or better in nine-in-ten special schools inspected and adequate in one-in-ten.

Most pupils in special schools make strong progress in relation to their needs, abilities and prior attainment. Many pupils make strong progress in their communication, literacy and numeracy skills and apply these well in practical situations, for example when shopping or on work-related activities.

Nearly all older pupils gain relevant qualifications appropriate to their abilities and interests. This prepares them well for the next stage in their learning. Most school leavers move on to further education or training.

In one-in-ten schools where standards are adequate, pupils do not consistently achieve the targets in their individual education or behaviour plans and do not use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well enough across the curriculum. In only a few schools, pupils use Welsh phrases in their interactions with staff and their peers.

Wellbeing

Over the inspection cycle, wellbeing is good or better in nearly all schools inspected. In almost a third of schools, wellbeing is excellent.

In nearly all schools, pupils are polite and show respect for each other and the staff. Many behave well and engage enthusiastically in learning. A common feature across the inspection cycle is pupils' enthusiasm and motivation to learn.

Greenfield Special School

At **Greenfield Special School**, senior leaders have embraced the challenge to improve pupils' Welsh language skills. As a result, nearly all pupils make extensive progress in relation to their needs, abilities and starting points.

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



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Figure 2.37:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2016-2017)

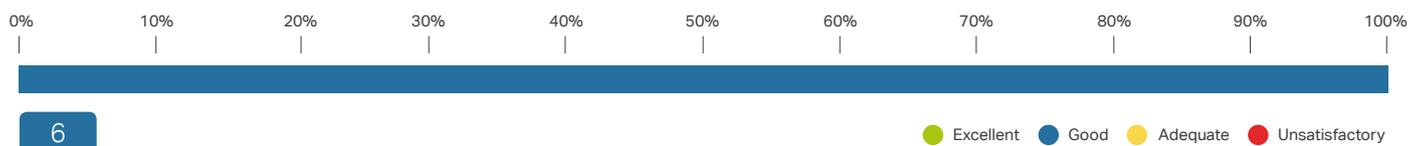
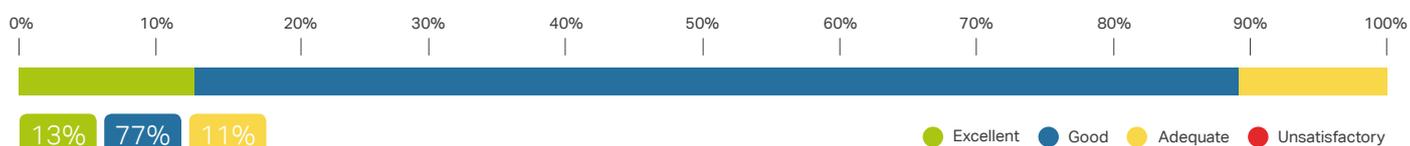


Figure 2.38:

Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Nearly all pupils attend regularly. Most pupils contribute well to school life and make frequent visits to local community settings to develop their independent living skills.

In the very few schools where wellbeing is less than good, pupils do not attend well and their poor behaviour is holding back their progress.

Héronsbridge Special School

In **Héronsbridge Special School**, skilfully organised pupil participation opportunities contribute to developing pupils' self-confidence and social skills. Over time, many pupils develop their independence and take increasing responsibility for themselves and their learning in line with their needs and ability.

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



Ysgol Penmaes

Ysgol Penmaes focuses on developing varied participation opportunities for the whole-school community and recognises that this has a positive impact on relationships throughout the school. It has developed structures and support to allow all pupils to contribute to the school improvement journey.

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



Tŷ Gwyn Special School

Tŷ Gwyn Special School, Cardiff, invested in ICT to help improve pupils' communication skills and break down barriers to learning.

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



Figure 2.39:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2016-2017)

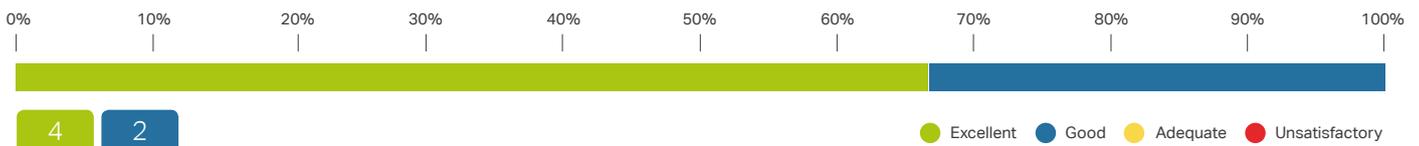
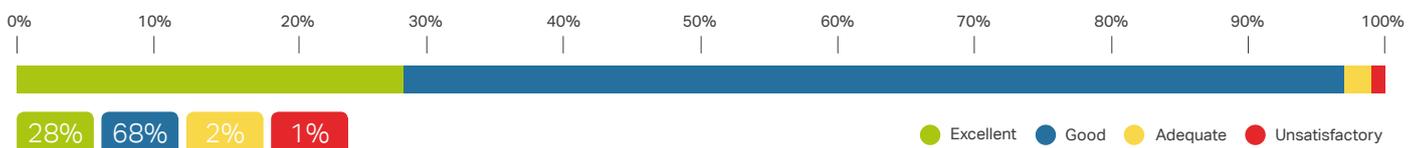


Figure 2.40:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Provision: Maintained special schools

During the inspection cycle, provision is good or better in nine-in-ten schools inspected and adequate in one-in-ten.

Nearly all maintained special schools provide a broad range of stimulating and interesting learning experiences tailored to the needs, abilities and interests of individual pupils. At key stage 4 and post-16, pupils follow appropriate learning pathways including relevant qualifications in accredited courses, work experience and volunteering opportunities in the community.

Most schools plan well for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In a few schools, staff do not always provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across the curriculum. In many schools, pupils extend their learning by joining pupils in mainstream schools or other settings for sessions that match their interests, abilities and skills well. However, a few schools do not provide enough pupils with these valuable opportunities.

In nine-in-ten schools, teaching is at least good and, in six of the schools inspected during the inspection cycle, it is excellent. Teachers and learning support staff know their pupils' needs, interests and abilities well. They work together effectively to plan and deliver work that is stimulating and engages pupils successfully. Teachers make effective use of a wide range of teaching styles and resources, including adapted technology devices and software, and signing and symbol exchange systems. This helps pupils to access the curriculum, and to improve their health and wellbeing by meeting their learning needs well.

Typically, care, support and guidance are strong in special schools. Staff work well with specialist professionals such as therapists, nurses and counsellors to provide high levels of care, support and guidance to pupils. Generally, these schools develop a strong inclusive ethos and promote equality and diversity well.

Ysgol Pen Coch

Ysgol Pen Coch uses a range of interventions, including a virtual reality room, that have had a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing, engagement and readiness to learn.

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



Figure 2.41:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2016-2017)

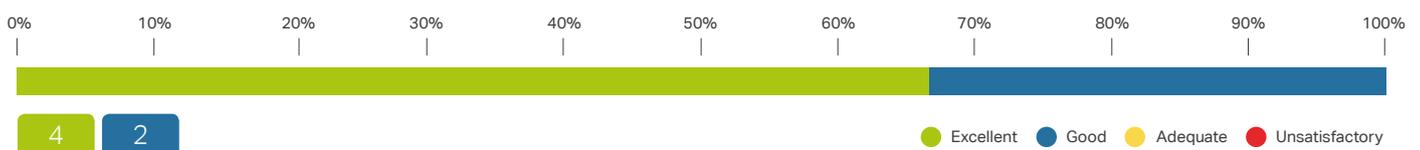
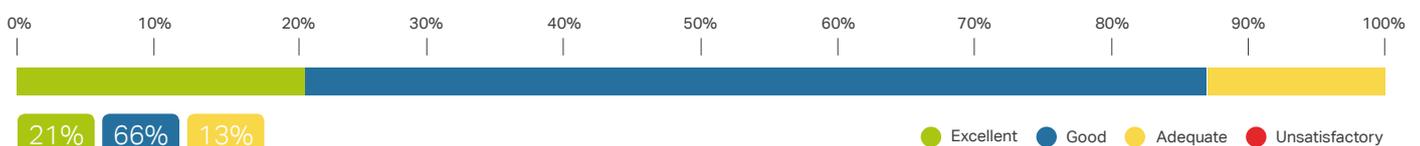


Figure 2.42:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Leadership and management: Maintained special schools

Over the inspection cycle, leadership is good or better in eight-in-ten schools.

Where leadership and management are strong, leaders have high expectations and create a clear vision for the school that staff, pupils and parents understand and support.

In the best examples, schools have robust systems to monitor all aspects of their work. In these schools, self-evaluation activities have a strong focus on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Leaders use data well to set challenging targets for pupils and staff and allocate sufficient resources to support school improvement priorities. Improvement plans address appropriate priorities well. However, in the few schools where leadership is less effective, self-evaluation activities lack rigour and do not identify the most important areas for improvement.

Ysgol Goffa Special School

Ysgol Heol Goffa has established partnerships with schools across the world that have allowed pupils to experience new languages and cultures and enriched the curriculum with a wide range of teaching materials.

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



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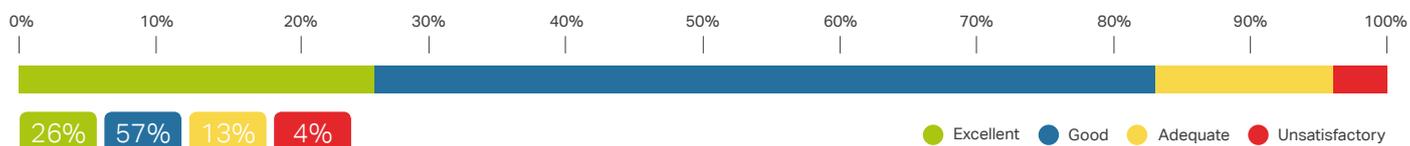
Figure 2.43:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (2016–2017)



Figure 2.44:

Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Generally, governing bodies know their schools well and provide a high level of support for senior leaders. However, a minority have not fully developed their role in challenging schools to improve.

A strong aspect of leadership in this sector is the highly effective sharing of good practice between special schools and with mainstream schools. These partnerships give leaders the confidence to introduce innovative approaches to extending learning experiences, tracking pupil progress and staff development.

Effective partnership working between schools, parents and specialist services, such as health professionals, has been consistently strong across the inspection cycle. This joint working has increased the range and quality of pupils' learning experiences and has made an important contribution to improving pupils' health and wellbeing.



Ysgol Tŷ Coch Special School

Ysgol Tŷ Coch Special School's exemplary strategic equality plan captures its ethos very effectively. It recognises, respects and celebrates each individual pupil and the diversity of their complex needs exceptionally well.

For more information read the **inspection report**.



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Section 2:

Sector summaries: Maintained special schools

Follow-up activity: Maintained special schools

In 2016-2017, five schools had excellent practice. This year, we identified two schools as needing further monitoring. In both these schools, self-evaluation and improvement planning did not focus well enough on the quality of teaching or the standards that pupils achieve.

Over the inspection cycle, there was excellent practice in over half of schools. Seven schools needed further monitoring by Estyn. In each of these schools, we identified weaknesses in leadership and in the arrangements to secure school improvement. Three of these schools made good progress and Estyn removed them from follow-up. Two schools remain in Estyn monitoring. A further three schools have not yet been monitored.

Two schools catering for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties needed significant improvement. At these schools, pupils' behaviour and attendance were a cause for concern. We removed one school from follow-up quickly and one school remains in need of significant improvement.

Between 2010 and 2017, we identified one special school as needing special measures, partly due to the unsatisfactory arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils and poor leadership. This school remains in need of special measures.

Figure 2.45:
Maintained special schools placed in follow-up in 2016-2017

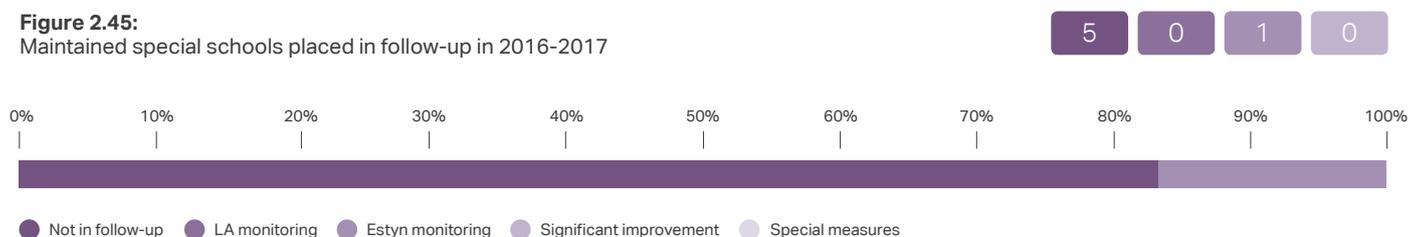


Figure 2.46:
Maintained special schools placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Sector report

Independent special schools

In January 2017, there were 35 independent special schools in Wales. These schools educate pupils aged from 5 to 19 with a range of needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the schools are small and pupils usually live in children's homes linked to the schools.

Between January 2011 and January 2017, 16 independent special schools opened and 11 closed. A further three schools closed between January and August 2017. Nearly all of the schools that closed were educating very few or no pupils at the time. As a result of these closures, nearly all registered schools are currently educating pupils. This is a significant change from earlier in the period of inspection 2010–2017. For example, from 2012 to 2014, there were nine schools registered that had no pupils.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent special schools

A few schools have provision on a number of different sites. During the period of inspection, there has been an increase in the number of schools that operate over multiple sites.

The numbers of pupils attending independent special schools has increased from around 500 pupils in 2010 to 870 in 2017. This is partly because one large independent school has changed its registration status to be able to educate pupils with additional learning needs. Not all the pupils at this school, however, have additional learning needs. Many successful schools have increased their numbers while schools with very few pupils have closed.

In addition to full inspections, Estyn carries out regular monitoring inspections of independent special schools, normally every 12 to 18 months. This year, we inspected four independent special schools and carried out monitoring visits to 20 schools. During the whole cycle of inspection, from 2010 to 2017, we carried out 24 inspections and 146 annual monitoring visits of 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).

Since 2010, around two-thirds of independent special schools complied with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 (National Assembly for Wales, 2003) at the time of their core inspection. During this time, there has been an improvement in the proportion of schools complying with all the standards. Between 2014 and 2017, six out of seven schools met all of the standards in comparison with around half between 2010 and 2014. This is due in part to the annual monitoring process, which has helped schools to understand what they need to do to comply with the standards.

Around two-thirds of the schools visited this year as part of the monitoring process met all of the standards. Seven schools failed to meet one or more of the standards.

For more information on the independent special schools inspected 2016-2017 please read the reports

Aran Hall School
Caban Aur
Greenfields
Amberleigh Residential Therapeutic School



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Outcomes: Independent special schools

Standards

Over the 2010-2017 cycle, standards are good or better in two-thirds of schools and adequate or unsatisfactory in eight schools. In three schools, no judgement was given for standards as there were fewer than six pupils at the time of the inspection.

Many of the pupils have had disrupted periods of education prior to starting at the school, and many arrive with underdeveloped knowledge and skills. During their time at the school, most pupils settle and engage well in their learning. However, in a few schools, pupils lack motivation and do not make progress in line with their ability.

Most pupils develop their social and communication skills well. Many pupils develop their thinking skills and problem solving skills well, for example through practical activities such as assembling a robot from a kit.

In many schools, pupils make suitable progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, the pupils with complex needs in one school apply their numeracy skills effectively when managing money at their local bank and in shops. However, in a few schools, pupils do not apply their literacy and numeracy skills well enough in a range of real-life contexts.

Figure 2.47:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2016-2017)

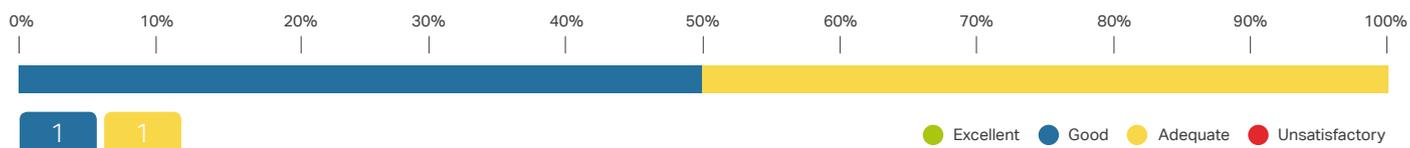
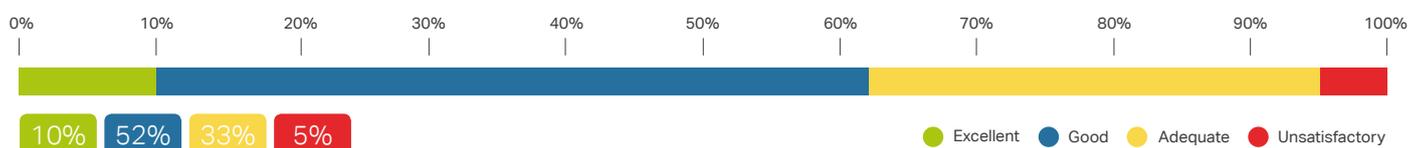


Figure 2.48:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Wellbeing

Over the cycle, wellbeing is good or better in three-quarters of schools and adequate or unsatisfactory in five schools. In three schools, no judgement was given for wellbeing since there were fewer than six pupils at the time of the inspection.

