



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

2014-2015



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales



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# Contents

<b>2-3</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>4-9</b>	<b>Foreword</b>
<b>10-15</b>	<b>About Estyn</b>
<b>16-19</b>	<b>Launch of new interactive data website</b>
<b>20-31</b>	<b>Section 1: The curriculum in Wales</b>
21	What does the school curriculum look like now?
22	What are the strengths in the current curriculum?
23	The Foundation Phase
24-25	Primary schools – Key stage 2
26-27	What are the strengths in the curriculum for our older pupils?
28-29	Special schools
30	What do some schools find difficult about the current curriculum?
31	How do schools move forward?
<b>32-111</b>	<b>Section 2: Sector reports</b>
32-37	Non-school settings for children under five
38-47	Primary schools
48-57	Secondary schools
58-63	Maintained special schools
64-69	Independent special schools
70-75	Independent mainstream schools
76-81	Independent specialist colleges
82-87	Pupil referral units
88-89	Local authority education services for children and young people
90-91	Further education colleges
92-97	Work-based learning
98-103	Adult community learning
104-107	Initial teacher training
108-109	Welsh for adults
110-111	Learning in the justice sector

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# Contents

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## **112-129 Section 3: Commentary on performance**

113 The performance of pupils in the Foundation Phase

114 Performance of pupils at key stage 2

115 Performance of pupils at key stage 3

116 Summary of teacher assessment

116 Examinations at key stage 4

117 Core subjects

117 Post-16 learners in school

118 Differences in performance between boys and girls

119-120 Performance of pupils eligible for free school meals

121 Achievement in selected indicators, by FSM eligibility and SEN status

122 Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

123 Attendance

124-125 Exclusions

125-127 Skills, further education and lifelong learning

127 Further education

128-129 Work-based learning

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## **130-133 Section 4: References**

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## Chief Inspector's introduction

This Annual Report draws on findings from inspections, follow-up visits and thematic reviews undertaken by Estyn during the 2014-2015 academic year. On the basis of this evidence, I report on the educational outcomes and on the quality of provision and leadership for each sector of education and training that Estyn inspects. In this foreword, I set out a number of opportunities and challenges that the education system in Wales faces over the coming years.

The report features a section on the curriculum for 3 to 16-year-olds. The section includes a set of self-evaluation questions that staff and governors may find helpful in thinking about teaching and learning in their own school or non-school setting and about how well prepared they are for the changes that lie ahead over the next few years.

A new feature included in the report this year is an interactive online data tool for readers to explore all of Estyn's inspection judgements since 2010. The data section explains that care is required when comparing inspection data from different years, as the number of inspections each year is relatively small. The improvement in the inspection outcomes for pupil referral units this year illustrates this point. Although there is good work in the three pupil referral units we inspected this year, the sector as a whole remains weak, and changes to how pupil referral units are managed and organised are still needed.



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

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## The challenge of variability

One of the most noticeable features of the Welsh education system over recent years has been its variability. Once again this year, there is a marked contrast between the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in our best education providers and in the weakest. This variability is not due primarily to socio-economic factors as some of our best providers are in relatively deprived areas.

There are examples of good and excellent practice in all the sectors we inspect, where learners make good progress and leaders work in partnership with staff, parents and the broader community to establish an aspirational culture where education is respected and valued. The challenge is to make sure that all providers share these practices and learn from them.

The proportion of excellence in primary schools has increased over the last five years. Only 8% of primary schools had excellence in some aspect of their work five years ago and this has increased to 18% this year. Two-thirds of primary schools inspected this year are good or better, a little better than last year.

The proportion of secondary schools identified as having some excellence has also increased, from 23% five years ago to 38% this year. However, while about one in six secondary schools are excellent overall this year, about the same proportion is unsatisfactory. Two-fifths of secondary schools inspected this year are good or better, a decrease from about a half last year.

While the amount of excellence we see in schools is growing, the proportion that is good or better has not changed much and the gap between the schools that are doing well and those that are not is still too wide. The variability in quality of education that exists between providers, and their varied capacity for leadership, self-improvement and partnership working, needs to be addressed.

Providers that are really struggling to cope with higher expectations need to be identified and supported as early as possible. Local authorities and regional consortia, working together, need to intervene quickly where necessary. They know their schools better now than in the past and there are signs that they are becoming more effective. However, issues remain about how well best practice is shared within and between authorities and regions, and to what extent schools get the support they need to improve.

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## Progress and the education improvement journey in Wales

Two years ago, Estyn published a report on 'Twelve secondary school improvement journeys' (Estyn, 2013). This set out the typical sequence of priorities at different stages of a school's development. Although the educational journey of the nation as a whole is more complex than that of a single institution, there are similarities. Quite rightly, considerable effort has been made in Wales over recent years to set sound foundations for education. Establishing early years provision of high quality (the Foundation Phase), attention to improving behaviour and attendance, proper care and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, and safeguarding learners from harm – all these are needed to ensure the wellbeing of learners, and make sure that they are 'ready to learn' and can make as much progress as they can.

On the whole, progress is being made with these foundations and we are beginning to see the benefits of this groundwork, although more remains to be done. For example, in most schools and settings, the principles of the Foundation Phase are generally well understood by staff, are implemented effectively, and have a positive impact on children, although more training is needed to make sure that senior leaders in all schools and settings understand the Foundation Phase. Schools now exclude fewer pupils for poor behaviour, pupil attendance rates are at their highest,

and the gap between the performance of deprived pupils and others is beginning to close. Nevertheless, disadvantaged pupils, such as those eligible for free school meals or those with emotional or behavioural difficulties, are still four times more likely than other pupils to be absent from school without a good reason.

Standards of basic literacy and numeracy are improving overall, although progress in literacy is more advanced than in numeracy. Accuracy in writing and pupils' ability to carry out simple calculations involving division, percentages and ratios still need attention in many schools across the age range. Not all schools understand how best to plan for pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. Most list opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in schemes of work, but they also need to provide genuine contexts for pupils to apply these skills across the curriculum, link them to the literacy and numeracy framework, and order the opportunities into a structured, whole-school sequence. The best schools already do this, but many do not.

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## Improving teaching and learning

We must continue to focus on these foundations for education and make sure that progress with them is sustained and consolidated, and that it becomes the norm in all providers. However, the progress already made should give us the confidence to move to the next stage on the improvement journey. Inspection outcomes for teaching and learning experiences are lower than for wellbeing and for care, support and guidance. Schools now need to consider central questions about teaching and learning: what should children and young people learn and how should they be taught and assessed? Professor Donaldson's 'Successful Futures' report, published in February 2015, suggested ways forward around which there seems much agreement. This consensus points to a growing maturity, confidence and shared sense of endeavour within the Welsh education system.

Many teachers and lecturers work hard to develop the self-respect and confidence of learners so that they become well-rounded individuals who are ready for further study and the world of work, and to contribute to society. The broader experiences offered by many schools and colleges beyond the formal curriculum form an important part of learners' education. The four purposes of the curriculum set out in 'Successful Futures' (Donaldson, 2015) capture well the characteristics that young people should develop during their time in compulsory education. Working in partnership with the wider community and with employers will be essential to improving and broadening learning experiences in future.

Employment opportunities in Wales now require much higher skill levels than in the past. A curriculum fit for the twenty-first century needs to build learners' intellectual strengths, their curiosity and creativity, and their adaptability and resilience. A challenging, ambitious curriculum helps learners to develop high-level thinking skills – their verbal, numerical and critical reasoning. These are the skills needed for most examinations and, in particular, for the new GCSEs in Welsh, English and mathematics, as well as for PISA. So there should be no tension between learning experiences that engage and excite young people and ones that ensure high standards of literacy and numeracy, of reasoning and creative ability, and of examination success.

It is time to refresh and modernise our curriculum. Underlying the higher expectations of education in countries across the world are developments in technology and in the nature of employment. For example, digital competence is an area of the curriculum that needs urgent attention. All children and young people need the knowledge and understanding of new technologies that will enable them to access, manage, and create the digital world of today and tomorrow, confidently and independently. The growth of digital information also has wider implications for the curriculum. The new curriculum has to help learners understand that not all information is reliable or safe. Learners also need a set of ideas and principles that will help them to understand and navigate the vast amount of information available to them online.

Further education colleges in particular have an important role to play in reflecting changes in the labour market in Wales, such as the recent growth in the biosciences and in the film, television and media industries. The landscape of further education in Wales has changed dramatically over the past five years. Following a series of mergers, and changes to governance and funding arrangements, colleges are increasingly well placed to respond to and to lead on technological innovation and the creative arts, to develop new ways of teaching and learning, and to deepen relationships with employers and communities. In response to these changes, Estyn established a new approach this year to inspecting further education that involves inspecting learning areas.

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## Leadership and staff development

The variability I mentioned earlier can only be addressed by the practitioners, teachers, lecturers and leaders who have a direct impact on learners and on their desire to learn. These are the people who can establish positive cultures in their schools and colleges and encourage teaching and learning of the highest quality in all classes. Developments and initiatives are only as good as the people that implement them. A self-improving system is one where staff and leaders take responsibility for their own improvement and development, and for the development of their colleagues.

