# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Publication of National School Categorisation System categories - year four.** |
| **DATE** | **Thursday 1 February 2018** |
| **BY** | **Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education** |

The National School Categorisation System was introduced in 2014. It provides a clear picture of how well schools in Wales are performing and the level of support they need to do better. Today we have published the support categories for primary and secondary schools for a fourth year.

The purpose of the categorisation system is to identify the support our schools need to improve.It offers a holistic approach to school improvement, which allows the context of the school and a broad range of information to be taken into account when determining a judgement on the school`s self-evaluation and capacity to improve.

The system is about providing support and encouraging collaborative improvement and is not about labelling or creating crude league tables.  It is about putting schools into a position that enables them to identify what the factors are that contribute to their progress and achievement or which areas to focus on to achieve further development.

The system evaluates and assesses schools and places then in a support category using the following process:

* Step One: A broad range of performance information is provided by the Welsh Government to inform schools self-evaluation of their capacity to improve in relation to teaching and learning; and inform the starting point of discussions with their regional consortium challenge advisor about their performance and areas for improvement;
* Step Two: Assessment of the schools’ self-evaluation by challenge advisers in the regional consortia;
* Step Three: After the outcome indicators and self-evaluation information have been analysed, a draft support category is agreed in discussion with the school. This category is moderated by the local authority and regional education consortium, verified nationally, and leads to a colour-coded support category for the school which will trigger a tailored programme of support, challenge and intervention.

Updated guidance has been made available, which sets out the categorisation process in more detail.

Last September, I announced changes to the system from this year in which the Welsh Government will no longer use a specific set of data to calculate a Standards Group for schools as part of Step One. This change was implemented following recommendations made by the OECD in their rapid policy assessment of our education system, and forms part of our commitment to reform accountability, as set out in *Education in Wales: our National Mission*.

The effect of this change is powerful. It encourages the system to use a broader range of information to feed into the school’s self-evaluation; it places more emphasis on professional dialogue between schools and their challenge advisers and it reflects the sophistication and rigour of the system that we have developed over time in collaboration with the regional consortia and local authorities.

The figures we have published today show that85.3 per cent of primary schools and 68.3 per cent of secondary schools are now in the green and yellow categories. This increase from last year continues the upward trend since 2015 and is to be welcomed. These schools will have a key role to play in supporting other schools in Wales, by sharing their expertise, skills, and good practice. In this way they will be making a vital contribution to driving forward improvements in Wales and moving us towards a truly self-improving system.

The publication of these outcomes today is a strong indicator of the supportive and collaborative system that we are building in Wales and will ensure that schools, and ultimately learners, are given the right support at the right time to enable them to fully realise their potential. I will now ask my officials to review the system with our regional education consortia to consider the best way forward for categorisation in the evolving landscape of Welsh education and our reform journey.

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/raisingstandards/schoolcategorisation/?lang=en>