In nearly all schools, pupils and staff have very strong working relationships. As a result, pupils are happy to ask for and accept help and advice. This has a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Nearly all pupils improve their self-esteem and confidence. They learn how to cope with their emotions, express themselves and develop strategies for managing their behaviours. Most pupils improve their attendance over time. Many arrive punctually in the morning and settle down to work promptly.

Figure 2.49:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2016-2017)

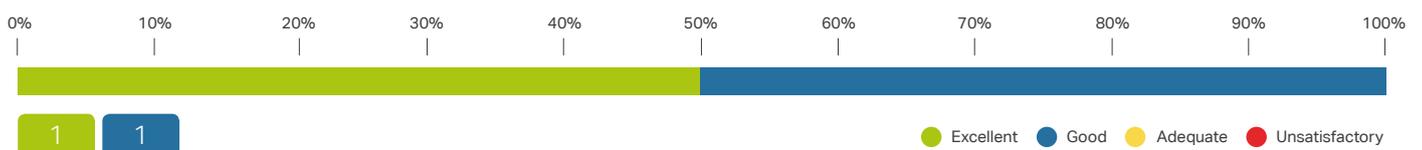
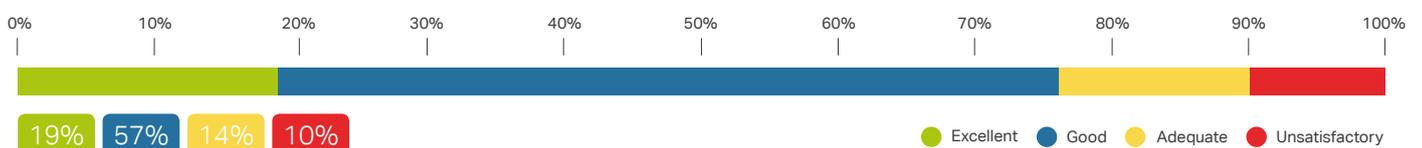


Figure 2.50:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Provision: Independent special schools

Over the cycle, provision is good or better in just over half of the schools.

The range of learning experiences varies considerably between schools. In a majority of the schools, the curriculum is tailored appropriately to meet individual pupils' needs and provides a suitable variety of well-planned activities. Where schools provide a wide range of interesting activities, they often have useful links with schools, colleges, charities and local businesses. However, in a few schools, learning experiences are restricted to the classroom and staff do not arrange off-site opportunities.

In a minority of schools, staff develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well in subjects across the curriculum. However, in a majority of schools, staff do not have a clear enough understanding of how these skills can be promoted across all lessons and other activities.

Nearly all of the schools provide a warm, welcoming and safe learning environment. Staff use praise and encouragement effectively to keep pupils motivated and build their self-esteem.

Care, support and guidance are excellent in four schools. These schools work well with partners to identify the needs of individual pupils and to develop appropriate packages of support. However, in a few schools, teachers do not use information about pupils' additional learning needs well enough to inform targets in individual education or behaviour plans and their work with pupils.

Headlands School

Headlands School has extended pupils' opportunities and increased overall attainment.

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



Figure 2.51:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2016-2017)

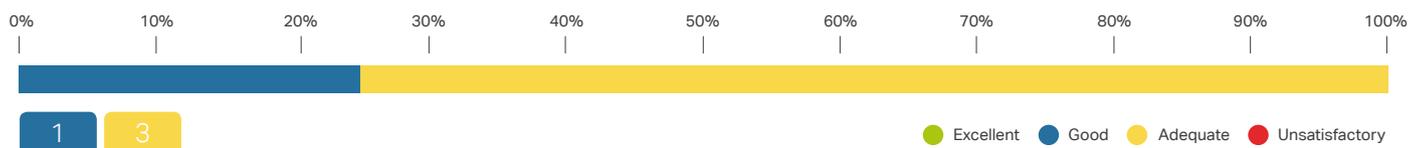
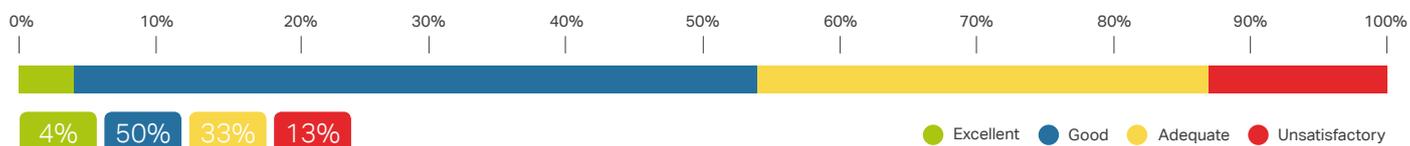


Figure 2.52:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Leadership and management: Independent special schools

From 2010 to 2017, leadership and management are good or better in four-in-ten schools.

In many of the schools, senior leaders provide purposeful leadership and communicate a clear vision for the school. In most schools, staff work together well to support the needs of individual pupils.

Many independent special schools have been slow to develop self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, although most are gradually improving in this area. By now, in a minority of schools, there are well-established processes for monitoring the work of the school, for example through lesson observations and book scrutiny. However, in a majority of schools, there is very little quality assurance activity.

Similarly, most schools have improved their collection of individual pupil and whole-school data. However, a majority of schools still do not analyse this data well when assessing the progress of pupils and to inform planning.

The management of resources is good or better in just over a half of independent special schools. In most schools, staff have appropriate expertise and are able to access appropriate training in relation to, for example, additional learning needs. However, nearly all schools are very small and there are often limited opportunities for staff to visit other schools and share practice.

Figure 2.53:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (2016–2017)

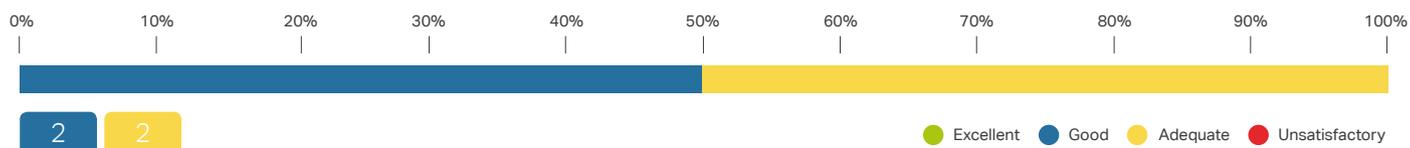
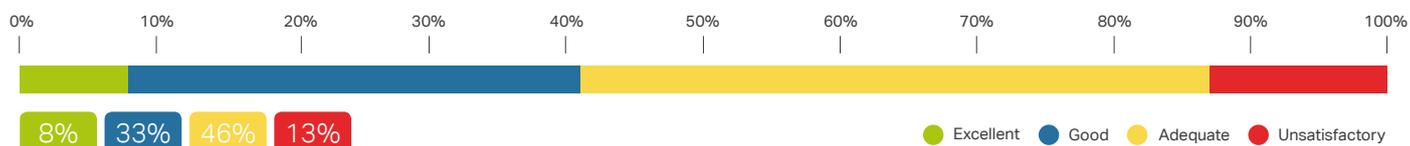


Figure 2.54:

Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2016–2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent special schools

Follow-up activity: Independent special schools

This year we identified one school as having excellent practice. This school has highly successful policies and strategies for supporting pupils' behaviour and emotional wellbeing. During the whole cycle, six schools were identified as having excellent practice.



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Sector report

Independent mainstream schools

In January 2011, there were 34 independent mainstream schools in Wales. This number increased to 39 schools in January 2014, but reduced to 35 in January 2017. These schools educate just over 8,000 pupils. This is around 2% of all pupils in Wales.

There have been 40 inspections of independent mainstream schools during the 2010–2017 inspection cycle. This year, we inspected six independent mainstream schools. Two of these schools are all-age schools, two schools educate pupils from the ages of 7 to 18 years, one school provides education for primary age pupils, and one school provides education for pupils aged 14 to 19 years. This year's sample reflects the diversity of provision in the sector.

We piloted the new inspection arrangements in two schools. The findings from all inspections have informed the report below, but findings from the pilot inspections are not included in the in the charts.

Section 2:

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, 2013). This year, five of the six schools inspected met all of these regulations (National Assembly for Wales, 2013). In one school, we identified shortcomings in a few regulations relating to the quality of education provided and the welfare, health and safety of pupils. We will monitor this school to ensure that it makes the required improvements to maintain registration.

We carried out follow-up monitoring activities with the two schools that had not met all of these regulations in 2015–2016. Both of these schools have taken appropriate actions and now comply fully with the regulations.

Over the 2010–2017 inspection cycle, two-thirds of independent mainstream schools complied with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 (National Assembly for Wales, 2013) at the time of their core inspection. This is an improvement when compared to the 2004–2010 inspection cycle, when only two-in-ten independent mainstream schools complied with the regulations at the time of their core inspection.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Outcomes: Independent mainstream schools

Standards

During the inspection cycle, standards are good or better in nine-in-ten of the independent mainstream schools. There were excellent features in the standards achieved in over a quarter of schools inspected.

Where standards are good or better, pupils use prior learning effectively and apply their knowledge and skills very well in new contexts. They present their ideas both orally and in writing in a confident and mature manner using a wide range of vocabulary for their age. Pupils use their reading skills to particularly good effect to extract and interpret information and draw conclusions. They apply their numeracy skills competently in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils attain outstanding performances in public examinations when compared to pupils in other schools in the maintained and independent sectors and are well prepared for future learning.

In a few schools, pupils do not develop their ability to write at length and for a range of purposes, do not present their work well enough and make frequent spelling errors.

Figure 2.55:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2016-2017)

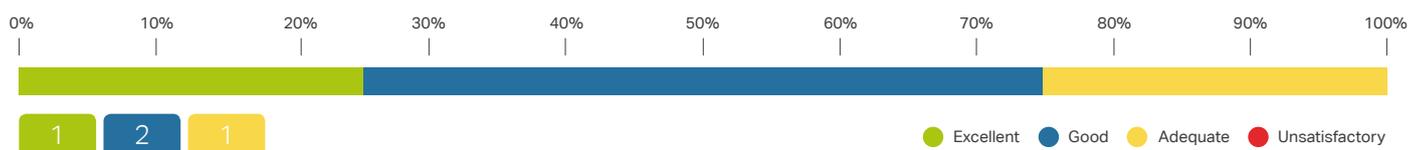
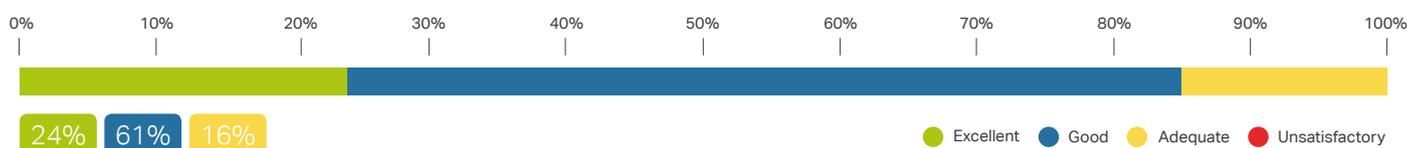


Figure 2.56:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Wellbeing

Over the inspection cycle, wellbeing is good or better in nearly all of the independent mainstream schools inspected. There are excellent features in pupils' wellbeing in just under a third of schools. In these schools, most pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning. For example, they are highly motivated, sustain their concentration and develop their capacity for independent study particularly well. Most pupils are extremely well behaved, show high levels of respect towards other people and form constructive working relationships with one another. Many pupils are mature and self-assured and undertake a wide range of leadership roles that help to develop their personal, social and learning skills.

In a few schools, pupils influence decisions about curriculum arrangements. However, more commonly, pupils' influence is limited to issues such as the accommodation and learning environment. In a very few schools, pupils do not have enough opportunities to influence the school's work.

Oakleigh House

Staff at **Oakleigh House School** have encouraged learners to be more resilient when faced with challenges, to learn from their mistakes and to become more independent in all aspects of their learning.

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



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Figure 2.57:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2016-2017)

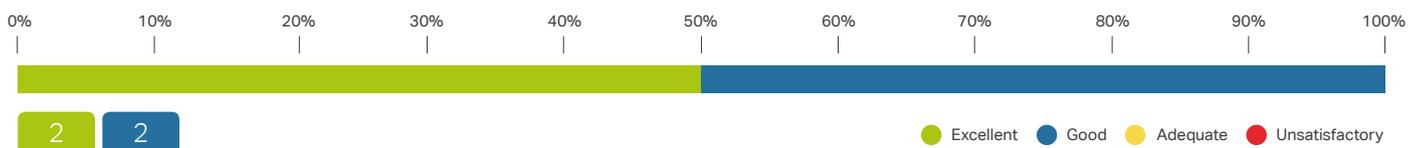
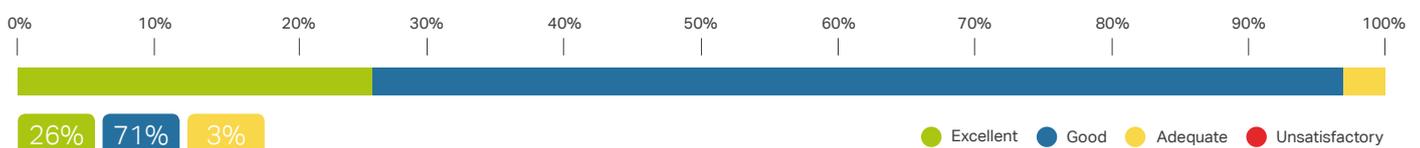


Figure 2.58:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Provision: Independent mainstream schools

Over the inspection cycle, the quality of provision is good or better in seven-in-ten schools. There are excellent features in one-in-ten schools.

Where learning experiences are good or better, schools plan well to develop pupils' skills in a relevant context. Teachers provide wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, reading, numeracy and thinking skills in particular. These schools have comprehensive extra-curricular programmes, with high participation rates. These programmes broaden and enrich pupils' experiences and make a significant contribution to their personal and social development.

However, in a few schools, the curriculum does not have a suitable balance. For example, pupils do not have enough opportunities to engage in physical or creative activities. In around half of schools, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.

In the majority of all-age independent schools, there are good links across the different phases of the school. These links help to ensure that pupils' experiences build effectively as they progress through the school. In a minority of all-age schools, in a few curriculum areas, the link between the different phases of the school is not strong enough.

In this inspection cycle, the quality of teaching is good or better in two-thirds of schools. In these schools, there are high levels of mutual respect between teachers and pupils and high expectations that motivate and challenge pupils. Teachers' extensive subject knowledge is used to probe and develop pupils' understanding. Clear explanations and questioning encourage pupils to think carefully to solve problems and extend their knowledge. Stimulating learning activities capture pupils' imagination and interest and constructive feedback helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

United World College of the Atlantic

Pupils at the **United World College of the Atlantic** have extensive opportunities to initiate, lead and engage in a wide range of local and global development projects. These projects embrace the college's vision that pupils should 'be empowered to make a positive difference in our world'.

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



Figure 2.59:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2016-2017)

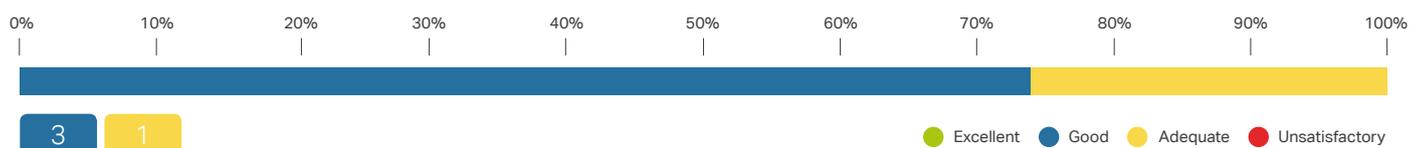
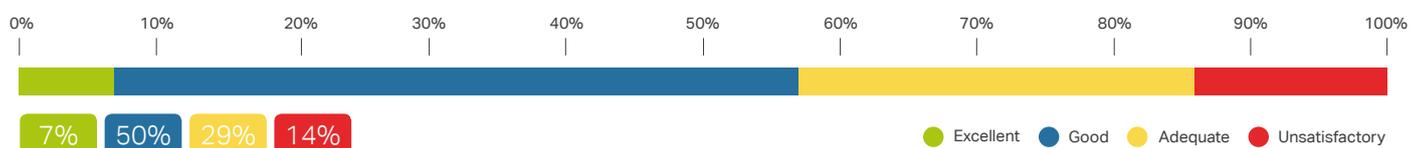


Figure 2.60:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Where there are shortcomings in teaching, this is most commonly because learning activities do not challenge pupils of all abilities. The slow pace of lessons restricts pupils' progress and there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn independently or develop their decision-making skills.

Just under three-quarters of schools have effective care and support arrangements. They promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. These schools have a strong sense of community and a nurturing ethos, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' confidence and wellbeing.

Rougemont School

Rougemont School has adopted a whole-school approach to support resilience and wellbeing. The initiatives have allowed pupils to thrive in their academic, social and emotional development.

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



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Leadership and management: Independent mainstream schools

Leadership and management are good or better in six-in-ten independent mainstream schools. In these schools, leaders communicate a clear strategic vision. They promote a strong sense of purpose and give firm direction to all aspects of the school's work. Leaders ensure that all staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, communicate high expectations and provide staff with constructive support and challenge. These leaders strive constantly to improve the schools' practice and to innovate in a considered way.

Where there are shortcomings in leadership, this is most commonly because leaders do not provide strong direction, roles and responsibilities are unclear, and performance management arrangements are not rigorous enough.