During the summer, we published a report which summarised much of what we know about successful leadership development, (Estyn, 2015a). Schools with successful leaders have a strong culture of professional learning and focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning are at the heart of education, as effective interaction between teachers and learners ensures that learners learn, grow and develop. Leadership is similar and involves developing staff, identifying talent and potential, and supporting them from an early stage.

## Inspection developments

We made two changes to inspection arrangements this year (2014-2015). First, we now report on how well each school is using the pupil deprivation grant. We found that schools are getting better at targeting the grant at supporting deprived pupils, including the more able. Schools that make the best use of the grant focus on improving the skills and wellbeing of pupils. They do this often through programmes that improve the literacy of these pupils, by offering more varied extra-curricular options and by adopting strategies to improve attendance. More schools are also using the grant to help staff to engage with parents and with the key agencies that can help them.

The second change was to regulations governing the timing of inspections. The change means that providers can no longer predict years in advance when they will be inspected. We find that most schools and other providers have an annual cycle of self-evaluation, including scrutiny of learners' work, observation of classes and analysis of performance data, that feeds into strategic priorities and development plans. It is disappointing to find a small number of providers where these self-improvement processes are not well established.

As the education landscape develops, Estyn needs to continue to make sure that inspection reflects the increasing expectations of society, and supports and encourages innovation in teaching and learning. We consulted recently on what our inspections should look like in future. I was pleased with the healthy response from stakeholders and we will build on this feedback to develop new inspection arrangements for piloting and further consultation in the coming year.



All Estyn staff have a role in producing the annual report.



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## About HMCI's Annual Report

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.

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## Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- primary schools
- secondary 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

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

In a number of sectors, we work with other regulators and inspectorates to inspect provision. We work in partnership with Ofsted to inspect work-based learning provision that operates both in Wales and England. Our inspectors liaise with CSSIW to inspect residential schools and local authority secure children's homes. We also take part in inspections, led by HMI Probation, of youth offending teams (YOTs) in Wales and we join HMI Prisons and Ofsted to inspect institutions for young offenders in England that have significant numbers of Welsh young people. 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 Minister 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 good 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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

## The inspection cycle covered in this report

When we inspect education and training in Wales, we use our Common Inspection Framework for education and training in Wales. This framework covers three key questions and ten quality indicators and they are organised as follows:

### How good are outcomes?

- 1.1 Standards
- 1.2 Wellbeing

### How good is provision?

- 2.1 Learning experiences
- 2.2 Teaching
- 2.3 Care, support and guidance
- 2.4 Learning environment

### 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 also make two overall judgements about current performance and prospects for improvement.

We use 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

## 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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local authority monitoring	✓			✓		
Estyn monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Focused improvement				✓		
Significant improvement	✓	✓	✓			
Special measures	✓	✓	✓			
Re-inspection					✓	✓

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.
Local authority monitoring	Local authorities will work with the provider to address the recommendations highlighted in the report. Local authority officers will discuss progress with Estyn's local authority link inspector. About a year after the publication of the inspection report, the local authority will write a report for Estyn, explaining how the provider has progressed.
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.
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.
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.

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## Explanation of words and phrases used to describe our evaluations

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

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

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### Notes about the data used in this report

- 1 The data we show in charts or discuss within the text of report derives from Estyn's database of inspection grades. Data from other sources is referenced in the report, and is mainly derived from the Knowledge and Analytical Services department of the Welsh Government.
- 2 Figures in charts are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. Totals may therefore not be equal to 100%.



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Launch of new interactive data website

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This year we have launched an interactive data website to support the publication of data relating to the Annual Report. In previous Annual Reports, we have published data relating to our inspection outcomes and learner and parent questionnaires in spreadsheet and PDF format. The new website improves the accessibility of our data by providing a simple, modern interface that works across mobiles, tablets and desktops. The website can be visited through the Annual Report section of the Estyn website. Users can apply filters to customise their data views and export the results. It includes data for each academic year from 2010-2011 to the latest full year.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

### The data relating to the Annual Report is in four sections:

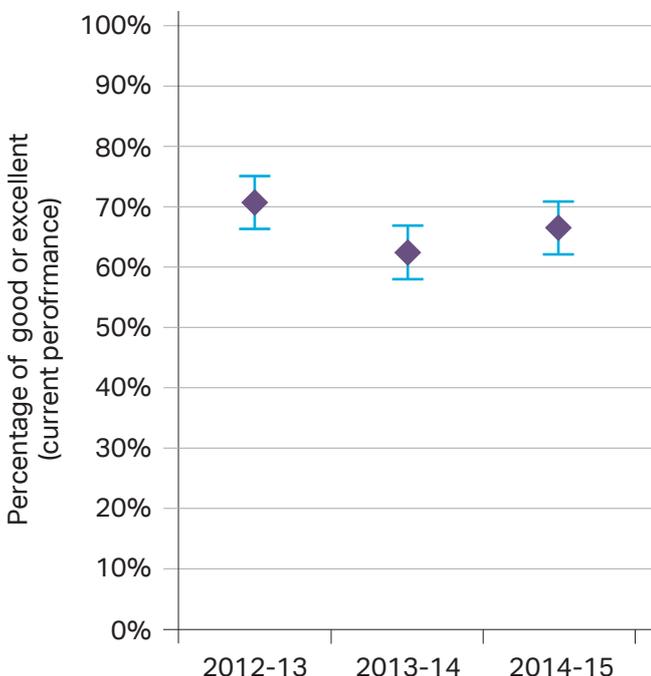
- 'Outcomes by provider' enables the user to look at inspection outcomes for individual providers and groups. The user can find outcomes for a specific provider by using the text search and access results for groups of providers by applying the relevant filters.
- 'Outcomes by sector' summarises inspection outcomes for whole sectors. It presents outcomes across the key questions and quality indicators in the Common Inspection Framework.
- 'Outcomes across local authorities' enables the user to view summaries of inspection outcomes for each local authority in Wales.
- 'Learner and parent questionnaire' presents the outcomes of our questionnaires used to gather the views of learners and parents before an inspection, with a range of options available to filter the results.

## Comparing trends in inspection outcomes data

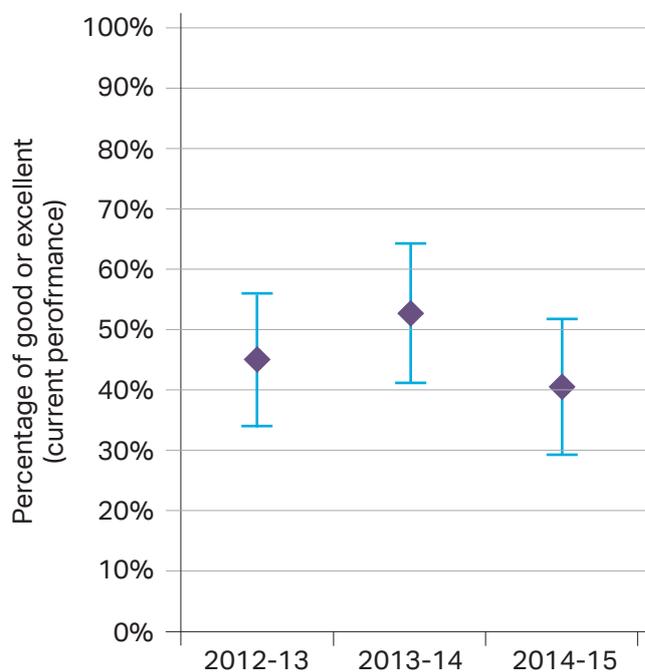
When analysing inspection outcomes data, it is important to note that there can be difficulties in comparing trends in outcomes between years. Each year, we inspect a proportion of providers in a given sector. For example, during 2014-2015, we inspected 227 (17%) of primary schools and 37 (18%) of secondary schools. The inspection outcomes we quote in the Annual Report for a sector for any year are therefore based on a sample of providers and not on the sector as a whole.

The charts below show the proportion of primary and secondary schools judged as having good or excellent current performance over the last three years of inspections. The proportion of good or excellent judgments for each year is denoted by the purple point and is based on the sample of providers that we inspected during that year. The blue bars denote the uncertainty around this estimate. There can appear to be large changes when comparing the difference between the years. For example, secondary school outcomes for current performance increased from 45% in 2012-2013 to 53% in 2013-2014 before decreasing again to 41% in 2014-2015. None of these changes were statistically significant.

