



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE**        **Release of bands for secondary schools**

**DATE**        **8 December 2011**

**BY**            **Leighton Andrews, Minister for Education and Skills**

Today I have released the Welsh Government's first set of bands for secondary schools.

Banding uses the performance of schools to group them into one of five bands – from Band 1, schools which are performing well, to Band 5, schools which need to improve.

Information about how well 15-16-year-olds have performed in examinations, and their level of attendance is used to band schools. The calculation also takes account of the level of poverty of pupils in the school as this can have an impact on what the school can achieve.

Four groups of data are used to calculate the relative performance of schools.

The first is the number of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs or the equivalent at grade C or above. The second is the average points per 15 year old pupil for the top eight GCSEs or equivalent results. The top eight scores are used to encourage schools to concentrate on achieving higher grades rather than more GCSEs at lower grades.

The third group is the performance in English, Welsh and mathematics, and the fourth is attendance.

Across the groups, relative performance is measured according to actual performance, progress over time and performance relative to the proportion of pupils at the school from a relatively deprived background, based on their entitlement to free school meals.

These measurements reflect my priorities for improving literacy, numeracy, attendance and reducing the impact of deprivation.

The process is designed to help local authorities support their schools more effectively, raising standards and performance in Wales. High-performing schools will be expected to share their good practice widely in order to help low-performing schools.

If we are to drive up standards across the board in Wales we need to know how our schools are performing. Banding is at the heart of this.

Plans for banding schools were set out in our manifesto and are now a key component in our Programme for Government. The process is designed to give us a clearer focus on our performance and progress.

This is not about labelling, naming or shaming, or creating a crude league table. It is about putting schools into groups to identify which need our support and which we can learn from.

We will now be exploring how we can best support those schools in the lower bands so they can begin their improvement journey. This work has already begun with the termly stocktakes and close working between the Welsh Government's School Standards Unit and local authority consortia. All consortia already have plans in place to provide targeted support to schools in the lower bands and this work is supported by funding from the Welsh Government.

Many schools have moved up several bands between the provisional and final sets because their performance has improved strongly between 2010 and 2011. It is clear therefore that schools can make marked improvement with the right intervention and this is what we need to focus on.

Parents and pupils have a right to know what is best in Wales and how their schools are performing. I have said all along that we will be transparent about the banding, both in terms of the methodology used and the outcomes for schools. In publishing this data today we are meeting this commitment.

Further information is available at the following link:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/raisingstandards/schoolbanding/?lang=en>