In just over a half of schools, improvement planning arrangements were good or better. In these schools, leaders carry out comprehensive and robust analyses of performance data and rigorous reviews of all aspects of their work, using a wide range of first-hand evidence. Leaders use these findings to identify clear improvement priorities and these have contributed to significant improvements in standards and provision.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning, however, is the weakest aspect of leadership and management. In just under a half of schools, leaders do not identify strengths and areas for improvement accurately enough. They do not have systematic arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, fail to analyse performance data robustly and prepare improvement plans that do not lead to better provision or a rise in standards.

In most schools, the proprietor helps to set the strategic direction and provide effective oversight of the school's work. They are well informed about the school's performance and provide appropriate support and challenge.

In nearly all schools, partnership working is good or better. These partnerships extend beyond the school community to include local businesses, sporting and cultural organisations and often both national and international links. These approaches to partnership working have a positive impact on pupils' achievements and wellbeing.

Figure 2.61:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (2016–2017)

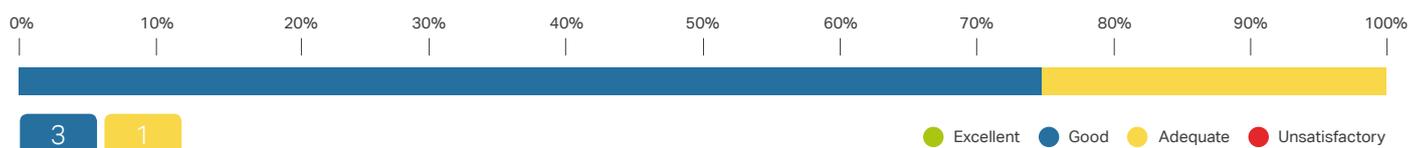
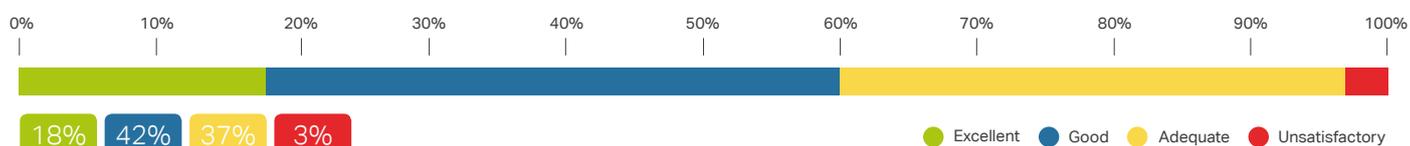


Figure 2.62:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent mainstream schools

Follow-up activity: Independent mainstream schools

This year, five schools had excellent practice. Three of these schools have exceptionally strong partnership arrangements, which contribute particularly well to pupils' high standards. In two schools, pupils' strong sense of wellbeing and extremely positive attitudes to learning have a significant impact on the standards they achieve. For example, pupils are resilient, learn from their mistakes and have strong independent study skills.

During this inspection cycle, four-in-ten schools had excellent practice and, in one-in-ten schools, the standard of teaching was excellent. The most common aspects contributing to the outstanding outcomes in these schools are consistently strong teaching, pupils' extremely positive attitude to their learning and exceptional partnership arrangements. Pupils in these schools are highly engaged and well-motivated. They develop successfully the skills to become effective and resilient independent learners. These characteristics contribute to the outstanding results that pupils achieve.

In around a fifth of schools, highly-effective local, national and international partnerships enhance the curriculum and learning environment significantly. These partnerships encourage pupils to become ethically informed citizens, to reflect thoughtfully on their role in society, and to understand how their actions can affect and transform the lives of others.



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Sector report

Independent specialist colleges

This year, there are seven registered independent specialist colleges in Wales. This is one more than in January 2016 and four more than in January 2010. These colleges educate around 220 learners aged 16 and over. The colleges provide for a range of needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

This year, we inspected one college.

For more information about the college inspected, please read the inspection report **Priory College South Wales**.



Over the 2010-2017 inspection cycle, we have carried out six core inspections.

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

For more information please read the thematic report **Learner progress and destinations in independent specialist colleges** (Estyn 2016e).



In addition to full inspections, Estyn carries 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 three monitoring visits.

Since 2010, we have made 22 monitoring visits to specialist colleges. Over the cycle, specialist colleges have made suitable progress in addressing most recommendations from core inspections and monitoring visits.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Outcomes: Independent specialist colleges

Standards

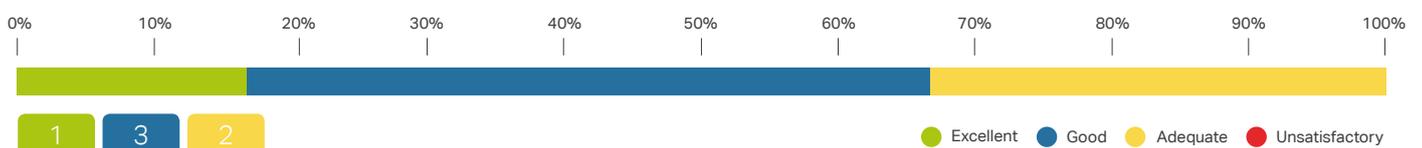
Over the inspection cycle, standards are good or better in four of the six colleges inspected.

In these colleges, most learners make suitable progress towards achieving the targets in their individual learning plans and many learners gain worthwhile units of credit or qualifications.

Most learners make strong progress in developing skills that are relevant to their needs and abilities. They develop their communication skills very well, using their preferred method of communication. Many learners develop their literacy and numeracy skills well and apply them effectively across a range of practical situations. Many learners acquire valuable skills for living more independently, including problem-solving and thinking skills. In around half of colleges, learners gain a suitable understanding of the world of work through meaningful work experience opportunities. These achievements help to prepare them well for the next stage in their lives.

In the two colleges where standards are adequate, learners have regular opportunities to practise and develop their communication, literacy and numeracy skills. However, in these colleges, information on the achievements of learners is not detailed enough to demonstrate whether learners make appropriate progress relative to their individual starting points. This is because these colleges do not have effective systems in place for recording and tracking learners' progress.

Figure 2.63:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Wellbeing

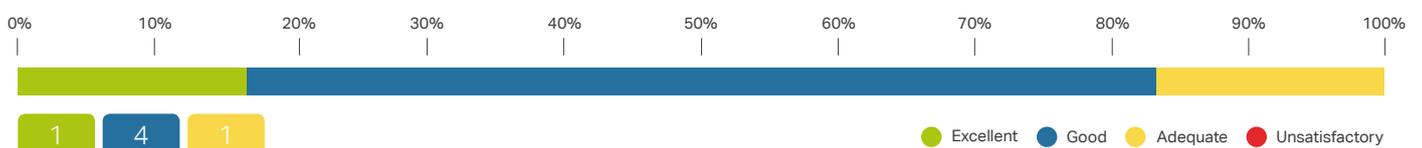
Over the cycle, wellbeing is good or better in five out of six of the colleges inspected. In these colleges, most learners attend college regularly and engage enthusiastically in their learning. Many learners develop a sound understanding of healthy lifestyles and the importance of making healthy food choices. Many take part in well-planned opportunities for physical exercise that take good account of their needs and abilities. More able learners demonstrate a suitable understanding of online safety.

In all colleges, learners behave well in sessions and around the college. Learners with more challenging behaviours learn how to manage these over time due to the support they receive. In four colleges, learners take on valuable leadership roles and contribute to decision-making in the college.

Where there are shortcomings in wellbeing, this is because a few learners are not punctual to lessons or do not attend college regularly enough. As a result, these learners miss valuable opportunities to learn.

Figure 2.64:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Provision: Independent specialist colleges

Over the cycle, provision is good or better in four out of six colleges inspected and adequate in the remaining two.

Where provision is good or better, this is because colleges provide a broad range of stimulating learning experiences that meet learners' needs. Staff use a suitable range of initial assessments to identify learners' abilities when they join the college and to set relevant targets across a broad range of skills that will be useful to them in their future lives. These colleges focus strongly on developing learners' literacy, numeracy, independence, social and life skills. They provide valuable opportunities for learners to achieve units of credit or qualifications in relevant areas. Well-planned opportunities for work experience and extra-curricular activities allow learners to practise and develop their vocational and social skills in realistic settings.

In these colleges, there are strong working relationships between tutors, support staff and learners. Tutors have a clear understanding of the needs of individual learners and they plan engaging sessions that link well to learners' personal targets. They track and monitor learners' progress regularly and they use data about learners' achievements well to plan for future learning and review the college's provision.

In five out of the six colleges, the quality of care, support and guidance for learners is very high. Well-coordinated processes for identifying learners' additional needs provide staff with detailed advice on how to support individual learners. Staff use this information skilfully to develop learners' independence and achievements. All colleges provide a positive and inclusive ethos, which promotes diversity extremely well.

Where there are shortcomings in provision, this is because initial assessments do not focus closely enough on learners' educational needs. Staff do not use the outcomes of initial assessments well enough to set meaningful targets on learners' individual learning plans or to ensure that learning programmes are fully relevant to learners' needs and abilities. Learning programmes focus too much on the requirements of qualifications rather than what is relevant to the learners' future destinations. Opportunities for learners to apply skills in a range of contexts are limited.

Coleg Elidyr

Coleg Elidyr,

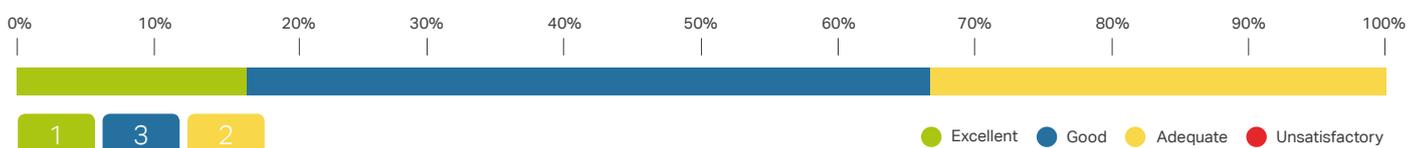
Carmarthenshire, is committed to developing learners' transferable skills. The college reviewed how subject lessons could help develop skills such as literacy, numeracy, social and communication skills. Staff were trained in how to integrate the teaching of transferable skills in subject-specific lessons and learners are more confident as a result.

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



Figure 2.65:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Independent specialist colleges

Leadership and management: Independent specialist colleges

Leadership and management are good or better in four of the six independent specialist colleges inspected during the cycle and adequate in the other two.

Where leadership and management are good or better, leaders and managers communicate a strong vision that focuses on the progress and wellbeing of all learners. They ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and promote high expectations of all staff. Leaders have reliable systems to collect a range of data on learner outcomes.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. Self-assessment takes suitable account of comprehensive data on learner progress and achievements, as well as feedback from parents, staff and learners. In these colleges, staff have a strong focus on continuous improvement and there is a successful track record in addressing recommendations from previous inspections. All colleges have secure processes for managing the performance of staff. Regular performance reviews result in useful opportunities for professional development and training that are well matched to the needs of learners.

In five out of six colleges, effective partnerships make a significant contribution to improving opportunities and outcomes for learners. These include well-developed links with local businesses and charities, which greatly enhance the range of opportunities for work experience for learners.

All colleges deploy resources well to meet the specialised needs of learners. They plan with schools, Careers Wales and specialist services to improve the transition process for prospective learners. Communication with parents and carers is a particular strength of this sector.

Specialist colleges work more closely together than they did at the start of the period of inspection. They meet regularly to share common approaches and effective practice. This joint working is beginning to have an impact on the quality of provision for learners across Wales. In two colleges, strong partnerships with the local further education college enable learners to access an extensive range of vocational and academic courses.

In the two colleges where there are shortcomings in leadership and management, this is because leaders do not provide staff with a clear enough direction for improving the provision. They do not evaluate data on learner progress and achievements well enough and self-evaluation activities do not identify important areas for improvement accurately.

Priory College South Wales

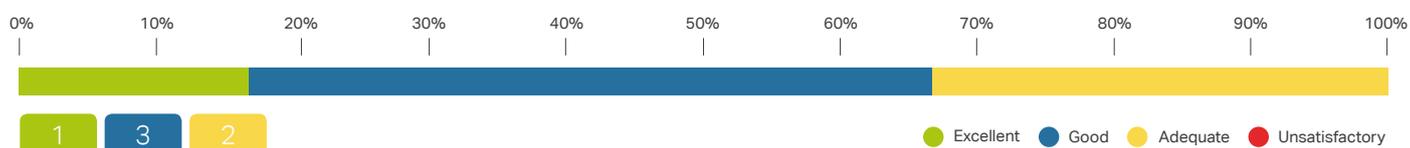
The strong partnership between **Priory College South Wales** and **Coleg Gwent** allows young adults with Asperger syndrome, autistic spectrum disorders and associated conditions to access mainstream courses.

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



Figure 2.66:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
(Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Sector report

Pupil referral units

In January 2017, there were 25 registered pupil referral units (PRUs) in Wales. This is 19 fewer than in January 2010. There were approximately 665 pupils educated in PRUs in January 2017. The number of pupils educated in PRUs has risen by 17% over the last seven years (Welsh Government, 2017j). There are four local authorities without a registered PRU.

Over the 2010-2017 cycle, we have carried out 37 core inspections of PRUs. This year we inspected four PRUs. Estyn piloted the new inspection arrangements in one of these PRUs. The findings from all inspections have informed the report below, but findings from the pilot inspections are not included in the charts.

For more information about the pupil referral units inspected 2016-2017 please read the inspection reports

Pembrokeshire Learning Centre
The Bridge Alternative Provision Portfolio PRU
Ty Glyn PRU Torfaen
Bryn y Deryn Pupil Referral Unit



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Outcomes: Pupil referral units

Standards

Over the cycle, standards are good or better in half of PRUs. In these PRUs, pupils make strong progress in line with their age, ability and learning needs. Pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well and apply these skills successfully in other subjects. Older pupils achieve qualifications appropriate to their aptitudes and interests and almost all move on to further education, training or employment. In these PRUs, many younger pupils return successfully to full-time mainstream education.

Standards are adequate in a third of PRUs and unsatisfactory in just over one-in-ten PRUs. This is because the standards pupils achieve in lessons are too variable, the breadth of qualifications achieved is too narrow, and many pupils have lost interest in their learning. In these PRUs, many pupils do not develop the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills they need to support their learning across the curriculum. Many of these PRUs do not have a good enough understanding of the progress pupils make due to the lack of recorded information about their prior attainment and to inconsistency in their baseline assessments.

Generally, Welsh and English speaking pupils do not make enough progress in their Welsh language development during their time in PRUs and lack confidence in using their Welsh language skills when communicating with staff and peers.

Figure 2.67:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2016-2017)

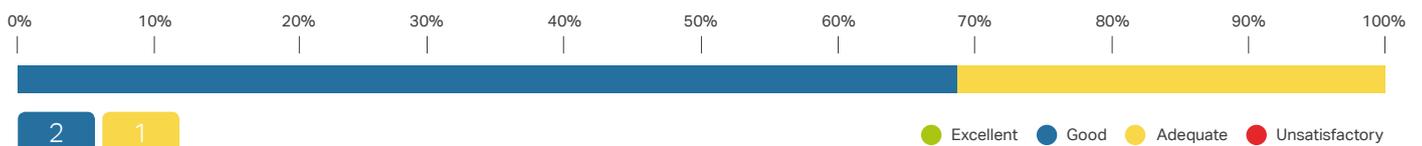
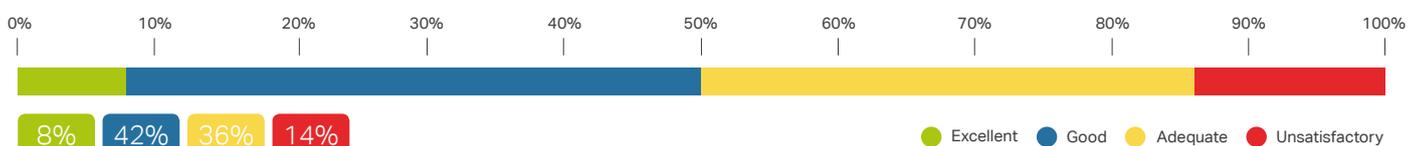


Figure 2.68:

Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is good or better in around half of PRUs. Wellbeing is adequate in four-in-ten PRUs and unsatisfactory in one-in-ten PRUs.

Many pupils start in PRUs with little confidence, experience difficulty in managing their emotions and behaviour, and have a history of exclusions from school. In the most effective PRUs, many pupils with a poor record of attendance in previous placements make sound progress and improve their personal attendance level. They improve their behaviour, learn to manage their emotions over time, and respond well to consistent support by staff.

In PRUs where wellbeing is adequate or unsatisfactory, attendance is generally too low. In a few PRUs, pupils' attendance is lower than their attendance in mainstream school. Often punctuality to the PRU and to lessons is also poor. In around a half of PRUs, the behaviour of a few pupils is a cause for concern. Poor attendance and behaviour limit pupils' ability to make progress.