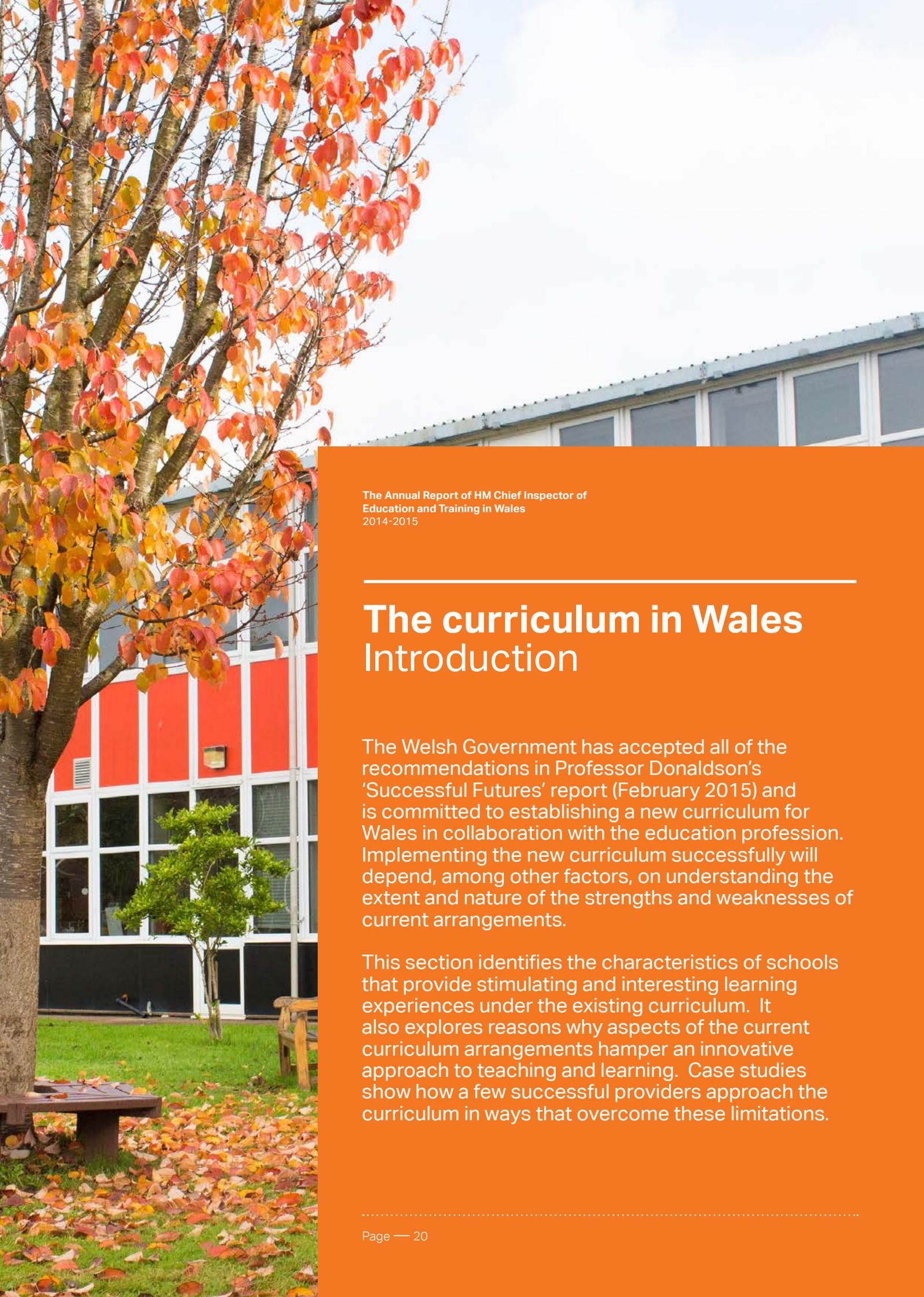
**Figure 1: Primary schools with good or excellent current performance 2012-2013 to 2014-2015**



**Figure 2: Secondary schools with good or excellent current performance 2012-2013 to 2014-2015**







## The curriculum in Wales Introduction

The Welsh Government has accepted all of the recommendations in Professor Donaldson's 'Successful Futures' report (February 2015) and is committed to establishing a new curriculum for Wales in collaboration with the education profession. Implementing the new curriculum successfully will depend, among other factors, on understanding the extent and nature of the strengths and weaknesses of current arrangements.

This section identifies the characteristics of schools that provide stimulating and interesting learning experiences under the existing curriculum. It also explores reasons why aspects of the current curriculum arrangements hamper an innovative approach to teaching and learning. Case studies show how a few successful providers approach the curriculum in ways that overcome these limitations.

## What does the school curriculum look like now?

This chart provides a broad summary of the curriculum offered in many typical schools and non-school settings. Providers have some flexibility to deliver and organise the curriculum as they wish, so provision may vary from the pattern suggested below.

Figure 1.1

	Content	Delivery	Organisation
<b>Foundation Phase</b> <b>Ages 3-7</b> <b>Primary schools and funded non-school settings</b>	Seven areas of learning (personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity, language, literacy and communication skills, mathematical development, Welsh language development in English-medium schools, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development creative development), Literacy and Numeracy Framework, non-statutory skills framework, religious education (RE) (5-7-year-olds)	Play and active learning, mix of focused tasks (adult-led), continuous and enhanced provision (usually pupil-led) and whole-class sessions; normally taught by the same practitioners or small group of practitioners for everything	Usually age-based groups for registration and whole-group sessions, sometimes mixed-age, especially in settings; often grouped by stage of development for literacy and mathematical development with more flexibility in other areas of learning
<b>Key stage 2</b> <b>Ages 7-11</b> <b>Primary schools</b>	11 National Curriculum subjects (core – English, Welsh in Welsh-medium schools, mathematics, science; foundation – art, design technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education (PE), Welsh second language in English-medium schools), Literacy and Numeracy Framework, non-statutory skills framework, RE, personal and social education (PSE), sex education	Usually separate lessons in core subjects, Welsh second language and PE; topic-based approach to foundation subjects; normally taught by the same teacher and support staff for everything, with occasional use of specialists	Usually age-based classes, sometimes mixed-age; often grouped by stage of development or ability for English/Welsh and mathematics; usually mixed ability for foundation subjects
<b>Key stage 3</b> <b>Ages 11-14</b> <b>Secondary schools</b>	12 National Curriculum subjects (as key stage 2, plus a modern foreign language), Literacy and Numeracy Framework, non-statutory skills framework, RE, PSE, sex education, careers and the world of work; sometimes an element of choice in Year 8 or Year 9, or, occasionally, key stage 3 curriculum is taught over two years, not three	Usually subject lessons, taught by subject specialists; in a very few schools, some pupils, typically in Year 7, follow a skills-based or thematic curriculum, taught by a smaller group of teachers	Usually single-age classes; often grouped by ability, particularly for core subjects
<b>Key stage 4</b> <b>Ages 14-16</b> <b>Secondary schools</b>	Core subjects, Welsh second language in English-medium schools, three or four foundation subjects or vocational courses chosen by pupils, non-statutory skills framework, PE, RE, sex education, careers and the world of work, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) in the majority of schools	Subject lessons, taught by subject specialists	Single-age classes, usually grouped by ability; often mixed ability for PE, PSE, RE
<b>Special schools</b> <b>Often ages 3-16</b>	Very varied, flexible and personalised, depending on the specific needs and stage of development of individual pupils; where appropriate, draws on content and skills from National Curriculum subjects and vocational courses	Personalised to the needs of the individual; sometimes taught through themes; often taught by the same teacher and support staff for everything, with specialists contributing where needed	Often grouped according to key stage and learning needs, but may also receive individual, specialist sessions; very occasionally grouped by ability

## What are the strengths in the current curriculum?

Schools that provide their pupils with exceptional learning experiences are excellent for varied reasons. They do all the things that good schools do well, but they also excel in specific areas where they have the confidence, skills and experience to innovate. As a result, they become exciting and vibrant places for learning, where pupils make excellent progress and achieve particularly high standards.

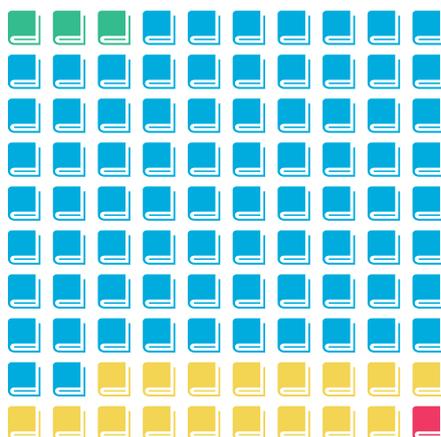
Figure 1.2

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Unsatisfactory

### Early Years

Summary of Quality Indicator 2.1 (learning experiences) outcomes, 2014-2015 - Early Years

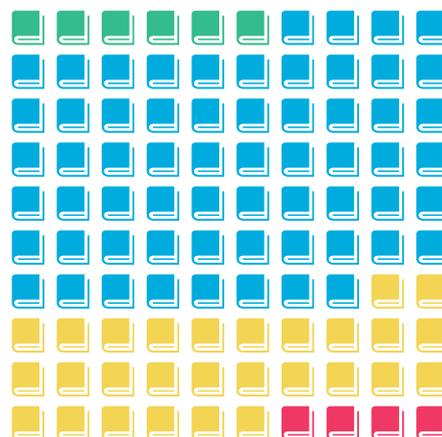
2.8% 78.7% 17.6% 0.9%



### Primary

Summary of Quality Indicator 2.1 (learning experiences) outcomes, 2014-2015 - Primary schools

6.6% 61.7% 27.8% 4.0%



## The Foundation Phase

The 'Successful Futures' report recognised that 'the existing curriculum arrangements in Wales have some very real strengths upon which we can build – not least the pedagogy underpinning the Foundation Phase' (Donaldson, 2015, p.19). A well-delivered, high-quality Foundation Phase experience nurtures a love of learning in young children that prepares them to learn throughout their lives.