Figure 2.69:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2016–2017)

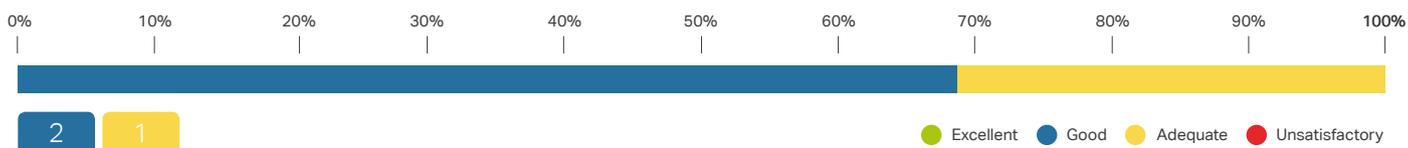
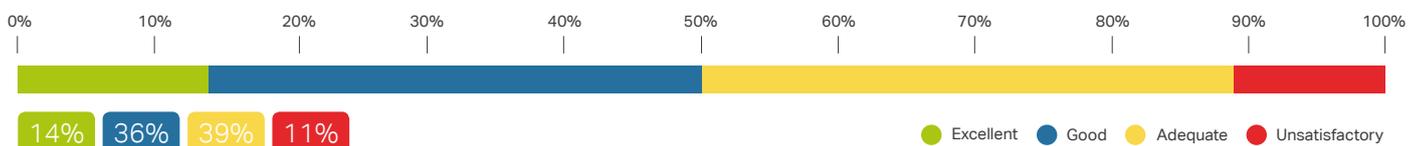


Figure 2.70:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Provision: Pupil referral units

Over the cycle, provision is good or better in half of PRUs and adequate in a third. Provision is unsatisfactory in one-in-six PRUs.

Six-in-ten of the PRUs inspected offer a broad curriculum that matches pupils' needs and interests well. In the best examples, the curriculum is responsive to the individual needs of the pupils and older pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, are encouraged to make choices in their learning to support their core subjects. In these PRUs, older pupils gain valuable work experience and vocational qualifications in areas such as construction, food hygiene and media studies. This helps them to secure placements in further education or employment in their chosen areas of work on leaving the PRU. Strong links with external providers such as local colleges and training providers enhance pupils' learning experiences. The interesting and varied curriculum helps to develop pupils' personal, social and thinking skills effectively. These PRUs generally plan well for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

In four-in-ten PRUs, the curriculum and the range of qualifications on offer are too narrow. Often the planning for skills is at an early stage of development in these PRUs, particularly numeracy and ICT. As a result, the curriculum offered lacks challenge and does not ensure that all pupils achieve.

Teaching is good or better in just over half of PRUs. In the most effective PRUs, there are strong working relationships between pupils, teachers and teaching assistants. Staff understand the needs of their pupils and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Teachers plan stimulating lessons that focus well on developing pupils' basic skills and make good use of questioning to check understanding and develop thinking skills.

Figure 2.71:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2016-2017)

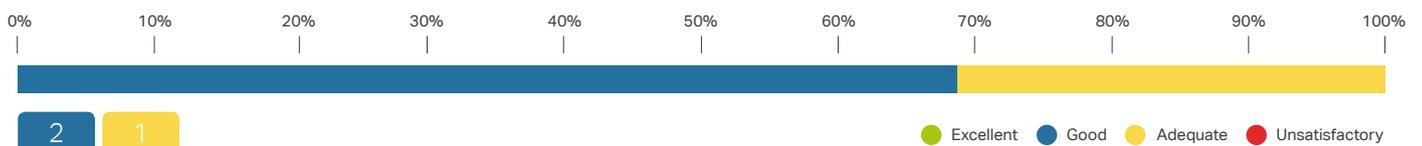
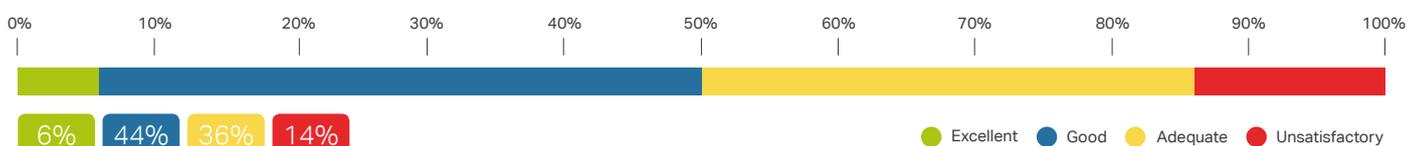


Figure 2.72:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

There are shortcomings in teaching in half of the PRUs inspected. In these PRUs, teachers' expectations of behaviour and learning are not high enough. The pace of learning is too slow. There is an over-reliance on teacher directed learning. This prevents pupils from developing and applying their skills well enough in subjects across the curriculum.

Procedures for care, support and guidance are robust in half of the PRUs inspected. In the most effective PRUs, there are well-established arrangements in place for identifying pupils' additional learning and emotional needs. These arrangements help staff to plan targeted support to address gaps in pupils' learning and improve their behaviour. Most PRUs make extensive use of specialist services such as mental health services, advisory teachers and educational psychologists to provide support for pupils and valuable training for staff.

Many PRUs have suitable measures in place for safeguarding pupils, although a few PRUs' arrangements do not fully meet requirements, due to concerns about behaviour management, suitable pupil supervision, and site security.

Most PRUs offer a suitable learning environment that is safe, supportive and welcoming. On a few occasions, the learning environment is not fit for purpose and provision for resources such as ICT is under-developed.

Ty Glyn PRU, Torfaen

The journey to improve the quality of teaching and learning

In working to improve teaching and learning at **Ty Glyn PRU**, leaders have focused on developing staff at all levels. Better links with mainstream schools mean that PRU staff are less isolated and benefit from recent developments in the secondary curriculum. Collaborative work has resulted in mainstream staff providing work and specialist teaching in subjects that PRU staff are unable to offer, for example Welsh. This work with mainstream schools has widened the range of choices for pupils and had a positive impact on standards. Further work through an audit of support staff skills led to an organised programme of training and national accreditation. Pupils now receive better support to develop their numeracy skills.

[Link to inspection report](#)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Leadership and management: Pupil referral units

Over the cycle, leadership is good or better in four-in-ten PRUs. The quality of leadership is adequate in four-in-ten PRUs and unsatisfactory in two-in-ten PRUs.

In a minority of PRUs, where leadership is most effective, the local authority, management committee and leadership team work together effectively. They share a clear vision and purpose and provide a strategic direction for the PRU.

However, in a majority of PRUs, leadership is less effective. Often this is because the local authority does not provide PRUs with suitable support, particularly for newly appointed teachers-in-charge. During periods of instability and significant changes to structure, leaders do not focus well enough on the day-to-day work of the PRU. As a result, in a few PRUs there are inconsistencies between the impact of leadership and management on the quality of provision on different sites registered as one joint or 'portfolio' PRU.

A strength of many PRUs is the effective partnership working with mainstream schools, social and health professionals and parents. In many PRUs, strategic partnerships with local colleges, mainstream schools and training providers enhance pupils' learning experiences very well. There have been no unsatisfactory judgements awarded for partnership working over the inspection cycle.

Figure 2.73:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
(2016-2017)

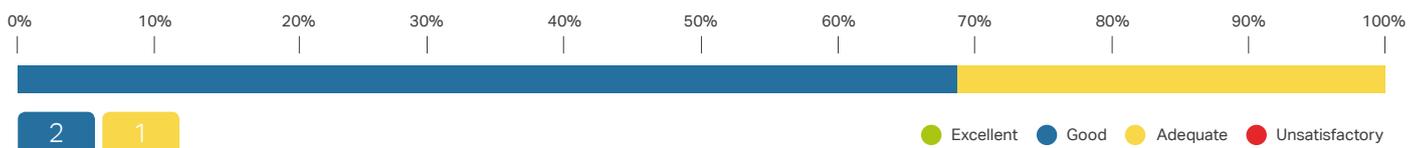
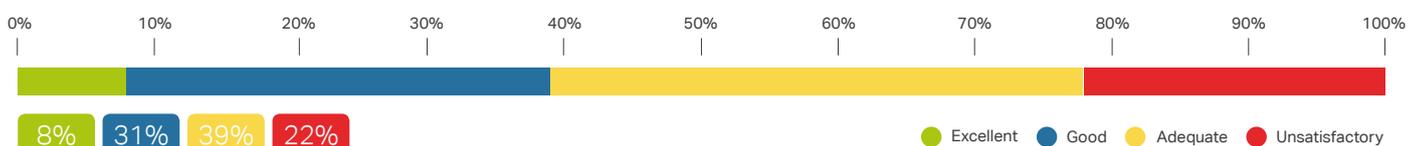


Figure 2.74:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Local authorities should inform the Welsh Government whenever a new PRU is set up or an existing PRU is closed. However, there are no formal procedures or consultation periods prior to opening or closing PRUs. As a result, there have been significant changes to the registration status of most PRUs over the period of inspection. This ongoing instability is a barrier to improvement across the sector.

Management committees became a statutory requirement for PRUs in October 2014. All PRUs inspected have appropriate management committee structures in place. Nearly all management committees support the PRU's work well and have made suitable progress to develop their role in self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

In three-in-ten PRUs, processes for improving quality are good or better. In the most effective PRUs, leaders have a very good understanding of how well the PRU delivers on its purpose. They proactively plan future improvements, including restructures, based on their analysis of current performance. In seven-in-ten PRUs, these processes lack rigour and need improving. In these PRUs, improvement planning is often unsatisfactory. The main shortcoming is the lack of focus on improving pupil achievements and on the quality of teaching. The analysis of available data is weak and often does not inform strategic planning well enough. Often strategic monitoring processes such as formal lesson observations and work scrutiny have been introduced only recently and leaders do not have an accurate enough picture of the PRU's main areas for development.

The management of resources is good in half of PRUs and excellent in one. In three-in-ten, it is adequate and in two-in-ten it is unsatisfactory. Often this is due to an over-reliance on temporary staff who do not always have the relevant skills and experience to support vulnerable and challenging pupils.



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Follow-up activity: Pupil referral units

This year, two PRUs are good with excellent practice in one or more areas. Two PRUs inspected this year require further monitoring. In both PRUs, pupils achieve only adequate standards, due in part to shortcomings in the curriculum on offer at key stage 4. Often opportunities for pupils to continue with their learning from previous settings are limited, particularly through the medium of Welsh. In both of these PRUs, data analysis, self-evaluation and improvement planning are undeveloped.

At the start of this year, four PRUs were in a statutory category of follow-up. During the year, one PRU was removed from significant improvement as it had made sufficient progress in relation to its recommendations in the core inspection. One PRU requiring significant improvement closed in August 2017 and one has not yet been visited. One PRU remains in special measures.

Over the inspection cycle, we inspected 37 PRUs. Five PRUs had excellent practice in one or more areas and two PRUs as excellent overall. Generally, these PRUs have strong leadership, effective teaching and very good arrangements for promoting pupils' wellbeing.

Since 2010, we identified 12 PRUs requiring further monitoring by Estyn. Three PRUs made good progress in around a year and were removed from Estyn monitoring. Six PRUs in need of further monitoring amalgamated with other provisions and are now part of larger 'portfolio' PRUs. Two PRUs remain in Estyn monitoring.

Seven PRUs required significant improvement. Three PRUs made good progress in relation to the recommendations of their core inspection and no longer need significant improvement. One PRU remains in significant improvement. Three other PRUs were removed from significant improvement but have since closed or amalgamated with other provision.

Over the inspection cycle, six PRUs required special measures. These PRUs had unsatisfactory leadership and prospects for improvement. One PRU was removed from special measures in around a year. Four PRUs closed following the core inspections and one remains in special measures.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Pupil referral units

Generally, the main shortcoming in PRUs placed in follow-up is the lack of consistent and effective support and challenge from the local authority. Often, in these PRUs, the vision for the PRU is not fully understood by all, and quality assurance processes, self-evaluation and improvement planning are weak.

PRUs requiring Estyn review usually make the necessary improvements in around a year. However, those placed in significant improvement or special measures take longer to make the necessary improvements and are often subject to lengthy local authority reviews and service re-structures. In the best examples, local authority reviews are swift, staffing re-structures are managed well and staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. In these PRUs, the highly effective targeted support provided by the local authority and the management committee has led to strong improvements in pupil outcomes, and the quality of teaching and learning environments.

During the period of inspection, one-third of PRUs in need of follow-up closed. In part, this is due to the development of multi-site portfolio PRUs and the amalgamation of PRUs with maintained special schools. When managed well, these changes strengthened leadership and management within the PRUs and created a more supportive learning environment for staff and pupils.

Figure 2.75:
Pupil referral units placed in follow-up in 2016-2017

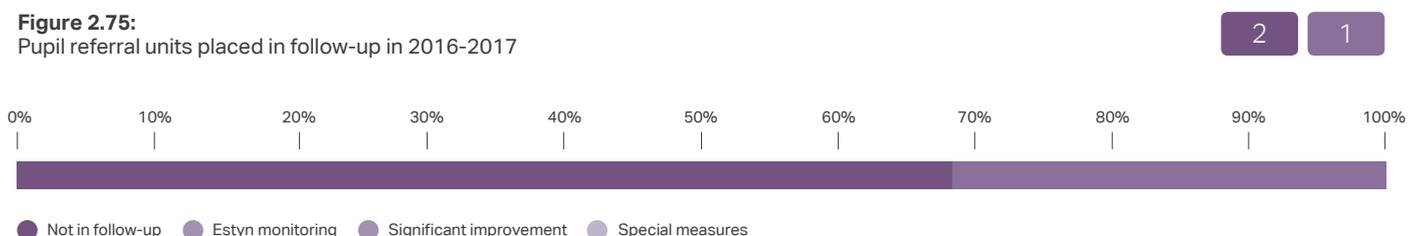


Figure 2.76:
Pupil referral units placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Local government education services

Sector report

Local government education services

Local authority inspections and follow-up activity

Between 2010 and 2014, we inspected the education services for children and young people in all 22 local authorities. Inspection outcomes overall were good or better in around two-in-ten local authorities during the cycle. These local authorities had strong leadership both politically and corporately, with detailed planning for improvement and honest self-evaluation being strongly embedded in the culture of their education services. They supported and challenged their schools effectively. They were ensuring that there was effective collaboration between services areas and make good use of resources to deliver their corporate priorities.

Across the majority of local authorities, the most positive aspect of their work related to the support for additional learning needs. These local authorities worked well with parents and with other agencies, such as health services, to provide tailored support to meet the specific needs of learners. In addition, they had good systems to track, monitor and analyse the progress of learners, and they used the information from these systems to plan strategically for improvements in their services. However, our thematic review in 2016 exposed many weaknesses in the outcomes and quality of education services for learners who are in education other than at school.

Education other than at School (Estyn, 2016f)

This is a report about education other than at school (EOTAS). The report focuses on provision for pupils of compulsory school age that receive EOTAS as all or the main part of their main education.

Read the full report.



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Local government education services

Ensuring sufficient access and school places for children and young people was an area that was strong in around a half of the local authorities. In general, officers were using a wide range of methods to evaluate this sufficiency and were planning reasonable options for future provision. However, local authorities were weaker in planning to meet the demand for Welsh-medium education. Our thematic review in 2016 highlighted that the strategic plans for the provision of Welsh-medium school places were underdeveloped in many local authorities, particularly in terms of identifying the level of demand.

Local authority Welsh in education strategic plans (Estyn, 2016g)

The review considers the impact of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs).

Read the full report.



Overall, the inspection outcomes for local authorities during the cycle were weak. Fifteen of the 22 local authorities required follow-up activity as a result of these inspections. Of these, six required special measures, the most intensive level of follow-up, and another two were in need of significant improvement. The follow-up work was completed in 2016. A common shortcoming in nearly all local authorities that required follow-up was a lack of leadership capacity to bring about improvement. The concerns in these authorities applied to all levels of leadership, from chief executives, education directors and senior education managers through to council leaders, cabinet members for education and chairs of scrutiny committees.

The pace of improvement following the inspections depended on the leadership in the local authorities understanding and accepting the issues identified, and their ability to address the issues through robust and coherent improvement plans. Many local authorities in follow-up re-structured their leadership teams and replaced key personnel, especially at director level. In a few cases, these new leaders grasped the issues and acted robustly to drive improvement in a timely manner. The best example was Anglesey local authority, who strengthened their leadership team by making key appointments soon after their inspection. The Director of Lifelong Learning started in post and the head of learning, standards and inclusion officer roles were filled on a permanent basis. This ensured that the schools services management team had a suitable range of expertise and experience across key service areas. The Portfolio leader for education also provided effective political leadership. As a result, the relationship between the service and schools was transformed and contributed to building a culture of continuous improvement within the authority.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Local government education services

The Welsh Government set up recovery boards to support local authorities requiring special measures to help address the lack of capacity in leadership and to support their improvement journey. The effectiveness of the recovery boards depended on the suitability and approach of the personnel serving on the boards as well as the receptiveness and engagement of the leadership in the local authorities to the board's work. In the best examples, the recovery boards played a strong role in helping the local authority to improve by providing additional leadership expertise and experience to help support and challenge the local authority to improve.

A common weakness in many local authorities, including in those that did not require follow-up activity, was ineffective processes for self-evaluating performance and planning for improvement. In general, their understanding of what they were doing well and what needed to be improved was underdeveloped. They usually had monitoring processes in place but, in many local authorities, those processes focused more on recording whether planned actions had been completed rather than on the impact the actions were having on the quality of the service area and on outcomes for learners.

Many of the local authorities requiring follow-up had poor quality school improvement services. In 15 out of the 22 local authorities, support for school improvement was either adequate or unsatisfactory. These local authorities did not know their schools well enough, and did not challenge or support school leaders effectively to enable them to improve. Local authorities were too slow to hold schools to account for outcomes that were below or even well below outcomes in similar schools. Local authorities were too slow to use powers available to them to secure improvements in schools, and often only acted once an inspection of a school had identified a cause for concern.

Regional consortia

During the period 2010–2014, Estyn inspected all 22 local authorities and found shortcomings in 15 of them. At the same time, the Welsh Government developed an alternative model of school improvement that required local authorities to establish regional consortia to provide school improvement services on behalf of the five or six local authorities within their respective regions. The consortia were established in part to help address the lack of capacity and expertise in local authorities' school improvement teams. In the period since their establishment, all four regional consortia have developed their structures and processes in line with the Welsh Government's national model for regional working (2015a). When we reviewed the work of the regional consortia in 2015, we found that they were improving the quality of challenge to schools but that the quality of support was too variable.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Local government education services

Improving schools through regional education consortia (Estyn, 2015k)

The purpose of this survey was to report on the progress being made by regional education consortia to provide school improvement services.

Read the full report.



We inspected all four regional consortia between February and June 2016. We found that two of the regional consortia provide good support for school improvement and the other two provide adequate support. The statutory responsibility for school improvement still remains with local authorities, and the different roles of local authorities and regional consortia in working with schools are not always clear to school leaders. While regional consortia usually know their schools well and provide sound information to local authorities about schools causing concern, local authorities do not always act on this information or use their statutory powers to bring about the necessary changes to improve school performance.

The way in which the regional consortia have interpreted and applied aspects of the national model in their different contexts has not always worked well. Three of the four consortia are re-structuring their workforce and changing working practices to enable them better to apply and use the resources available to support schools in a more strategic and coherent way. In the other consortium, support for the Foundation Phase initially fell outside the consortium's remit due to a pre-consortium regional approach that local authorities were reluctant to change. As a result, it was difficult for the consortium to provide a strategic lead in this area of work. More recently, the consortium has gained responsibility for the Foundation Phase, allowing it better to support its schools.

After a relatively uncertain beginning when the long-term future of the consortia was unclear, the last year has seen the regional consortia become a more stable feature of the education system in Wales. The Welsh Government has directed more responsibilities and resources towards the regional consortia, and at times consortia have struggled to deliver on all of these new areas. An example is support for curriculum development, which is an additional strand to the consortia's work.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Local government education services

Improvement conferences

In the latter part of the inspection cycle, as part of our link inspector work with local authorities, we developed an “improvement conference” approach to help local authorities to improve aspects of their work that were weak and causing concern. The aim of the conferences is for inspectors to seek assurance from senior officers and members that the authority and its consortium understands and takes shared responsibility for the issues that are resulting in poor performance. During the conference, we check that the authority has coherent plans to improve, has sufficient resources to implement its plans and has rigorous processes in place to monitor and evaluate their impact. The implementation of the plans is then monitored by the local authority link inspectors during their visits to the local authorities.

During 2016 and 2017 we held pilot improvement conferences in three local authorities, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Wrexham. We invited the key senior officers, elected members and partners to meet to explore the specific areas of their work that were causing concern. In all three pilot conferences, secondary performance was an issue identified as needing to be improved. At the end of each conference, we were assured that the local authorities understood the reasons behind the weak performance of their secondary schools and that they were taking appropriate action to rectify the situation. For example, the senior leaders in Pembrokeshire authority changed the challenge adviser for nearly all of its eight secondary schools to provide more effective support and challenge. The council also agreed a proposal to reorganise secondary education in Haverfordwest, where the two secondary schools were in special measures.

A feature of local authorities in Wales is the high proportion of new education directors, nearly all of whom have been appointed in the last three or four years. The limited opportunities for professional learning for middle and senior leaders in local government education services have limited the development of leaders across the education system in Wales and affected the capacity of the system to support national priorities.

Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

Sector report

Further education colleges

In January 2011, there were 22 institutions providing further education courses in Wales. By January 2017 this had been reduced to 13 colleges due to college mergers. There is considerable variation in size and scope of the colleges, from the smallest, Ceredigion College on two campuses, with 1,000 learners, to Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, the largest, with three main campuses, 11 smaller campuses and satellite sites covering a significant area of North Wales. This college has 20,000 learners. There are also differences in the sector between large city colleges and more rural colleges; as well as a few tertiary colleges and one sixth form college. A few colleges are directly owned by higher education institutions, while others work in partnership with higher education institutions.

Over the 2010-2017 cycle of inspection, there were 17 inspections of further education colleges, including one re-inspection relating to further education programmes within a higher education college. These inspections took account of the different social, economic and linguistic contexts of the further education colleges. During the inspection cycle, revisions were made in 2014 to inspection arrangements to take account of the increased size of many colleges, and to include inspection of learning areas in the first inspection week. This year, we inspected three further education colleges.

For more information about the three colleges inspected 2016-2017 please read the inspection reports

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai
Pembrokeshire College
The College, Merthyr Tydfil



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

The following thematic surveys relevant to the further education sector were published 2010-2017:

- **Learner progress and destinations in independent living skills learning areas in further education colleges** (Estyn, 2017e)
- **Welsh-medium and bilingual teaching and learning in further education** (Estyn, 2017b)
- **The quality of education and training in adult health and social care** (Estyn, 2016c)
- **Learner support services in further education for learners aged 16-19** (Estyn, 2015g)
- **Effective teaching and learning observations in further education** (Estyn, 2015h)
- **How well do further education institutions manage learner complaints?** (Estyn, 2015i)
- **The effectiveness of learner-involvement strategies in further education institutions and Welsh for adults centres** (Estyn, 2013h)
- **A review of standards and the quality of provision for engineering in further education colleges and work-based learning providers in Wales** (Estyn, 2013i)
- **The effectiveness of strategies for learner involvement in post-16 learning** (Estyn, 2012d)
- **The impact of deprivation on learners' attainment in further education and work-based learning** (Estyn, 2011d)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

Outcomes: Further education colleges

Standards

This year, two of the three colleges inspected have good standards, which is close to the average for the 2010-2017 inspection cycle.

During the inspection cycle, the proportion of colleges with good or better standards has improved overall, although there has been variation in performance ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory. Standards have been good in two-thirds of colleges during the last seven years.

This year, one college had adequate standards. In a third of colleges over the cycle, standards have been adequate or below. A common feature of these colleges is a lack of appropriate challenge and support to all learners to achieve their full potential.

In vocational programmes, many learners make strong progress in their studies. Their skills and technical competencies develop at a good rate. In many cases, learners use realistic contexts to apply their skills and develop their technical competencies. Learners on a minority of vocational courses are not challenged to achieve the highest grades of which they are capable.

In A level classes, many learners recall prior learning well and apply their knowledge and skills to new contexts effectively. Many use subject specific and technical terminology accurately and develop their academic writing skills appropriately. Many learners progress to higher education. A few more able learners do not make the progress that they are capable of achieving.

Figure 2.77:

Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2016-2017)

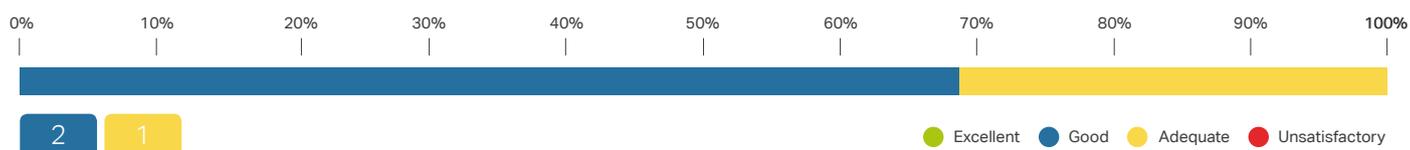
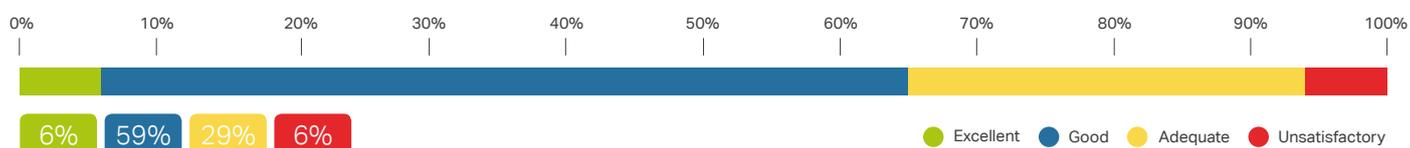


Figure 2.78:

Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

By the end of the cycle, nearly all learners complete appropriate initial and diagnostic assessments at the start of their course and use this information well to identify their strengths and weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy. In a majority of colleges, learners do not have short-term skills targets to help them address specific weaknesses and improve their skills. Learners taking Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification courses study essential skills at a level appropriate for their qualification and generally attain their qualifications at good rates.

Overall, many learners respond confidently to questions, explain their knowledge and ideas clearly, and use subject-specific terminology appropriately. Their spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally accurate and many develop their literacy skills well, often from low starting points. In many colleges, learners carry out numerical calculations competently and develop their numeracy skills confidently in a range of contexts. However, a minority of learners do not develop their literacy and numeracy skills well enough through vocational courses.

In a few colleges, learners make suitable progress in improving their use of Welsh, for example in customer service and client care programmes. Across many colleges, non-Welsh-speaking learners make limited progress in developing their Welsh language skills through their main programmes of study. In addition, a very few Welsh-speaking learners produce written work in Welsh. At best, as seen in one college inspected this year, many Welsh-speaking learners undertake learning bilingually or in Welsh and about a quarter of learners undertake assessments in Welsh. Welsh-speaking learners demonstrate strong Welsh language skills and use technical vocabulary fluently and confidently.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

Wellbeing

The wellbeing of learners is good or better in nearly all colleges, and in a few wellbeing is excellent.

Most learners feel safe, enjoy their learning and participate well in sessions. Many are enthusiastic and motivated to complete their programme and progress to the next level.

They participate well in a range of additional activities at college, including clubs, charity and community events and sport, that help them to develop confidence and self-esteem. Learners participate in decision-making through student councils and, in one college, an annual learner conference, where they discuss matters of concern, including feedback on aspects of teaching and learning. They work constructively with college staff to make improvements to the college environment and to support systems for learners.

Learners show a high level of care, respect and concern for each other and value the college environment. In most colleges, behaviour in classes, workshops and around the college is very good. Attendance rates are generally good at most of the colleges inspected across the cycle. A majority of learners develop social and life skills well through competitions and a few compete at a local, regional and international level.

Figure 2.79:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2016-2017)

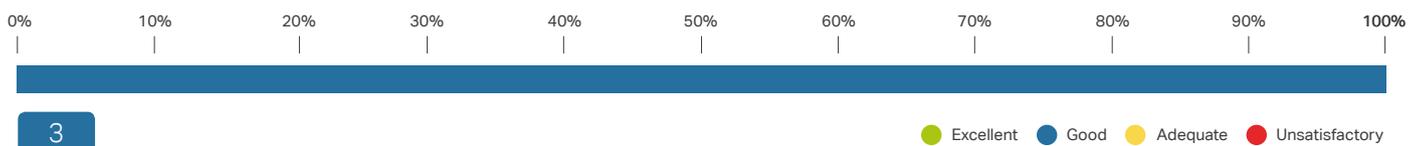
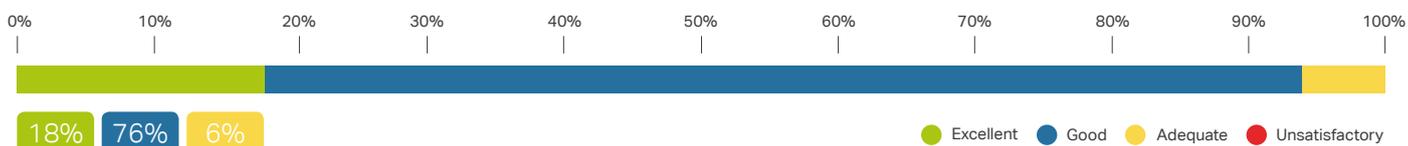


Figure 2.80:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

Provision: Further education colleges

In 2016-2017, provision overall is good or better in all three colleges.

Over the cycle, provision is good or better in eight-in-ten further education colleges. The quality of further education provision has improved over 2010-2017, with a few institutions having excellent provision overall in recent years.

Provision within learning areas is good or better in nearly all of the colleges inspected since we started to inspect learning areas in 2014. Provision is excellent in a very few specific learning areas. For example, in one college, hairdressing and beauty learners achieve an impressive standard and range of vocational skills through the innovative use of digital learning resources, success in skills competitions and excellent partnerships with employers and supplier networks. Areas of provision requiring the most improvement include independent living skills.

This year, learning experiences are good or better in all three colleges. During the cycle, learning experiences are good or better in eight-in-ten further education colleges. Learning experiences are judged as excellent in a third of colleges.

Many colleges plan the curriculum well to meet the needs of learners and the wider community. Leaders and managers take good account of feedback from employers and local market information to ensure that the range of courses offered meets learners' needs from entry level to level 6. This has improved over the course of the inspection cycle.

In a few colleges, well-planned provision enables learners to progress across levels of learning, differing specialisms and types of study, from continuing in further education to entering work-based learning or higher education or employment.

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai makes effective use of an early identification tool to identify and support learners at risk of leaving a course before completion.

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



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Figure 2.81:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2016-2017)

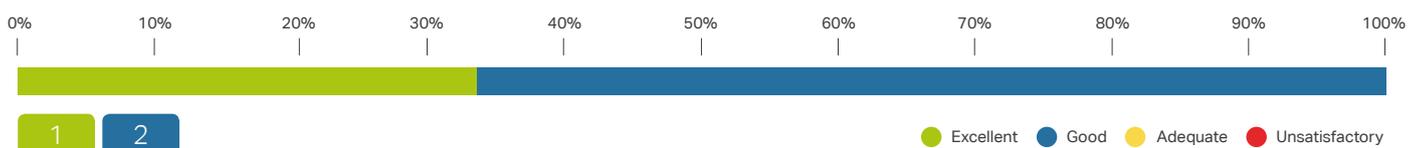
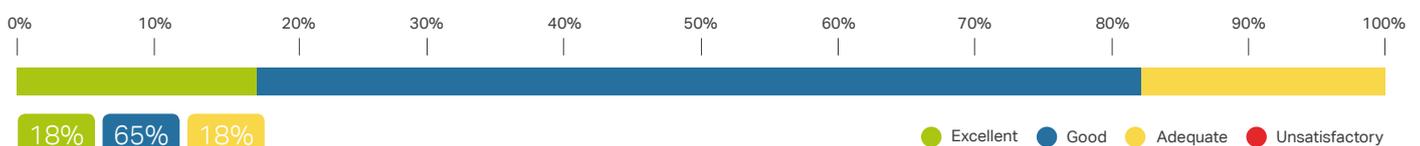


Figure 2.82:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

One college inspected this year with excellent provision has very good links with employers, which lead to high-quality, relevant work experience for learners in many areas. Over the inspection cycle, however, a minority of learners have not benefited from useful work experience that develops their skills in the workplace.

Many colleges have developed clear strategies and policies to improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills, offering a broad range of provision that includes Essential Skills Wales qualifications, GCSEs and other skills development programmes. In a very few colleges, technology is used innovatively to ensure that learners develop their ICT skills well across learning areas.

In many colleges, teachers integrate literacy and numeracy skills opportunities well in main programmes. However, in a few colleges, roles and responsibilities for the development of literacy and numeracy skills within learning areas are not clearly defined. As a result, learners do not have enough opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills within their learning areas.

In 2016-2017, teaching is good in two of the three colleges inspected and adequate in another.

Teaching was good in seven-in-ten of the colleges inspected over the cycle, although no college was providing excellent teaching. Where teaching is good, this is because teachers plan sessions well and use their industrial knowledge to develop learners' practical and theory skills. They use a comprehensive range of strategies and high-quality resources that engage and challenge learners. Literacy and numeracy strategies are used to help learners improve their skills. In a few classes where teaching is less effective, teachers do not use questioning skilfully enough to draw out expanded answers, check and challenge learners' understanding, or develop their thinking skills. In a few lessons, teachers do not maintain high expectations of progress, and do not plan activities well enough to ensure that all learners are fully challenged, particularly more able learners.

In three-in-ten colleges where teaching has important shortcomings, this is because teachers do not plan a wide enough range of activities to challenge learners of all abilities, and the pace of lessons does not meet learners' individual needs well enough. In addition, teachers' feedback to learners is too general and does not help learners know what they need to do to improve.

In two colleges inspected this year, many teaching staff plan assessment activities well. In one college, their online learner tracking system is an effective tool to record assessment of learning and monitor learner targets. In one college with adequate teaching across academic and vocational subjects, the college does not use learners' prior achievements consistently to help set target grades that are sufficiently challenging. The monitoring and tracking of learners' literacy and numeracy targets across the college are not effective.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

This year, care, support and guidance are good or better in all three colleges inspected. Since the start of the cycle, the quality of care, support and guidance is strong in nine-in-ten colleges. Five out of the 17 institutions provide excellent care, support and guidance. A particular strength of the provision has been learner support, particularly for those with additional learning needs. A few colleges have effective systems to identify learners at risk of failing to progress with their education or secure employment, and offer tailored support. Other strong features include colleges providing valuable guidance and advice to learners using a wide range of online-based curriculum materials on a range of issues, as well as access to a wide variety of support from counselling and chaplaincy services, or through multi-agency partnerships.

The learning environment is a particular strength across the further education sector over the cycle. The learning environment is excellent in a third of colleges and good in the remainder. Many colleges promote a very strong positive ethos and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment in which learners feel respected and supported. Particular strengths in the colleges with excellent provision are innovative approaches to promoting equality and diversity, as well as highly-integrated and inclusive approaches to supporting vulnerable groups of learners.