In about 70% of primary schools and 80% of settings, Foundation Phase provision is good or excellent. In good schools and settings, practitioners are willing to try new ways of working that enhance, enrich and extend children's learning. Staff plan creatively, taking careful account of what children already know, can do and understand. They link child-led and adult-led activities well together to build pupils' learning through a range of purposeful contexts. Practitioners plan active, independent learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors. These activities help pupils to practise and improve their literacy, numeracy, personal and social skills while developing their knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. In these successful schools and settings, staff place skilful questioning, physical activity, time for reflection and

opportunities for children to make choices at the centre of the planning and delivery of the curriculum. They give high status to children's personal and social development and this encourages children to be healthy, confident individuals with a good awareness of the world in which they live. As these children move into key stage 2, they often have strong communication skills and are usually confident, independent learners.

In about 7% of schools and 3% of settings, where provision is excellent, senior leaders have a thorough understanding of the philosophy and purpose of the Foundation Phase. They ensure that children have strong curriculum experiences in all their classes. Confident, knowledgeable leaders encourage staff to be inventive with the curriculum. For example, practitioners create imaginative learning zones that contain stimulating challenges for children at different stages of their development. These areas excite pupils and inspire them to make choices about their own learning and to develop their independence, while expanding their skills and confidence. Excellent schools make sure that children experience all elements of the seven areas of learning regularly. For example, as part of creative development, children take part in a balance of activities in art, craft, design, music, dance and movement, drama and role play.



### Careful planning of learning experiences in stimulating contexts improves pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

**Ysgol Glan Gele** in Abergele is keen to ensure that planning for the Literacy and Numeracy Framework has a high priority. Working together in staff and year group meetings to map out specific skills in their plans, the school has seen significant improvements in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

## Primary schools – Key stage 2

Around two in three primary schools meet the needs and interests of their key stage 2 pupils effectively, and around one in fourteen have exemplary arrangements to deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Phase.

Nearly all teachers in primary schools use a topic-based approach for planning children's learning. In schools that are good or better, teachers do not follow schemes of work or teaching methods slavishly, but they adapt the contents or strategies skilfully to suit the particular requirements of their pupils. In the two-thirds of schools where the curriculum is good, teachers recognise the importance of ensuring that pupils have strong literacy and numeracy skills and use the Literacy and Numeracy Framework to ensure that pupils build on their previous learning as they move through the school. They have incorporated the framework into their curriculum planning, but have not allowed it to dictate unduly what or how they teach. In successful schools, the framework is not an afterthought or a 'box to complete', but is integral to the learning activities across the curriculum. These schools focus well on developing the skills that pupils need, using whole-school approaches, particularly for teaching phonics, and they provide plenty of support to make sure that pupils make good progress. They make certain that competence in literacy and numeracy is not achieved to the detriment of the rest of the curriculum. They ensure that pupils have plenty of interesting experiences that stimulate them to talk, read and write across all subjects. Staff also provide interesting extra-curricular activities that broaden pupils' outlook and develop their talents.

Integral to the success of the curriculum in good schools is assessment for learning, rather than assessment for bureaucratic purposes. Purposeful assessment helps teachers to plan effectively for the next steps in pupils' learning and, as a result, it helps to raise standards.

A further strength of the current curriculum in good schools is a commitment to Welsh language and culture. Many primary schools work hard to make sure that pupils understand the history, geography, heritage and culture of Wales. In many cases, this is through interesting topic work, such as learning about Wales during the Blitz, studying famous Welsh artists and authors, or participating in cultural events, such as eisteddfodau or visiting places in Wales of historical or cultural significance. These primary schools also have a strong commitment to the Welsh language and nurture positive attitudes in their pupils towards learning and using the language.

In the 7% of schools that provide their pupils with excellent learning experiences, senior and middle leaders are clear about the purposes of the curriculum. They know that having a well-planned set of topics to address requirements does not guarantee high standards for pupils. They encourage and support staff to blend innovative approaches to the curriculum with high-quality teaching strategies that enable pupils to enjoy learning, to make strong progress and to achieve high standards. Teachers in excellent schools understand what constitutes effective teaching and learning. They link new work to pupils' previous learning experiences. They know their pupils' strengths and areas for development and set them interesting, real-life tasks and problems. They provide just the right level of challenge so that they are within pupils' reach, but tricky enough for them to have to work hard to achieve. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They require them to apply their knowledge, to develop new skills, or to apply a range of existing skills in combination, independently or in collaboration with others. They encourage pupils to engage fully in their learning and to develop high-level thinking and problem-solving skills. These schools have robust arrangements to nurture teachers and to challenge them to reflect on the success of their teaching strategies.

### Using an "app" to encourage independence in learning

**Ysgol y Graig** uses a digital application (app) to try new approaches to learning. Teachers record adults reading stories and pupils use the app to identify success criteria for different genres of writing. Pupils develop their independence in learning by listening and observing others, analysing text, recording their own evaluations and editing their work.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

## Primary schools – Key stage 2

A very few excellent primary schools ensure that their pupils develop strong skills in all areas of ICT as well as in literacy and numeracy. In these schools, senior leaders make developments in ICT a whole-school priority. They target resources carefully on developing staff expertise, often appointing a dynamic, highly-skilled curriculum leader who can lead and train others. They are not afraid to innovate or to introduce new ideas and technology. They enable pupils to contribute to planning and to lead learning by training them as digital leaders who train, support and inspire others.

The most effective primary schools in Wales do not allow the current curriculum to stifle innovation or to limit the creativity of staff or their pupils. They are always thinking of ways to engage and motivate their pupils to achieve as well as they can. When they find out what works well with their pupils, they develop and adapt it, and listen to what pupils say so that the work does not become stale or routine.

### Using staff expertise and passions creates motivated and high achieving learners

To create engaging resources that break down barriers to learning, staff at **Rhiwbeina Primary School** use exciting topics that reflect their interests and talents. Their approach successfully developed children's literacy, numeracy, digital competence, and social and life skills.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)



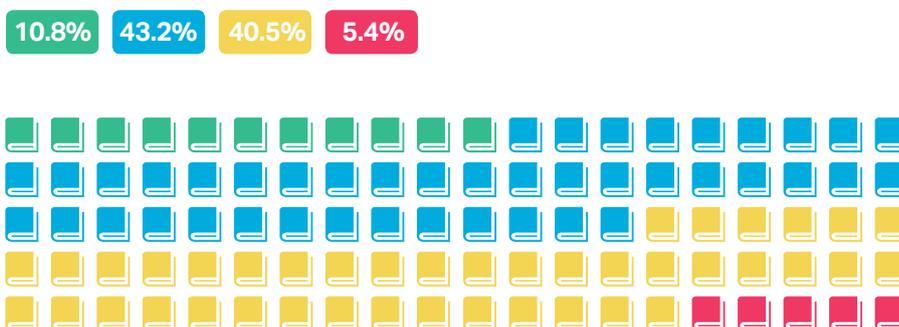
## What are the strengths in the curriculum for our older pupils?

Figure 1.3

### Secondary schools

Summary of Quality Indicator 2.1 (learning experiences) outcomes, 2014-2015 - Secondary schools

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Unsatisfactory



Just over half of secondary schools provide good or excellent learning experiences for their pupils. In good schools, teachers have secure knowledge of their subjects and use a wide range of teaching approaches to engage and motivate pupils. They appreciate the contribution their subject can make to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and develop specific aspects of literacy and numeracy that relate to their particular subject. They recognise the importance of building on the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils bring with them from primary school. In these secondary schools, the Literacy and Numeracy Framework has encouraged staff to see the links between subject areas and prompted them to share good practice across departments within and between schools.

In good secondary schools, curriculum collaboration with other providers, such as local colleges or other schools, is well developed, and this helps to extend the choice of courses available to pupils at key stage 4. Schools plan this provision carefully to meet the needs of their pupils so they can follow a curriculum pathway that is relevant, interesting and suited to them. Vocational pathways and aspects of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification also broaden pupils' understanding of enterprise, citizenship and the world of work.

A strength of good secondary schools is a commitment to developing pupils' broader social and moral awareness and the effective promotion of healthy eating and living. This is often through personal and social education and activities relating to sustainable development and global citizenship. The work of school councils and eco-committees often contributes particularly well to this aspect of pupils' experience. It encourages them to become active

participants in their school community, to initiate activities of their own, to raise money for charities, to help make decisions about what and how they learn, and to contribute to school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Good schools also enhance the curriculum with extra-curricular learning experiences of high quality. These often include cultural, artistic, musical and sporting activities, and school clubs linked to the curriculum. Schools encourage pupils to become involved in a wide range of activities. As a result, pupils make the most of their strengths and discover new interests and talents. These opportunities contribute well to pupils' academic progress and to their sense of wellbeing. They help them to become confident learners who are well prepared for future learning and employment.

In the one in ten secondary schools where learning experiences are excellent, meeting pupils' needs is the basis of the school's culture. It informs all decision-making and helps leaders and teachers to think creatively about the curriculum. Within this culture, effective headteachers and senior leaders provide clear direction and set high expectations for pupils and staff in all aspects of the school's work. Sharing these expectations with parents and carers leads to a strong sense of purpose, a shared ambition for all pupils to achieve the best they can, and a general commitment to the school's values, aims and objectives.

In these excellent secondary schools, leaders take an imaginative approach to curriculum design. They do not allow curriculum requirements to place too many

constraints on curriculum planning or reduce the autonomy that staff have to develop cross-curricular learning. They ensure that pupils achieve the best outcomes, while encouraging staff to be ambitious and confident. These principles are often at the heart of their curriculum design. They give their staff the confidence to be creative, to try new ideas and to take calculated risks when planning learning experiences. They deploy their teachers effectively, providing them with professional development opportunities of high quality that help them to plan and deliver new approaches. Leaders monitor and evaluate these innovative approaches closely and enable staff to share best practice regularly, both internally and with other schools.

In some of these schools, departments work together to provide opportunities to develop pupils' skills in extended projects, particularly in the humanities and in creative arts subjects. This is a similar approach to the thematic learning that takes place in primary schools. When it takes place in Year 7, it often supports a smooth transition for primary school pupils into secondary school learning. In the most effective examples of this practice, leaders select teachers carefully to ensure that they have the right skills and expertise for this way of working. The teachers involved understand the benefits of working in this way and are fully committed to its principles. They work with one another and consult pupils to plan themes that interest and motivate pupils. They have a good understanding of progression in the relevant subjects, as well as in literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and ICT skills, and use assessment information to plan learning activities that match pupils' needs.

### Developing thematic projects

**Bishop Gore School** has taken a personalised approach to learning and has redesigned its key stage 3 curriculum. 'Development blocks' provide pupils with time to apply subject-based skills to cross-curricular thematic projects, enabling them to develop wider problem-solving skills and work with others. As a result of this approach, end of key stage levels and feedback from tests have shown significant improvement.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)

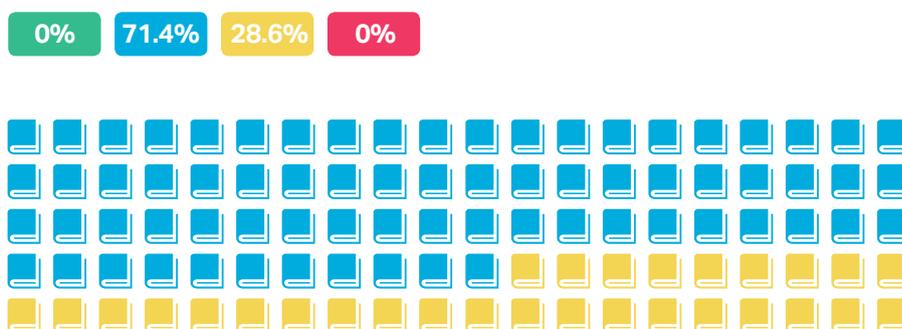
## Special schools

Figure 1.4

### Maintained special

Summary of Quality Indicator 2.1 (learning experiences) outcomes, 2014-2015 - Maintained special schools

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Unsatisfactory



Over 70% of maintained special schools meet the needs and interests of their pupils well. These schools form effective partnerships with each other that help them to identify and to learn from good practice and to share resources and training. This joint working has given leaders the confidence to try innovative ways of meeting pupils' needs.

In good special schools, teachers know their pupils particularly well. They assess many aspects of pupils' development and learning regularly and use this information to measure small but important steps in their learning. They set clear targets and plan challenging and enjoyable activities. Most special schools are particularly skilled at personalising the curriculum so that it matches the specific needs, abilities and interests of pupils. Staff understand the importance of developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and communication skills and they focus on enabling pupils to make suitable progress in these areas. Flexibility of approach is key to success, so they search for the most appropriate, often innovative, ways to support their pupils. For example, in most special schools, staff use a wide variety of ICT equipment to develop pupils' competence and confidence in communicating with others.

These special schools know that personal and social education helps pupils to develop valuable independent living skills, including taking responsibility for their own behaviour and developing healthy lifestyles. Staff use a wide range of environments to provide useful learning experiences, often taking pupils out of school to develop their skills in real-life situations and to give them the confidence to work with others.

In successful maintained special schools, the curriculum at key stage 4 focuses on developing work-related skills. Leaders form partnerships with colleges of further education, training providers and other schools to increase the options available to pupils. This helps pupils to develop their vocational skills and prepares them well for moving to their next learning experience. In the best special schools, the curriculum offers pupils an individual learning pathway based on their interests and abilities. This might include GCSE subjects as well as other courses or awards, such as ASDAN, for various achievements, including environmental work.

Leaders of these schools make sure that teachers and teaching assistants receive specialised training to meet the specific needs of the pupils in their school. The careful deployment of suitably-qualified teaching assistants is important in ensuring that pupils receive good support to access the curriculum and to achieve well in relation to their starting points and learning targets. Leaders enable staff to work closely with a range of specialists to meet pupils' health and care needs. This works particularly well when schools and health professionals offer appointments on the school premises, reducing stress and travel for pupils and their parents and carers. As a result, pupils are supported to access the curriculum effectively, for example through the use of signing or provision of specialised equipment.

Positive links with parents and carers are key to the success of special schools. In the best cases, schools provide training and advice for parents and carers on understanding the approaches used by the school. Parents learn how to support these approaches at home and this provides greater consistency for pupils.

### Using person-centred planning across the school

Person-centred planning is at the heart of reviewing pupil progress at **Crownbridge Special Day School**, Torfaen. This model has improved pupil performance by transforming their learner review process, which now includes information from the pupils, parents and a range of partners.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)



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## What do some schools find difficult about the current curriculum?

There are strengths in the content, delivery and organisation of the curriculum in around two-thirds of primary schools and in around a half of secondary schools. However, even in good schools, misunderstandings about the curriculum sometimes restrict the flexibility and breadth of the curriculum unnecessarily. In less successful schools, these restrictions can become a straight-jacket that prevents the school from providing a curriculum that engages learners and helps them to flourish.

Where leaders and teachers lack confidence in their understanding of teaching methods and curriculum requirements, they are reluctant to interpret the curriculum boldly and flexibly. They then often revert to desk-based, formal methods, and pupils do not benefit from the active learning approaches that encourage their problem solving, creativity and critical thinking. For example, in the Foundation Phase, some leaders mistakenly consider that only a formal approach to learning will ensure that children perform well in national tests in Year 2. Others misinterpret the Foundation Phase philosophy by offering pupils too much choice and neglect the teaching of basic skills.

In these schools, the curriculum can appear dull and repetitive, teaching and learning lack creativity, and activities do not challenge and engage pupils. For example, less confident teachers tend to rely heavily on pupils completing worksheets and similar low-level tasks. In the schools where teachers follow a published or school-based scheme of work mechanically, every lesson follows the same pattern, pupils know what to expect and they are not motivated or engaged in their learning. Artificial expectations and tick-lists for lesson planning and classroom observations can also lead to formulaic, over-rigid lessons.

In these weaker schools, although teachers recognise their responsibility for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, many fail to understand how subjects can create genuine contexts in which pupils can apply these skills. These schools offer limited opportunities for pupils to make meaningful links between subjects, or to develop their skills in real-life situations. Many of these schools do not think deeply about their curriculum design and attempts to link subjects through cross-curricular approaches often fail because of poor planning or a lack of commitment.

Many schools have reduced the time spent on non-core subjects and areas of learning. This is often after introducing heavy-handed approaches to literacy and numeracy development, aimed at boosting their performance data and the outcomes of annual tests. Recent changes to qualifications and performance measures have led many secondary schools to reduce the number of option choices for pupils in key stage 4. This narrowing of the curriculum has not necessarily resulted in better outcomes.

Concerns around assessment and accountability also prevent many schools from being innovative. Less confident leaders may promote a culture where teachers assess pupils' work regularly, but with little impact on standards. They gather a considerable amount of information about pupils' progress and attainment, but do not use it to inform the teaching or to plan for the next steps in pupils' learning.

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## How do schools move forward?

The 'Successful Futures' report suggests how new curriculum and assessment arrangements can best meet the present needs of children and young people and equip them for the future. It emphasises that the curriculum should include 'all of the learning experiences and assessment activities planned in pursuit of agreed purposes of education' (Donaldson, 2015, p.6). The report sets out four purposes for the curriculum, aimed at ensuring that children and young people should develop as:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

There is a strong case for modernising the curriculum in Wales. Even so, there is much current practice that teachers and school leaders can use as a foundation for future curriculum developments by building on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses that have been identified.