Nearly all colleges offer appropriate well-maintained accommodation and many buildings are of very high quality, with good access to ICT, internet connectivity and resources. Nearly all workshops and specialist classrooms contain modern, industry-standard equipment that that gives learners the chance to experience a realistic working environment, preparing them well for future employment.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

Leadership and management: Further education colleges

In 2016-2017, leadership and management overall are good or better in all three colleges inspected.

Since 2010, leadership and management are good or better in eight-in-ten further education colleges. The quality of leadership has improved with excellent practice being identified in four of the five colleges inspected in the past two years. In these, the principal or chief executive, senior leaders and governing bodies have provided outstanding transformational leadership in implementing major structural change in these colleges, driving improvements in standards and embedding a strong vision and values. Senior leaders have developed a culture of openness, collaboration and clarity in these colleges. As a result, managers and staff at all levels are very supportive of their college and committed to its key aims and objectives. During times of significant change, staff morale at these colleges has been maintained.

Leadership and management of learning areas are good or better in the majority of colleges inspected over the past three years, although a few are unsatisfactory, especially in independent living skills provision. A thematic survey report relating to the independent living skills learning area, published this year, includes useful examples of effective practice.

In 2016-2017, improving quality is good in two colleges and adequate in another. Although, over the whole period 2010-2017, improving quality is good or better in two-thirds of further education colleges, this is the weakest of the four quality indicators for leadership and management. The weaknesses lie in the quality of self-assessment. In a minority of learning areas, self-assessment reports show limited use of first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and learning and are not sufficiently evaluative. In a few areas, data is not used effectively to analyse performance and drive improvement. In a few colleges, self-assessment does not focus sharply enough on learners' progress and achievement in lessons. In addition, a few college self-assessment reports are too descriptive, judgements are over-generous and the reports do not identify areas for improvement clearly enough.

Figure 2.83:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?
(2016-2017)

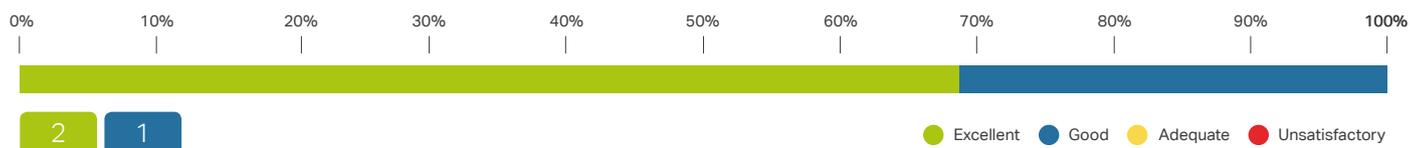
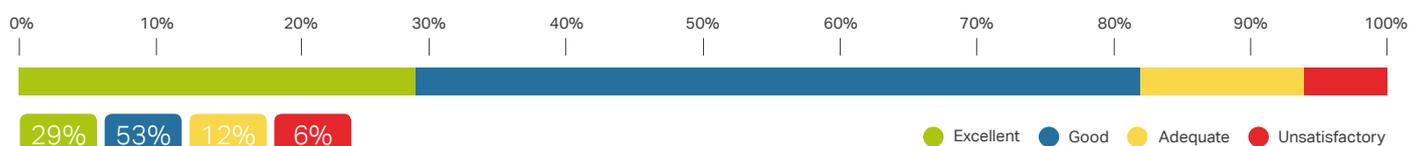


Figure 2.84:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

This year, for the third year in succession, partnership working is excellent in all colleges inspected. Over the course of the cycle the quality of partnership working is excellent in six-in-ten colleges inspected. Partnership working is a particularly strong feature across the sector and this indicator of performance is the strongest of all ten indicators within the inspection framework in terms of excellent practice. The main strengths have been in the very strong, strategic partnerships with a range of local, regional and national organisations, which have a positive impact on learners' experiences and outcomes. Effective and highly productive relationships have been developed and established with small and medium size employers and major companies in the local area to meet current needs and plan for future skills needs.

Another strength of many of these colleges is their substantial contribution to the work of local 14-19 networks or in developing tertiary provision, significantly broadening the choices available to learners pre and post 16 years of age. These colleges work well with a range of universities to deliver higher education opportunities and plan progression.

In 2016-2017, resource management is good in two colleges and adequate in another. This is below performance for the previous year, in which resource management in both institutions inspected was excellent.

Since 2010, resource management is good or better in around eight-in-ten further education colleges. Since the college mergers, most colleges manage finances and resources well and have effective financial planning systems. Many colleges take good account of sustainability and energy efficiency in the management of their estate. A few colleges have links with other organisations to share expertise in a few key areas that improve efficiency. Many colleges have a strong commitment to staff training and development, particularly in developing teaching skills, through peer mentors and observations or sharing good practice.

Pembrokeshire College

Pembrokeshire College has developed partnerships that support the development of skills in Pembrokeshire, improve learners' access to post-16 education and engage with hard-to-reach groups.

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



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Section 2:

Sector summaries: Further education colleges

Follow-up activity: Further education colleges

Since 2010, 12 further education colleges have been identified as having excellent practice. The proportion of institutions identified as having excellent practice has increased over the past three years as a result of the improvements in the quality of strategic leadership following mergers. Around half of institutions inspected were identified as having excellent practice in the years from 2010–2013, increasing to all colleges inspected more recently.

Over the cycle a minority of further education institutions required follow-up. This included one institution that required re-inspection, one college that required Estyn monitoring and three institutions that required link inspector monitoring.

The main shortcomings in the one college that required re-inspection related to learner outcomes and leadership and management.

In the one college requiring Estyn monitoring the significant shortcomings related to learner outcomes and quality improvement.

Performance was judged to have improved from unsatisfactory to adequate in the one institution that required re-inspection. Prospects for improvement were judged to have improved from unsatisfactory to good in the same institution on re-inspection. On re-inspection, the overall rates at which learners complete and attain their qualifications had improved and arrangements for improving quality and standards were effective.

Figure 2.85:
Further education colleges placed in follow-up in 2016–2017

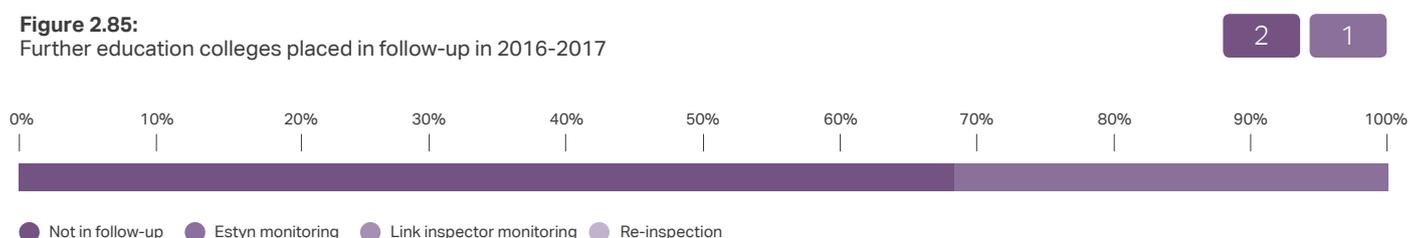
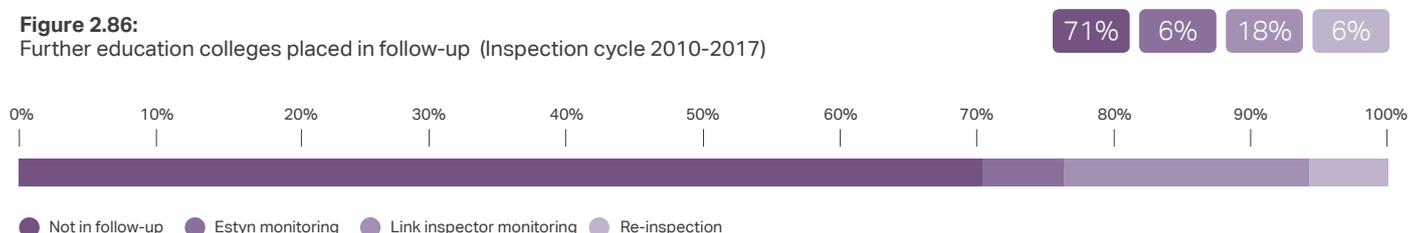


Figure 2.86:
Further education colleges placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010–2017)



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Sector report

Work-based learning

In January 2011, there were 78 work-based learning providers delivering training in Wales. Currently, 19 lead providers deliver work-based training in Wales. This is due to changes in their contracting arrangements and reductions in the number of lead providers. The majority of these providers work in consortia or with sub-contractor training providers. Overall, over 100 providers are involved in training across Wales. Throughout the 2010-2017 inspection cycle, the number of learners undertaking training programmes has remained fairly consistent. In 2015-2016, the latest year for which published data is available, the number of learners undertaking a wide range of training programmes was 53,735.

Over the cycle there were 33 inspections of training providers. In 2016-2017, we carried out three inspections, including a pilot for the new inspection arrangements. The findings from all inspections have informed the report below, but findings from the pilot inspections are not included in the charts.

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

The Cad Centre UK Ltd
Torfaen Training
Itec Training Solutions Ltd

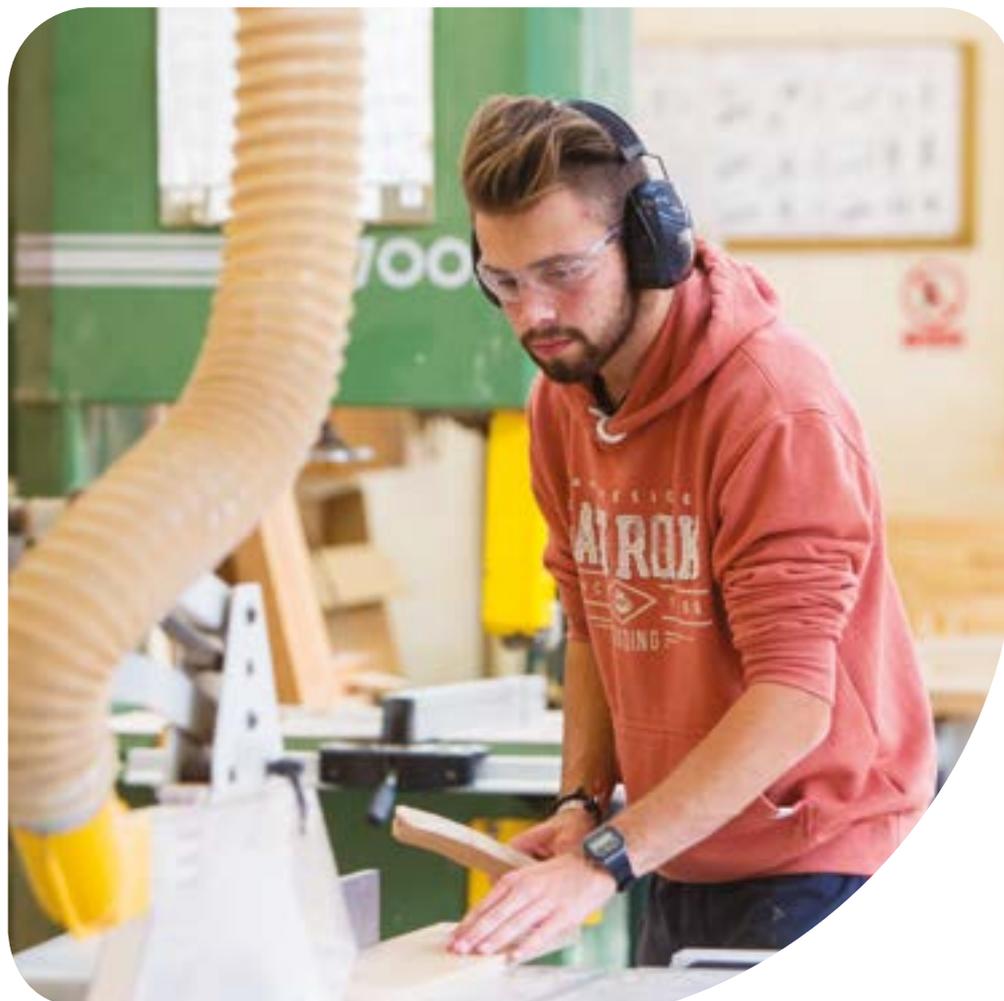


Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Between 2010 and 2017, inspectors carried out the following work-based learning thematic surveys:

- **Breaking down barriers to apprenticeships** (Estyn, 2015j)
- **The effectiveness of learner-involvement strategies in adult community learning and work-based learning** (Estyn, 2014e)
- **Barriers to apprenticeship** (Estyn, 2014f)
- **A review of standards and the quality of provision for engineering in further education colleges and work-based learning providers in Wales** (Estyn, 2013i)
- **Initial review of the effectiveness of the Welsh Government's Traineeships and Steps to Employment programmes** (Estyn, 2013j)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Outcomes: Work-based learning

Standards

Over 2010-2017, standards are good or better in around half of providers. This year, two-thirds of the providers inspected have adequate standards.

Over the cycle, standards were unsatisfactory in one-in-ten providers. This year, one provider has unsatisfactory standards. Where standards are unsatisfactory, learners do not make strong enough progress and their performance is below that of other providers.

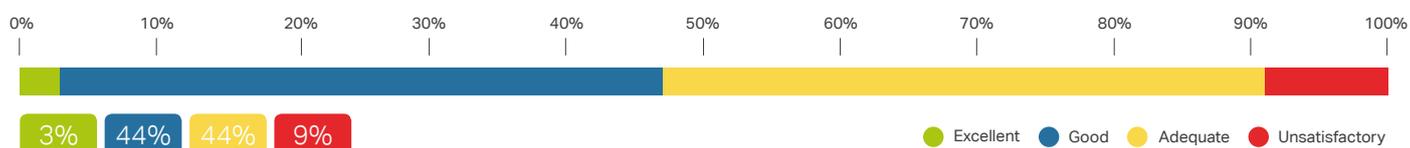
Over the cycle in four-in-ten providers inspected, the rates for apprenticeship framework completion are below the national comparators for other providers. For higher apprenticeships, the completion rates are particularly low. In these providers, too few learners complete their frameworks within the scheduled timeframe. During their time on training programmes, a majority of apprentices make suitable progress in developing their practical competence, theory knowledge and skills. As a result, they develop industry-related skills in their workplace well. However, many learners take longer than expected to complete their training programme.

Learners generally complete their Essential Skills Wales qualifications at the level required in their training frameworks. In many providers, and when appropriate, learners complete qualifications at a higher level. Most learners demonstrate confidence when using ICT during a range of activities. The majority of learners develop their literacy skills appropriately. In a few providers, very few learners develop and apply their numeracy skills well in a variety of contexts within their workplaces.

In a few providers, a majority of learners do not take ownership of their training. In these cases, they do not understand their training programme content or fully engage in agreeing assessment targets.

Figure 2.87:

Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

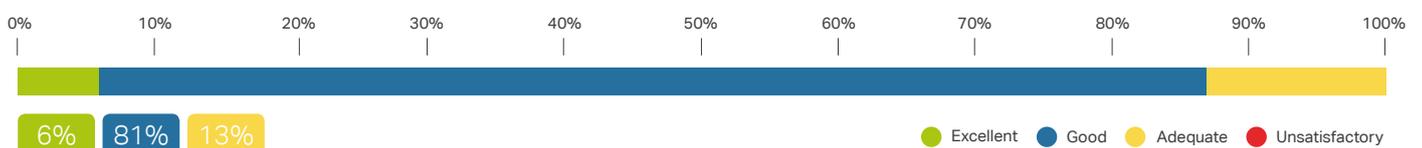
Wellbeing

Over the cycle, wellbeing has been one of the strongest features with almost nine-in-ten providers being good or better. Wellbeing is good in two-thirds of providers in 2016-2017.

Many learners are motivated to complete their training frameworks and other qualifications. Learners gain a robust understanding of working life and develop a wide range of employability and life skills. Learners improve their communication skills and many quickly become valued members of their employers' staff. They develop skills that enable them to sustain employment and progress in their chosen career.



Figure 2.88:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Provision: Work-based learning

Provision is good or better in seven-in-ten of the providers inspected over the cycle. In 2016-2017, provision is adequate in all three providers. Providers deliver training in a wide range of learning areas that results in learners gaining the skills to sustain employment. However, training across all learning areas is not of a consistent high quality.

Providers usually deliver training programmes at levels 1 to 5 and many learners benefit from opportunities to progress to the next level. In one provider inspected, no learners on higher apprenticeship programmes completed their training successfully in 2015-2016.

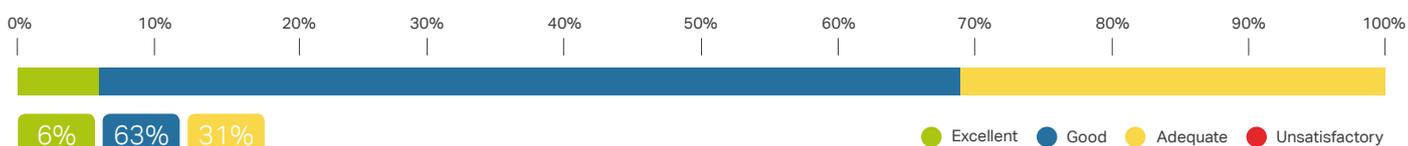
Over the cycle, many providers have improved their strategies and practices to develop learners' literacy and numeracy. However, in the providers inspected in 2016-2017, a minority of tutors and assessors do not plan well enough to challenge and support the learners' literacy and numeracy skills within their vocational pathway at a high enough level.