Work on the new curriculum is in the early stages of development. However, schools can begin to prepare themselves for the future by considering the following questions as part of their self-evaluation:

- Does the curriculum that we offer currently help pupils to develop according to the 'four purposes'?
- What can we do to promote these four purposes further within our current arrangements?
- How confident are we as school leaders in our capacity to inspire, support and evaluate innovation in our school curriculum?
- How can we encourage creativity, variety and individuality in our approaches, while also achieving consistency and coherence in the curriculum that we offer and in the way that we deliver it?
- To what extent is our school (leaders, teachers and support staff) ready to embrace change and willing to engage with pioneer schools in developing the new curriculum?
- How do our teachers and support staff gain the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to develop the new curriculum?
- How can we build on the creativity that exists already among our staff and enable others to develop their imagination in relation to the curriculum?
- Do we provide a wide range of additional extra-curricular experiences for our pupils and recognise all their achievements?
- Do our teachers and support staff understand formative and summative assessment and use assessment information to raise standards and to maximise the progress that pupils make?
- Do we use assessment to help pupils to improve their own work and the work of others?
- Do we ensure that our pupils build well on what they have already learned when they move through and between schools?
- Does our school develop the full range of pupils' ICT skills and digital competence?



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report

### Non-school settings for children under five<sup>1</sup>

Nearly all local authorities in Wales fund some part-time education for three-year-olds, and very occasionally for four-year-olds, in 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. Settings that provide funded early education include day care providers and playgroups. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) also inspects the quality of care for children at these settings. Estyn and CSSIW plan to inspect non-school settings together from September 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> These are also known as funded non-maintained settings

This year, there were approximately 645 providers of part-time education for three or four-year-olds, a fall from 660 last year. Despite this overall drop in numbers of providers, 23 new settings opened or re-opened. This is in part due to the expansion of Flying Start funding for two-year-olds, which has made a few settings more financially viable to provide part-time education for three and four-year-olds. We inspected 108 of these settings this year. Close to half of these are small settings with fewer than six children funded by local authorities for part-time education. In small settings, inspectors report on provision and leadership only, in order to avoid identifying individual children.

## Summary: Non-school settings for children under five

This year, we identified nine settings as having excellent practice. This is lower than the number of settings identified last year. Settings with excellent practice make the most of learning opportunities provided by the community to enhance children's experiences. For example, they arrange worthwhile visits into the community, such as to the local baker, and they use this experience during activities in the setting to encourage children to weigh ingredients and make their own bread. Practitioners' professional development is a priority and robust appraisal systems challenge and support practitioners to improve. Effective teamwork encourages practitioners to take responsibility for leading initiatives and for curriculum planning. This develops a sense of ownership for what happens in the setting.

About a third of settings inspected this year require monitoring either from the local authority or from Estyn. This is higher than in the last two years and reverses the previous trend of improvement in key areas, such as curriculum planning and self-evaluation. Where the local authority is required to support settings, they generally do this well, for example by helping the setting to plan more focused activities or making assessments more manageable. As a result, these settings tend to improve quickly. We identified one setting this year that required an increased level of monitoring by Estyn (focused improvement). This was due to weaknesses in leadership, self-evaluation and planning for improvement.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

Figure 2.1: Percentages of settings in levels of follow-up



# Outcomes: Non-school settings for children under five

## Standards

Standards are good or better in 86% of settings where we reported on standards. This is lower than in the previous two years, when children's standards were good or better in 95% of settings.

In English-medium and Welsh-medium settings, where standards are good or excellent, many children speak clearly and confidently and are eager to share what they are doing with adults and each other. They listen carefully to instructions, such as when playing a board game or playing together to control a large parachute. Most children handle books carefully, holding them the right way up and turning the pages correctly. They show pleasure in listening to stories and when pretending to read books to their friends. Many children enjoy experimenting with pens, pencils and other writing tools to make marks and begin to write. They display an increasing understanding of the importance of writing, such as making a list to remember what they need to buy when they visit a role-play garden centre. In these settings, most children join in enthusiastically in learning number songs and rhymes and many can count the children present at registration. In these settings, children sort, match and count familiar objects correctly. For example, they sort jelly cubes into colour groups and animals into farm or zoo animals. In the very best practice, children use ICT confidently to support their learning. For example, they use a camera on a tablet computer to photograph mini-beasts they find outside and then use the photographs to make models from paper and cardboard, counting carefully how many legs and how many spots they need to add.

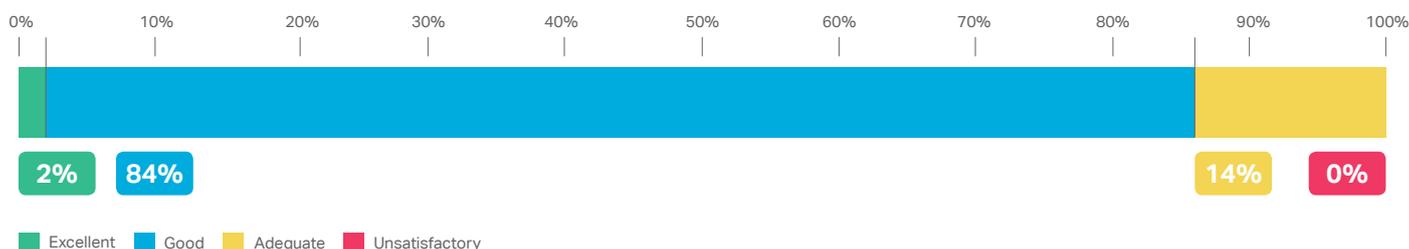
In around one in seven settings where standards are adequate, children lack confidence when speaking in a group, rarely choose to look at books with an adult or on their own, make simple mistakes when counting objects and fail to recognise or name common two-dimensional shapes. In a very few Welsh-medium settings, children are hesitant in using Welsh without prompting by an adult.

Standards of Welsh in English-medium settings, and ICT more generally, are frequent areas for development, even in settings that are good overall.

## Wellbeing

Nearly all children demonstrate high levels of involvement and engagement and are happy and content. They take on responsibility willingly, such as helping to tidy away resources, taking the register, preparing food and laying the table at snack time. Almost all share toys willingly and learn to take turns when playing a game or waiting for another child to finish using a resource. Many make sensible choices about what they would like to do and develop sound friendships with other children. They begin to play co-operatively with each other and show care and consideration for others, for example by helping their friends to put on painting aprons or wellington boots or showing concern for a child who is hurt.

Figure 2.2: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision: Non-school settings for children under five

Provision is good or better in 89% of settings inspected this year. There is a small increase in provision that is adequate, with inspectors identifying fewer examples of excellent practice.

Long-term curriculum planning is improving steadily. As a result, many settings provide worthwhile learning experiences for young children. Where day-to-day planning is particularly good, all activities have a clear learning purpose. For example, in 'home corner' role-play, children sort washing, put socks into pairs and count the clothes as they peg them on the line. However, aspects of short term planning are occasionally weak, even when provision is good overall. For example, activities sometimes lack challenge and they do not always build well enough on previous learning or do not focus enough on developing children's literacy and numeracy.

Where teaching is good or better, many practitioners take part in children's play to help them learn and practise new skills. For example, they join in enthusiastically with children playing musical instruments

and encourage them to follow the rhythm of a song. Many intervene appropriately when they see children struggling and they work hard to make learning fun. Most practitioners use praise well to manage children's behaviour, but are less successful in using praise to celebrate children's achievements. There are weaknesses in the use of assessment to identify and address children's next steps in learning in many settings, and this is often the reason why inspection judgments for teaching are lower than they might be.

Most settings have effective arrangements to support children's health and wellbeing and to encourage children to take care of themselves. For example, practitioners encourage children to eat healthy snacks and wash their hands before eating. They provide daily physical activity for children, such as dancing to music or playing parachute games. In a very few settings this year, there are issues relating to health and safety due to the nature of premises, or safeguarding concerns relating to the setting's policy and procedures for child protection.

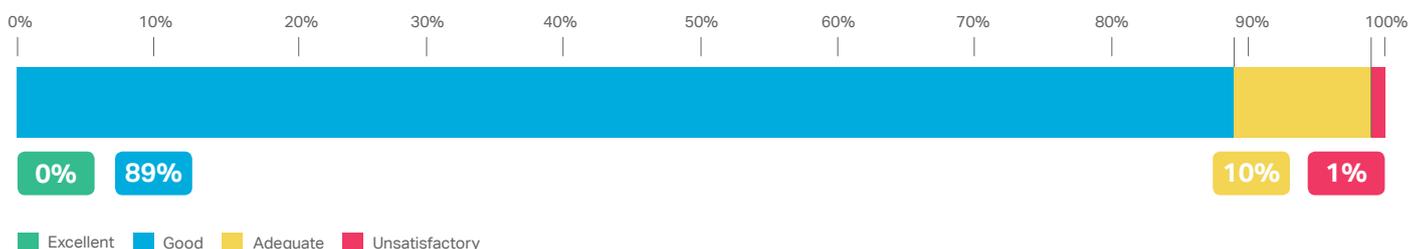
Many practitioners work together well to provide a stimulating and well-resourced learning environment that supports children's involvement, participation and enjoyment. In a very few settings, staff do not use community resources enough to compensate for limitations in the setting's outdoor provision.

Around a third of recommendations for improvement in provision this year focus on improving Welsh in English-medium settings, particularly the regular use of Welsh by practitioners. Improving ICT features in around a quarter of recommendations and links closely to a lack of planning for ICT or a lack of suitable resources.

For more information about provision in non-school settings, please click on the [thematic report](#), 'The impact of advisory teachers on funded non-maintained settings'.



Figure 2.3: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



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

Leadership is good or better in 88% of settings this year. In these settings, leaders have a clear vision of what they want to achieve for children. Leaders ensure that practitioners implement policies and procedures consistently. They establish high levels of care and nurture that help children to achieve good standards and wellbeing. Leaders in these settings have a good understanding of how to improve quality through self-evaluation and action planning. In settings where leadership is adequate or unsatisfactory, leaders do not challenge staff to do better. Self-evaluation is often too cumbersome and complicated or too informal and based on very little evidence. In both cases, self-evaluation does not help leaders to identify what needs to improve.

Partnership working with parents is a strong feature in almost all settings. Increasingly, larger settings, such as day nurseries, are making use of ICT, particularly social media, to share information about what children are doing and to provide information about events. Many settings have effective partnerships with their local community. For example, children visit local shops to learn about the world of work and make regular visits to the park or woodland to find out about the seasons. There is a mixed picture of partnerships with local schools. In the best practice, practitioners from settings share valuable information prior to children moving into school, and regular visits to and from the school mean that children become familiar with school staff. This prepares the children well for their next stage of education.

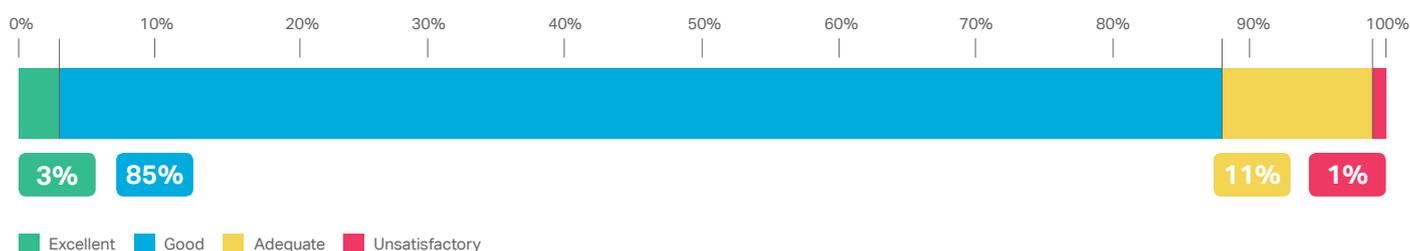
Many settings provide good value for money. They make effective use of staffing and resources to support children's learning. A very few settings do not have secure financial planning in place. This means that it is difficult for them to plan ahead, to purchase new equipment or to provide training for staff to keep up-to-date with new initiatives.

### Strong parental involvement leads to a successful start into nursery education

**Borras Park Infants School Early Education** has strong partnerships with parents. Parents clearly understand the setting's aims and play an active role in developing these. Children are able to settle quickly and are prepared well for the infant school. The levels of children's wellbeing and their standards of achievement are high.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.4: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



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

All settings requiring local authority monitoring and most settings requiring Estyn monitoring have made enough progress for Estyn to remove them from follow-up. These settings have addressed the recommendations from their core inspections. Leaders have acted on support and guidance from the local authority or the consortium in a timely fashion. They have ensured that practitioners access additional training and visit other settings to improve their practice.

This year, one setting failed to make enough progress while being monitored by Estyn and was placed in focused improvement. Estyn is continuing to monitor another setting placed in focused improvement in summer 2014. In settings that fail to make enough progress, leaders are not clear about what they need to do to improve. They do not focus well enough on learning and teaching and are often resistant to change.

**Sparkles Day Nursery** in Wrexham is a community enterprise and is part of Caia Park Partnership Limited, a registered charity. As a result of a core inspection in June 2014, the setting was found to require Estyn monitoring. An inspector visited the nursery again in June 2015 to monitor its progress and judged that it no longer requires monitoring.

An important feature of the setting's progress is the improvement in strategic leadership. The setting now has a manager and lead person for early education provision. The manager provides strong leadership and practitioners have clear roles and responsibilities. Practitioners have attended appropriate training to help them to deliver early education of a high quality. The staff appraisal process meets practitioners' needs well.

Standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT have improved since the core inspection. Many children communicate clearly and enjoy talking about their activities. Most take an interest in books and listening to stories. They understand the purpose of writing and participate enthusiastically in mark making activities. Many children match objects and use mathematical language in their activities. They identify common

shapes and count to ten correctly. Most children use tablet computers, talking books and cubes confidently to help them learn as they play.

The setting has improved its planning to provide greater support for teaching and learning. Good quality long and medium-term planning is in place and practitioners co-operate well to plan activities for the short-term that develop children's skills. Practitioners evaluate their planning and teaching appropriately and are beginning to identify children's strengths and areas for development through careful observation.

Since the core inspection, the setting has improved the quality of the indoor and outdoor environments. There are now clearly defined, attractive areas of learning with well-organised resources to match the age and ability of children. Practitioners use the local environment and a range of visits and visitors well to enhance its provision. The setting has greater control over its budget, so practitioners can respond to children's needs quickly and plan more easily for the future. Improvements in self-evaluation mean that staff have become more reflective and now know what the setting does well and what it needs to do to improve.



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report Primary schools

In January 2015, there were 1,330 primary schools in Wales. This is 27 fewer than in January 2014. There were 273,400 pupils in primary schools in January 2015, an increase of around 4,000 from the previous year. This is the fifth consecutive annual rise in primary pupil numbers. The number of pupils in primary schools is now 6% higher than it was five years ago.

This year, we inspected 227 primary schools.

## Summary: Primary schools

This year, we identified 41 primary schools with excellent practice for at least one quality indicator. This represents 18% of the schools we inspected and is an increase on the past few years where the proportion has been around 15%. We judged the current performance of five schools as excellent overall. In these schools, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make very good progress from their starting points due to the consistently high quality of teaching and learning. In 15 schools, inspectors judged the schools to have excellent prospects for improvement. This is because leaders use an extensive range of methods to monitor the quality of provision and the standards that pupils achieve. They make highly effective use of this information to inform school improvement priorities.

Around a quarter of schools inspected this year need monitoring by Estyn, compared with about a third last year. In these schools, there are inconsistencies in the quality of the provision. Often there are marked variations in the quality of teaching between classes, or in how well teachers plan progressive activities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

This year, 20 primary schools (9%) were placed in a statutory category, up from 7% last year. The proportion of schools requiring significant improvement remained at around 5% (12 schools). Eight schools require special measures, representing 4% of schools inspected, slightly more than last year.

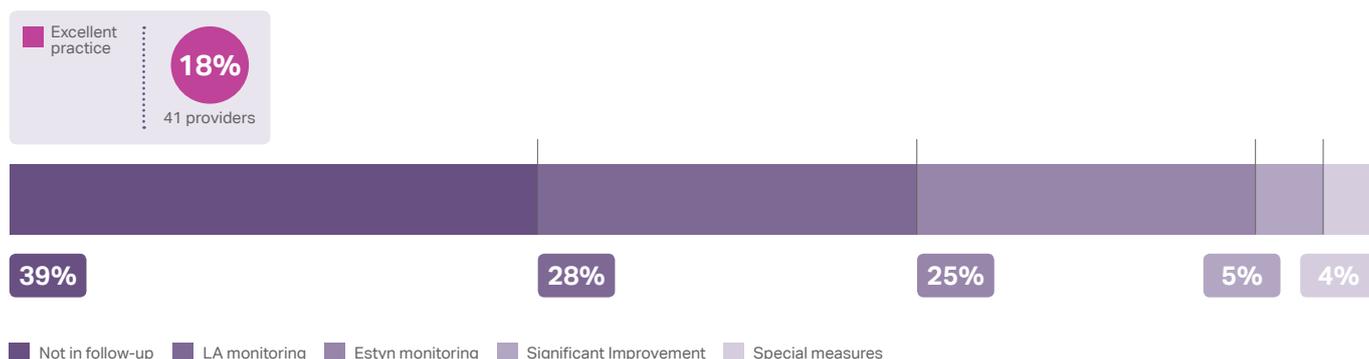
These schools all have weaknesses in the quality of leadership and management and, in most, inspectors made recommendations either to establish stable leadership, or to strengthen the quality and impact

of leadership at all levels. Often, these leaders fail to address shortcomings in the quality of teaching, planning and assessment. They do not hold teachers to account for pupils' progress and attainment. Although there may be occasional pockets of good classroom practice in these schools, teaching overall is not good enough to ensure that pupils make the progress they should.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)



Figure 2.5: Percentages of primary schools in levels of follow-up



# Outcomes: Primary schools

## Standards

Standards are good or better in around two-thirds of primary schools inspected. This is a slight improvement on last year. The proportion of schools where inspectors judged standards as excellent or unsatisfactory has remained broadly the same as last year.