Many providers offer aspects of training and assessment in Welsh but, in 2016-2017 and throughout the cycle, the number of learners undertaking written assessment in Welsh remains low.

Around six-in-ten of providers inspected over the cycle have good or better teaching, training and assessment. In these providers, assessors plan activities well and provide useful written comments that help learners to improve their work. However, there have been fewer judgements of excellence for teaching, training and assessment than for any other quality indicator. In 2016-2017, all three providers have adequate teaching, training and assessment.

The most consistent features of ineffective teaching, training and assessment are low expectations of learners and the lack of effective challenge to make sure that learners reach their full potential. In addition, teachers, trainers and assessors do not check learners' progress often enough and, as a result, too many learners make slow progress.

Figure 2.89:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

The majority of teachers, trainers and assessors have comprehensive vocational knowledge and industrial experience. Many use this experience well to give learners good personal support. A few teachers, trainers and assessors do not challenge and encourage learners effectively to develop higher level practical competence and theory knowledge.

Care, support and guidance have been a strong feature over the course of the cycle of inspection. Since 2010, this aspect has been good in eight-in-ten providers. In 2016-2017, all three providers inspected have shortcomings in their provision for care, support and guidance, two of the three providers have adequate provision and one is unsatisfactory.

Many providers have comprehensive care, guidance and support policies and practices. As a result, vulnerable learners and those at risk of leaving are supported effectively to remain in training. Many providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. However, in 2016-2017, two of the three providers do not go far enough in their monitoring of the safeguarding practices of their sub-contractors to assure themselves that all learners are safe. Many providers promote health, safety and wellbeing well with learners. Most providers use appropriate staff well to support learners with additional learning needs. This results in learners staying on their training programmes and achieving their training frameworks.

The learning environment is good or better in seven-in-ten providers over the cycle. Providers are inclusive in their recruitment and create an ethos of equality. However, in the majority of providers, assessors do not use a wide enough range of teaching and learning materials. As a result, learners do not always develop a comprehensive understanding of equality and diversity.

Most learners work in workplaces where they access and benefit from good quality training and assessment opportunities. Off-the-job training centres are often well resourced.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

Leadership and management: Work-based learning

Leadership and management are good or better in six-in-ten providers over the inspection cycle. This year, leadership and management are adequate in a third of providers and unsatisfactory in two-thirds. This is a decline from the previous year and below the average for the cycle.

In the one-in-ten providers where leadership is unsatisfactory, the work of leaders does not have a positive impact on the standards that learners achieve or the quality of their training experience. In these providers, targets are often too vague and not challenging enough and there is insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching, training and assessment and learner progress.

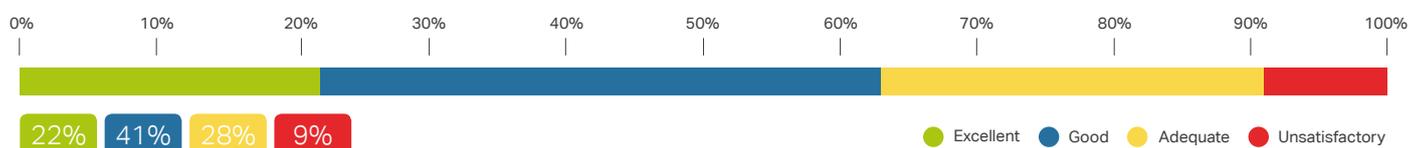
Over the cycle, improving quality has been one of the weakest aspects of the work of around half of training providers. While self-evaluation has improved over the cycle, too many leaders and managers do not make critical appraisals of the provider's performance or identify areas for improvement clearly enough. As a result, they are not able to focus on the right areas to secure sustained improvement. Although the management of sub-contractors has improved, inconsistencies remain in performance across partners. Too often, improvement planning is not strategic enough and managers do not prioritise actions for improvement. In these providers, managers do not do enough to monitor and improve the quality of their own and sub-contractors' performance. Meetings between the lead providers and sub-contractors do not focus enough on performance improvement and the quality of training and assessment. The feedback to staff is often too descriptive and is not evaluative enough to give them clear direction on precisely what they need to do to improve.

Over the cycle, partnership working has been a particularly strong aspect of the work of eight-in-ten providers. In the providers where partnerships are of high quality, the provider works effectively in collaboration with a large number of partners, often by working in consortium or sub-contracting arrangements. These partnerships make a significant contribution to the range of provision available to learners and learner outcomes. In the best examples, there is a clear focus on quality and the experience that learners have during their training.

Around half of providers manage their resources well. Many providers support their staff well with a wide range of training and professional development opportunities. In the best examples, staff access training that meets their personal development needs and has a particular focus on improving the quality of teaching, training and assessment. However, in around half there are shortcomings. Examples include learners and training staff not having internet access in the provider's training centre and variability in the quality of accommodation, including in theory rooms and practical workshops.

Figure 2.90:

Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Work-based learning

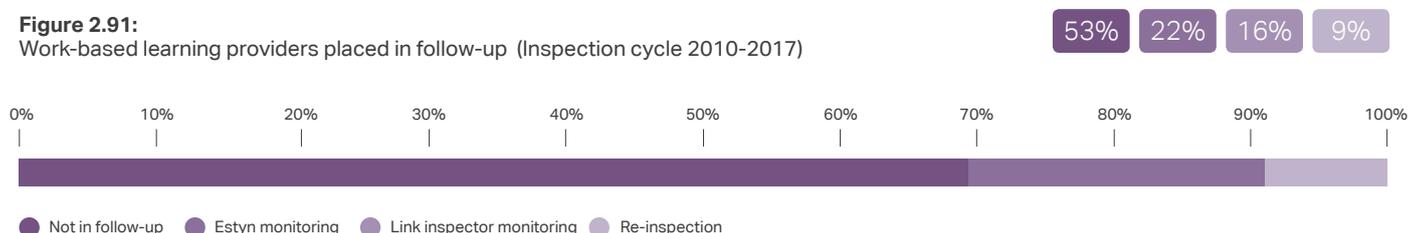
Follow-up activity: Work-based learning

All three providers inspected this year require follow-up activity and none were judged to have excellent practice. In these providers, too many learners make slow progress towards completing their training frameworks. Teachers, trainers and assessors give learners good personal support, but they do not set and monitor challenging learner targets for the completion of assessments. The marking of learners' written work is inconsistent and not all learners benefit from constructive written feedback that will enable them to improve their future performance. Leadership and management have not been effective in identifying shortcomings early enough and putting corrective actions in place. As a result, quality assurance procedures have not sustained or improved the quality of learning experiences for learners.

This year, one provider received a follow-up visit. As a result of improvement, the provider no longer requires further follow-up activity.

Around half of providers required follow-up across the cycle.

Figure 2.91:
Work-based learning providers placed in follow-up (Inspection cycle 2010-2017)





Section: 2



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Adult learning

Sector report Adult learning

Adult community learning partnerships provide government-funded courses in adult basic education (literacy and numeracy), ICT and English as a second language, aimed at adults over the age of 19 who want to update their skills. They also provide a range of 'leisure' courses for adults wanting to develop their own businesses, take up a new hobby, or keep active. These courses are funded mainly through learners' fees.

During 2010-2015, we inspected 14 adult community learning partnerships. No inspections have taken place since 2015 but, in 2016, we undertook a thematic survey of the sector. In addition, inspectors have made formal monitoring visits to all the partnerships and to Adult Learning Wales.

Adult community learning in Wales (Estyn, 2016d)

The report provides an overview of standards, provision and leadership in adult community learning in Wales.

Read the thematic report.



In July 2017, the Welsh Government published a policy statement setting out its priorities for adult learning in Wales. From September 2017, the sector will be known as adult learning.

Section 2:
Sector summaries: Adult learning

Outcomes: Adult learning

Standards

Standards are good or better in six-in-ten adult learning partnerships. Learner completion rates for adult basic education, ICT and English as a second language range between 94% and 96%, while success rates range from 82% to 86% (Welsh Government, 2017k). Success rates are generally about 10 percentage points lower than completion rates. This is because adult learners have many commitments in their lives and, while they may complete a course, they may not always attempt the qualification. Data that might indicate whether adult community learning courses improve employability is not yet collected by the Welsh Government. However, there is much anecdotal evidence of learners progressing to employment or benefiting in other ways from their participation in learning.

Wellbeing

Learners' wellbeing is good or better in nine-in-ten partnerships. Nearly all learners participate well in classes. They are keen to improve their learning and interact effectively with other learners. In many practical classes, such as art, needlework and photography, learners progress well at their own speed. They usually provide, and are open to, constructive criticism from tutors and fellow learners. Many learners benefit not only from the learning opportunities they receive in class, but also from the social interaction with like-minded people.

Figure 2.92:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2010–2015)

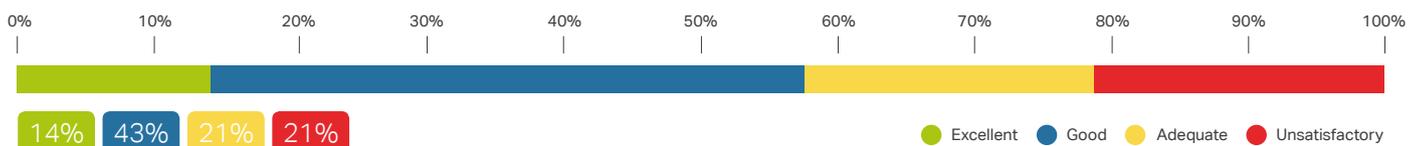
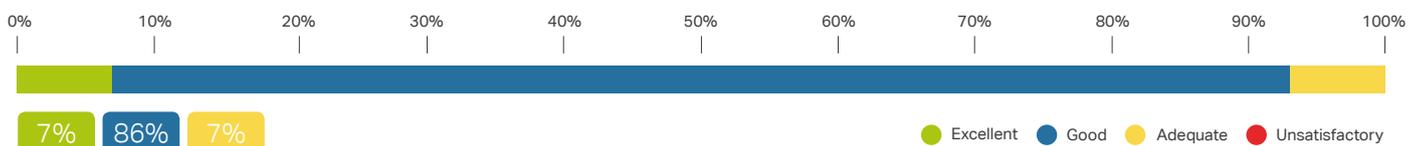


Figure 2.93:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2010–2015)



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Adult learning

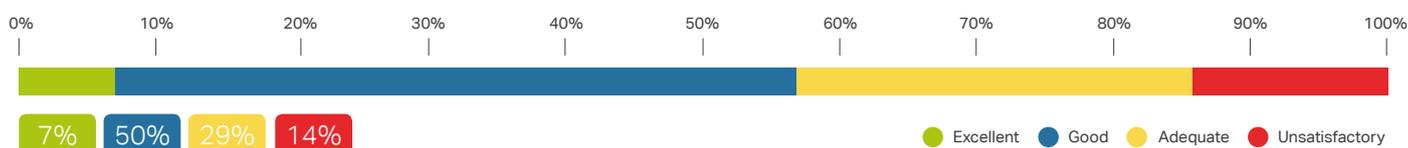
Provision: Adult learning

Nearly all adult community learning partnerships provide a wide range of courses that match learners' employability needs and personal interests. Partnerships place an appropriate focus on providing courses that help to tackle deprivation, for example courses that help learners to improve their literacy, numeracy, ICT and English as a second language. In nearly all cases, adult community learning partnerships have developed effective provision for hard-to-reach and vulnerable learners, such as the unemployed, those who have not been in learning for a long time and those with mental health issues or those recovering from addictions. In most cases, partnerships have done this by working well in alliance with other initiatives, such as Communities First, and with voluntary organisations.

Since 2015, financial restraints have challenged adult community learning partnerships' ability to provide as many courses as previously. In most cases, senior leaders have analysed a wide range of data carefully and have been creative in continuing to provide a core of courses at central venues. Nonetheless, while these courses are accessible for a majority of people, they are not always easily accessible for the elderly and vulnerable or learners living in isolated areas. This leads to inequality of important learning and wellbeing opportunities for those who are less affluent. In areas where Welsh is pre-dominantly learners' first language, most adult community partnerships have made good progress in providing learning opportunities through the medium of Welsh.

Over the inspection cycle, teaching is good in six-in-ten partnerships. Tutors provide a stimulating range of opportunities through which learners can progress their individual learning. However, fewer classes have resulted in the loss of tutoring expertise, particularly in ICT. In a few cases, this has also meant that learners have not been able to complete courses or move on to higher levels of learning.

Figure 2.94:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?
(2010-2015)



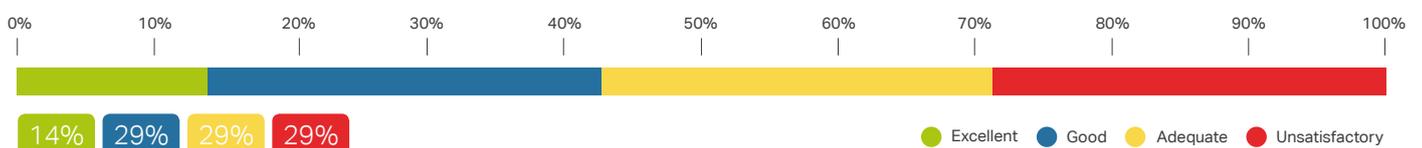
Section 2:
Sector summaries: Adult learning

Leadership and management: Adult learning

Over the cycle, senior leaders have become more effective in how they work together to provide strategic direction to the partnership. They take good account of local, regional and national priorities and policies, as well as labour market data, to provide a range of courses suitable for the area. They analyse collective data more effectively than previously and use the outcomes well to play to individual partners' strengths. They work increasingly well in alliance with other initiatives, such as Communities First and the voluntary sector. In most cases this has resulted in reduced duplication and improved signposting for learners to progress to higher level courses. In the latter half of the cycle, many senior leaders have either left the service or moved to other roles. This means that the coherence of partnerships developed across the cycle has diminished in a minority of cases and, in a few cases, adult community learning partnerships are less viable.



Figure 2.95:
Percentage of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (2010-2015)



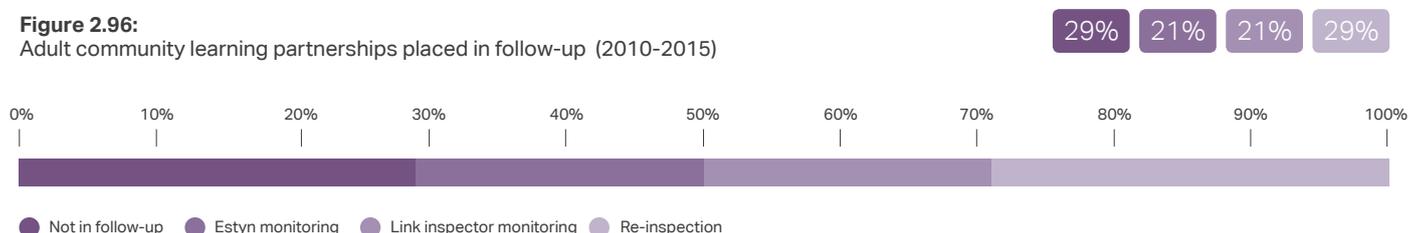
Section 2:
Sector summaries: Adult learning

Follow-up activity: Adult learning

Seven-in-ten adult community learning partnerships received follow-up monitoring visits between 2010 and 2017. In nearly all cases, adult learning partnerships made good progress in addressing the recommendations. In many cases, recommendations focused on raising success rates, improving partnership working to reduce duplication and improving progression routes. In the most effective case, two neighbouring adult community learning partnerships, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, joined together to address similar recommendations. They have shared and analysed their data well to raise learners' standards, improve tutoring and revise provision appropriately.



Figure 2.96:
Adult community learning partnerships placed in follow-up (2010–2015)



Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Initial teacher education

Sector report

Initial teacher education

There are currently three regional centres of initial teacher education in Wales, which, together with the Graduate Teacher Programme and the Additional Graduate Training Programme (called 'Teach First'), provide routes to become a qualified teacher.

In 2016–2017, the number of trainees on both undergraduate and post-graduate programmes fell short of the intake targets across Wales. Recruitment to primary programmes was at around 90% of the target number, and secondary programmes attracted only 66% of the target. In the recruitment to secondary programmes, only history and business studies met their targets. Recruitment to mathematics and to chemistry was at just under three-quarters of the targets, physics at just under two-thirds, and biology was at just over half of the target number. Modern foreign languages, information technology, design technology and music all recruited below half of their target numbers of trainee teachers.

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

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Initial teacher education

Summary

Initial teacher education

We inspected all three centres of initial teacher education in the period of inspection 2010–2017 and carried out re-inspection and monitoring visits between 2014 and 2017.

During 2016–2017, Estyn re-inspected the North and Mid Wales Centre of Initial Teacher Education. The centre works with partnership schools across a wide area of Wales. In 2016–2017, the centre trained just under a third of all primary trainees and one-fifth of all secondary trainees in Wales.

Figure 2.97:

The outcomes for Key Questions 1, 2 and 3, the level of follow-up for each centre at the time of their inspection, and the outcome of follow-up visits

Centre	Year	KQ1	KQ2	KQ3	Follow-up	Follow-up outcome
South West Wales Centre	2011–2012	Adequate	Good	Good	Estyn monitoring	Removed from follow-up in 2014
South East Wales Centre	2012–2013	Adequate	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	Re-inspection	Removed from follow-up in 2015
North and Mid-Wales Centre	2014–2015	Unsatisfactory	Adequate	Unsatisfactory	Re-inspection	Removed from follow-up in 2017

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Initial teacher education

For more information read our reports

South East Wales Centre for Teacher Education and Training
South West Wales Centre for Teacher Education
North and Mid Wales Centre for Teacher Training



All centres have some common good features. Trainees generally make good progress in meeting the standards for QTS. They have a good understanding of curriculum requirements and positive attitudes towards their training. There are a few examples of very high-quality teaching in university, and very good mentoring in schools.

After follow-up, standards, provision and leadership in all three centres are better than at the time of their core inspections. However, there are a number of areas in need of further improvement.

- Trainees' planning skills, especially the use of assessment information to inform planning, and trainees' planning to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT
- The Welsh language skills of trainees training through the medium of English to develop the bilingual skills of their pupils
- Trainees' reflective skills
- The variability of training across and within programmes
- The assessment of trainees on school experience
- Strategic leadership and vision for initial teacher training
- Leadership roles and practice at all levels
- The rigour of self-evaluation and planning for improvement
- The strength of quality assurance systems across the centre and its partnership schools to ensure consistency in practice or provision

Section: 2



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

Sector report Welsh for Adults

The Welsh for Adults sector was re-structured nationally during 2016-2017 with 11 providers replacing six regional centres and over 20 sub-contractors.

Between 2010 and 2015, we inspected four of the six former Welsh for Adults regional centres.

For more information on the four centres inspected in 2010-2015 please read our reports

South West Wales Centre
North Wales Centre
Glamorgan Centre
Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Centre



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

Outcomes: Welsh for Adults

Standards

The standards achieved by Welsh for Adults learners are good or better in three of the four centres. Many learners make good progress, recall previous learning well and apply it to new situations successfully. However, learning is often overly driven by examination requirements that put too much emphasis on grammatical correctness and gaining a qualification rather than on producing confident communicators.

Wellbeing

Learner wellbeing is a particular strength. It is excellent in two centres and good in the other two. In all four centres, nearly all learners are enthusiastic, enjoy their learning and take an active part in lessons. They show high levels of motivation, work together well and have good independent learning skills. They watch Welsh television programmes and make valuable use of ICT to keep in touch with one another in Welsh. Wherever possible, they use Welsh in their everyday lives and in their work.

Figure 2.98:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.1: How good are standards? (2010-2015)

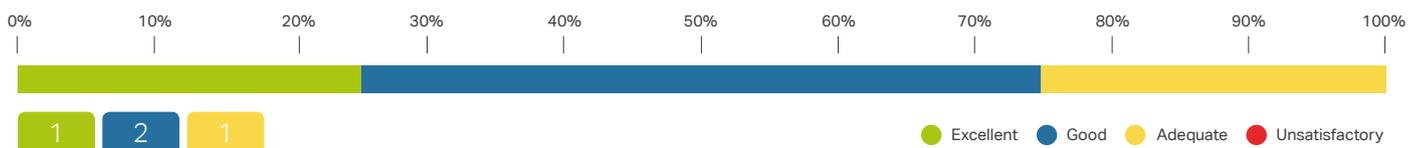
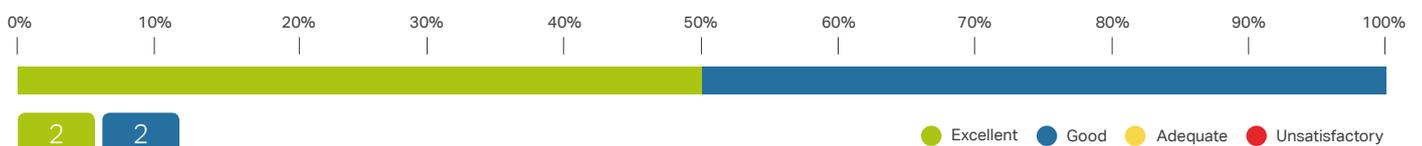


Figure 2.99:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Quality Indicator 1.2: Standards of wellbeing (2010-2015)



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

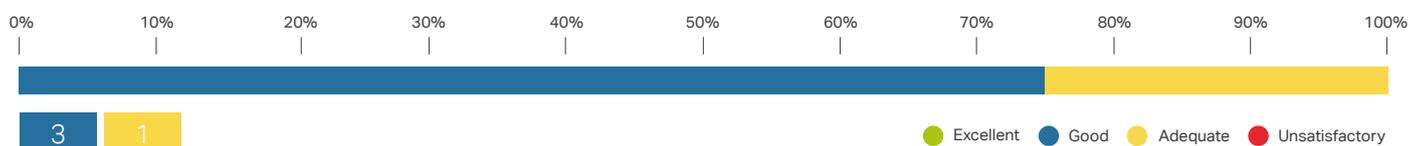
Provision: Welsh for Adults

Provision and the quality of teaching are good in three of the four centres. Most teachers plan effectively and use a wide range of teaching activities. In weaker lessons, there are not enough opportunities for learners to practise their new vocabulary and sentence structures.

Three centres provide excellent learning experiences for their learners. They offer a wide range of courses and useful opportunities for learners to use their Welsh language skills outside of the classroom. All centres offer beneficial care, support and guidance to learners. Learning environments are good in three of the four centres. However, resources, including ICT, are not always used effectively to support learning or to promote independent working during lessons.



Figure 2.100:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision? (2010-2015)



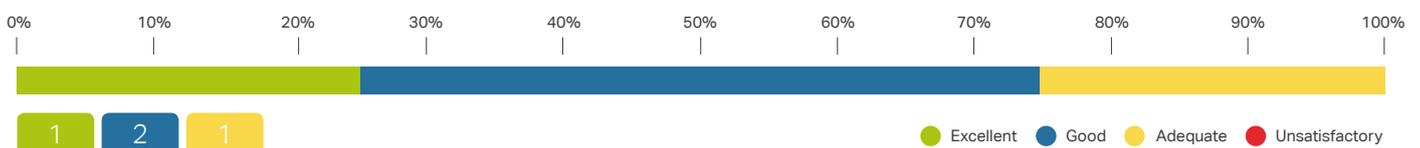
Section 2:
Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

Leadership and management: Welsh for Adults

Leadership and management are good or better in three centres on many indicators. These centres co-operate effectively with partners to improve the quality of provision and learning experiences. However, two of the four centres had adequate quality improvement processes and did not use data effectively enough to monitor and improve learners' performance. Lesson observations also concentrated too much on aspects of teaching rather than on learners' progress and standards.



Figure 2.101:
Numbers of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? (2010–2015)



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

The future: Welsh for Adults

In 2013, the Welsh Government published its 'Raising Your Sights: review of Welsh for Adults' (Welsh Government, 2013b). The report made a number of recommendations that included establishing a national entity to provide clear, sound and consistent strategic leadership to the sector and undertake developmental duties at a national level. The report also recommended reducing the number of providers from 27 to between 10 and 14.

During 2015 and 2016, no inspection activity was undertaken due to the proposed national restructuring of the sector.

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. In June 2017, we reviewed the work and progress of the Centre.

A review of the work of the National Centre for Learning Welsh (Estyn, 2017c)

The review evaluates the initial work and progress of the Centre in achieving the aims set out in its strategic plan (Gyda'n Gilydd: Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg – National Centre for Learning Welsh, 2016) based on the recommendations made in the 'Raising Your Sights' review (Welsh Government 2013b).

Read the full **review**.



The report focuses on how the National Centre is influencing, leading and managing developments following the national re-organisation. It also considers how well the National Centre is providing consistent and coherent strategic direction to the 11 Welsh for Adults providers about how they plan and deliver provision.

In the relatively short period since its creation in 2016, the National Centre has become a strong national voice for the Welsh for Adults sector. It has clearly defined its strategic aims and objectives and is addressing key challenges facing the sector. These include the lack of standard measures to evaluate progress made by adult Welsh learners; the wide variation in approaches taken to the Welsh for Adults curriculum across Wales; and professional development and assessment.

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Sector summaries: Welsh for Adults

The National Centre is also focusing well on increasing provision in key target areas such as intensive courses and improving progression between levels. In addition, it has developed a comprehensive programme to monitor providers' performance, which includes termly monitoring meetings with each provider to discuss their performance and to identify any action needed.

The National Centre is developing a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy to promote the benefits of learning Welsh and to encourage more adults to learn the language. The National Centre's evaluation of this strategy, together with feedback from providers, indicates that the current marketing approach needs refining in order to reach more potential learners.

The National Centre has introduced rigorous systems to ensure that providers target a greater proportion of their funding on teaching and learning activities. Its contracts with providers stipulate that spending on activities other than teaching and learning is limited to no more than 15% of the total funding allocated. The average figure at present is 7%.

The Welsh Government has allocated additional funding to the National Centre to develop courses to teach Welsh in the workplace. This re-enforces the National Centre's key role in Welsh language planning, although placing additional demands on the Centre.

The National Centre has been generally successful in communicating its strategies and approaches to its new providers. Providers feel that the National Centre staff are approachable and inclusive and they know whom they can contact if they require advice. However, only a few providers are fully aware of the National Centre's governance arrangements. In a few instances, providers are reluctant to embrace fully the direction provided by the National Centre and are slow to take on board the changes it promotes.

The report makes the following recommendations for the National Centre and for providers.

- The National Centre should develop its procedures for holding the providers to account for their performance and their compliance with the national policies.
- The National Centre should refine its marketing strategies in co-operation with providers to target more potential learners across the various communities of Wales.
- Providers should fully implement policies and practices introduced by the National Centre and improve their understanding of the governance arrangements and policies of the National Centre.

We will pilot new Welsh for Adults inspection arrangements in 2017-2018 and a new inspection cycle will start in September 2018.



Section: 2



Section 2:
Sector summaries: Careers

Sector report

Careers

Gyrfa Cymru Careers Wales was formed in 2013 and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Its role is to provide a careers information, advice and guidance service for Wales that is all-age, independent and impartial. The company delivers a remit set by the Cabinet Secretary for Education. The service aims to help people make effective decisions in planning their careers and progressing within training, further learning or employment.

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, resulting in significant reductions in its work with schools and colleges. As a result, schools now play a more important role in helping young people to plan their career progression and make key decisions at transition points. In addition, Gyrfa Cymru Careers Wales has withdrawn its provision to support young people to access work experience.

Section 2:

Sector summaries: Careers

In 2012, we published a survey of schools' effectiveness in helping young people to develop their career awareness and planning skills (Estyn, 2012e). We found that the approaches to delivering careers education and guidance in schools varied considerably across schools. The amount of lesson time that schools allocate to careers education and guidance varied too much. The extent to which schools involve others to deliver careers education and guidance varied greatly. In addition, evaluation by schools of the impact and effectiveness of support they give young people to develop their career planning was not effective.

In September 2017, we published an updated report evaluating the implementation of the careers and world of work framework in secondary schools (Estyn, 2017f). Overall, we found that nearly all schools provide pupils with a range of useful information in Year 9 to help them make their key stage 4 subject choices. However, the majority of schools have not responded effectively to reductions in the support offered by Careers Wales. A minority of schools do not use sufficiently up-to-date information or resources to guide pupils' decisions and, in general, 11-18 schools place too much emphasis on promoting their own sixth form rather than exploring fully the range of other options available to pupils across a range of providers.

The following thematic surveys relevant to the careers sector were published 2010-2017:

Informed decisions: The implementation of the Careers and the World of Work framework (Estyn, 2012e)

Careers – The implementation of the careers and world of work framework in secondary schools
(Estyn, 2017f)





Section: 2



Section 2:

Sector summaries: Learning in the justice sector

Sector report

Learning in the justice sector

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

With the recent opening of HMP Berwyn in Wrexham, there are now five prisons in Wales, with one also housing a young offenders' institution. A minority of adults and young people from Wales serve their sentences in secure settings in England.

In 2016–2017, Estyn worked with partners to inspect Her Majesty's Prison Swansea and the young offenders' institution in Her Majesty's Prison Parc. There is one secure children's centre in Wales. Estyn worked with CSSIW to inspect the education provision in Hillside Secure Centre. Estyn joined the inspection of one Youth Offending Service (YOS) in Cwm Taf.

For further information on the inspection of Her Majesty's Young Offender Institution Parc please read the **inspection report**.



For further information on the inspection of Her Majesty's Prison Swansea please read the report on the **HMI of Prisons website**.



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Sector summaries:

For more information on the provision at Hillside Secure Centre the report can be requested from here:
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales



For more information on the Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Work in Cwm Taf please read the
inspection report.



Since 2010, leaders and managers in the secure children's home have improved the breadth and relevance of the curriculum. Good support from the local authority has created a formal partnership with a local secondary school. This helped to improve the standard of teaching. Improved liaison between care and teaching staff has resulted in better tracking of learners' progress. Managers have also improved the range of therapy practitioners available to learners, such as psychologists. These developments have improved staff working together to support learners better to achieve their goals. Leaders have improved the breadth and relevance of the curriculum and most learners leave with a positive education outcome. However, learners' literacy and numeracy skills are still under-developed. Very few learners gain literacy and numeracy qualifications at a high enough level to enable them to progress directly into further education.

In May 2016, Dame Sally Coates published her review of education in prisons in England and Wales (Coates, 2016). Her report included recommendations relating to:

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

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Most established prisons in Wales have yet to address these recommendations. In the minority of prisons where strategic managers give priority to education, provision and the quality of teaching have improved. The recent introduction of a regional manager to oversee the development of education in the public sector prisons in Wales has resulted in improved partnership working between Heads of Learning and Skills. However, in recent years, the majority of prisoners in public sector prisons do not have enough access to opportunities to improve their skills and employment potential. Initial assessment of prisoners' learning needs has improved. Leaders and managers do not have effective strategies to ensure that all staff focus enough on how they can best improve prisoners' literacy and numeracy. Prisons still do not evaluate well enough the impact of their provision in supporting prisoners to reduce reoffending behaviour when they leave prison.

In the young offender institution, outcomes for learners have benefited from a strengthening of the unit's management team. The majority of learners participate enthusiastically in lessons and make good progress in their work. Nearly all behave well in class and take pride in their achievements. Nearly all learners improve their literacy and numeracy by at least one level. Most gain qualifications that allow them to progress to higher levels of education and that prepare them for work. However, opportunities for work experience are very limited.

In many youth offending services (YOS) across Wales, there have been strengthened arrangements to gather information about learners from schools and the local authority. Many case workers use this information well to plan activities that help learners to progress and continue with their education. However, they do not give enough attention to learners' development of literacy and numeracy. Few services promote learners' use of the Welsh language. Most case workers give good attention to learners' development of personal and social skills, such as improving self-esteem and reducing challenging behaviour, but services have not made good progress in developing ways to track improvements in these behaviours. Services support well those learners who are not in education, employment or training to access opportunities that will enable them to progress. However, too many young people of statutory school age do not receive their entitlement to full-time education and most services do not analyse the impact of the work they do on learners' success in progressing into opportunities.

In December 2016, the UK Government published Youth Justice Review and its response, with a range of recommendations that would restructure the services to young people who offend (Taylor, 2016). The UK and Welsh Government will work together to take forward the recommendations in Wales.

Section: 3



Section 3:
Annex 1

Annex 1 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 authority education services for children and young people
- teacher education and training
- Welsh for adults
- work-based learning
- learning in the justice sector

Section 3:
Annex 1

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

In a number of sectors, we work with other regulators and inspectorates to inspect provision. We work in partnership with Ofsted to inspect work-based learning provision that operates both in Wales and England. Our inspectors liaise with CSSIW to inspect residential schools and local authority secure children's homes. We also take part in inspections 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 authority 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

Section 3:
Annex 1

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

When we inspected education and training in Wales 2010-2017, we used our Common Inspection Framework for education and training in Wales. The framework will apply for the inspection of further education institutions until 2018. This framework covered 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

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

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

We 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 new inspection arrangement pilots in 2016-2017 and for the next cycle of inspection

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 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					✓	✓

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Category	Explanation
Excellent practice	If a provider gains any excellent judgements and is, therefore, identified as having sector-leading practice in one or more areas they will be invited to write a case study to share with other providers. The case study may be published on the Estyn website.
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 is Estyn Review.
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 monitoring: post-16	If a post-16 or initial teacher training provider is identified as needing Estyn team monitoring, a small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the provider to judge progress around a year later. If inspectors judge that insufficient progress has been made, this may result in a full re-inspection. Following Estyn monitoring, a letter will be published on the Estyn website, reporting on the findings of the monitoring visit.
Re-inspection	If a post-16 or initial teacher training provider is identified as needing a full re inspection, the inspectorate will write a letter to the provider, copied to DfES, and, in the case of initial teacher training, to the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCW) identifying the areas that require improvement, and will carry out a full re inspection of the provider within a year to 18 months. After the re-inspection, Estyn will publish a full report evaluating the progress made by the provider. If the team judges that insufficient progress has been made at the end of a re-inspection, this will be reported to DfES, and to HEFCW in the case of initial teacher training, as part of their contract management procedures.

Explanation of words and phrases used to describe our evaluations

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

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

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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 the Knowledge and Analytical Services departments of the Welsh Government. Figures in all charts are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Totals may therefore not be equal to 100%.

When analysing inspection outcomes, it is important to note that there can be difficulties in comparing trends in outcomes between years. Each year, we inspect a proportion of providers in each sector. For example, during 2016-2017 we inspected 194 (14%) primary schools and 31 (16%) secondary schools. There may appear to be large changes when comparing the inspection outcomes between years. However, since we introduced the current Common Inspection Framework in September 2010, no year-on-year changes have been statistically significant.

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

We published our inspection outcomes for 2016-2017 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 2017.

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



Annex 2



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