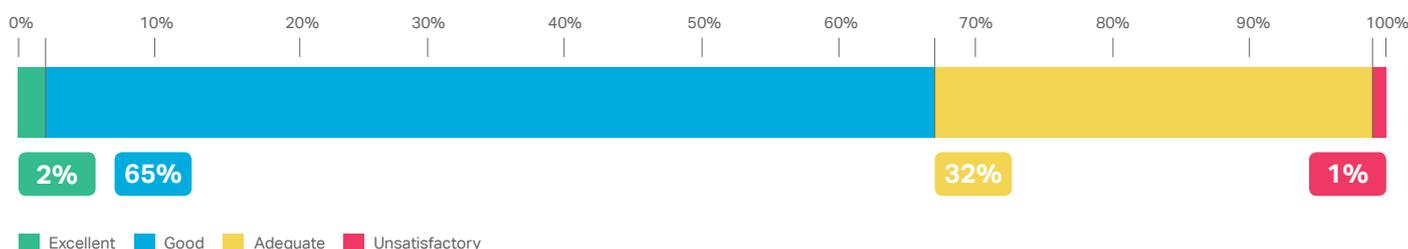
In schools where standards are good or better, boys and girls tend to perform as well as each other. Pupils eligible for free school meals generally perform as well as other pupils or their performance improves over time. Most pupils make strong progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs or English as an additional language.

This year, we have seen improvements in pupils' literacy skills and they apply these skills across the curriculum at the level that they achieve in their language lessons. In a majority of schools, standards of literacy in the Foundation Phase are good. In these schools, most pupils discuss their learning enthusiastically and listen attentively. Many make good progress with reading. By Year 2, most pupils read with enjoyment, talk about the books they like to read and refer to their favourite characters and plots with enthusiasm. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them to read unfamiliar words. More able pupils read accurately and expressively, and show good understanding when retelling stories. Younger pupils use their phonic knowledge to write simple words and short phrases and most make good progress. For example, they write simple sentences independently when making their own books on sea creatures. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils write appropriately in a range of styles, using basic punctuation accurately. For example, they write letters from a pirate ship, explaining their jobs. In the quarter of schools with recommendations relating to standards in literacy in the Foundation Phase, pupils do not write at length or for a range of purposes well enough. They use punctuation inconsistently and do not make plausible attempts at spelling new words.

In key stage 2, standards of literacy are good in around 68% of schools. Most pupils are enthusiastic about books and reading. They use the contents, index and glossary pages confidently to help them to find information and use dictionaries to find the meanings of unfamiliar words. More able pupils read fluently with very good understanding. They talk about the types of books they like to read and discuss plot, characters and setting in detail. By the end of Year 6, many pupils produce a wide range of written work of high quality, such as reports, biographies, letters or stories. They spell most words accurately and generally punctuate their work correctly. The most able use an increasingly rich and varied vocabulary and evaluate their work and its effect on the reader. In a minority of schools, many pupils do not write accurately and do not adapt their writing successfully to different genres. When discussing books, they do not understand characters or plot, and do not use ideas from books to enhance their own writing.

In around a quarter of schools, progress in improving pupils' numeracy skills is too variable. This is partly due to pupils' lack of confidence in applying numeracy skills outside of mathematics lessons. It also is related to a lack of relevant and engaging opportunities for them to apply their skills across the curriculum. Where standards of numeracy are good or better, pupils approach problem-solving with confidence, and discuss and refine their methods well. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils make good use of data, such as when collecting information in a tally chart for a traffic survey. They use this information well to create accurate graphs and to draw simple conclusions. Pupils in key stage 2 use the most appropriate method of recording data in different circumstances. For example, they draw line graphs accurately and interpret the information correctly when comparing temperatures and wind speeds. Where pupils' numeracy skills are strong, they explain

Figure 2.6: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



their mathematical reasoning confidently and justify the methods that they use to perform calculations. More able pupils look for patterns when investigating problems and express their findings correctly in simple algebraic terms.

In a majority of schools, there are important shortcomings in standards in ICT. Although most pupils use ICT appropriately for word processing, research and presentations, they do not develop their skills well enough in other elements of ICT, particularly modelling, and creating and using spreadsheets and databases, across the curriculum. Standards in ICT are good or better in only a minority of schools. Many pupils in these schools use a broad range of ICT skills to enhance their work across the curriculum. For example, they create interesting presentations that include hyperlinks and video, audio and interactive sources. They use quick response (QR) codes, and are beginning to develop simple programming skills. They use databases and spreadsheets to analyse costs and information for a class project.

Last year, we reported that standards in Welsh as a second language had not improved and this remains the case. This year, almost a third of English-medium schools inspected have a recommendation to improve Welsh as a second language. In these schools, pupils do not build on the Welsh that they learn in the Foundation Phase and do not use Welsh confidently outside formal Welsh lessons.

## Wellbeing

Standards of wellbeing are good or better in a majority of schools and this is similar to last year. In these schools, many pupils have good independent learning skills and co-operate well in lessons. They use a range of learning resources efficiently without teacher direction. Most pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Nearly all make healthy choices about the snacks they eat during school time and many explain the benefits of regular exercise and the effect this has on the body.

In most schools, pupils behave well during lessons and around the school. They treat adults and each other with respect.

In 2014-2015, there is a slight increase in overall attendance when compared with levels recorded last year. Even so, over a quarter of schools inspected this year still have a recommendation to improve attendance.

In most schools, school council representatives take their duties seriously and represent other pupils well. They lead on actions that improve the school environment and resources, such as introducing more activities at playtimes or choosing books for the school library. In a few schools, the school council is beginning to make suggestions about what is taught, though this is well established in only a very few schools. In these schools, pupils are involved in activities such as giving presentations to parents and sending out newsletters about their involvement in formulating child-friendly policies on equal opportunities, behaviour and anti-bullying.

### Pupils working together to plan the curriculum for their school

Learners in **Gladestry Primary School** work with both teaching staff and each other to set learning targets and improve their school environment. As a result, pupils are highly engaged and attendance is well above average.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

## Provision: Primary schools

Provision overall is good or better in three-quarters of schools inspected this year. This is a slight improvement on last year.

### Learning experiences

This year, we have seen planning for the development of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum improve. Planning for numeracy and ICT is generally not as strong and often does not help pupils to build on skills they develop as they move through the school. Where planning is most successful, the context for lessons is exciting and imaginative and there are relevant, engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills throughout the curriculum. Planning takes good account of opportunities to promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) while developing pupils' literacy skills. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators oversee the planning for skills and check for progression.

There are shortcomings in just under a third of schools, where planning does not ensure that pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills across a broad range of subjects and the focus for developing these skills is too narrow. Often, in these schools, teachers do not use the Skills Framework well for planning progression in ICT. In a few schools, there are important gaps in curriculum coverage, such as in religious education, and teachers often do not pay enough attention to science and the creative arts.

There are still a very few schools that are not implementing the Foundation Phase fully. In these schools, learning becomes too formal too quickly and pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop as independent learners or to make choices about what and how they learn. A few pupils have limited access to outdoor space and, where outdoor areas have been developed, they are not used well enough.

In many English-medium schools, teachers plan to develop pupils' skills in Welsh as a second language in Welsh lessons. However, there is less attention to consolidating pupils' oral skills and promoting the use of Welsh outside lessons. As a result, many pupils do not use Welsh confidently, and it remains an area for improvement in many schools.

### Teaching

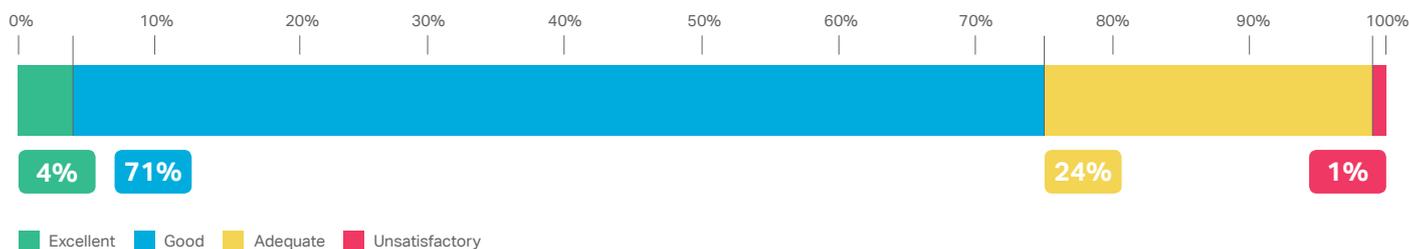
Around two-thirds of schools have good or better teaching and assessment. In these schools, teachers use a wide range of teaching methods and approaches. They design lessons that stimulate and engage pupils, often by setting interesting challenges and problems. Teachers and support staff use their expertise to collaborate and plan to deliver learning skilfully. Teachers ensure that lessons proceed at a lively pace and adapt their plans during lessons to respond to opportunities to take pupils' learning further or into related areas. Teachers question pupils skilfully to develop pupils' understanding.

There are shortcomings in teaching in a minority of schools. In these schools, many teachers do not vary the level of challenge to suit different groups of children or to make sure that they make the best progress possible. They do not use questioning to extend pupils' understanding.

Generally, the quality of teaching in ICT is better in the Foundation Phase than in key stage 2. This is mainly because the knowledge of ICT needed by Foundation Phase practitioners is less demanding than that needed in key stage 2. As a result, teachers and staff in the Foundation Phase are more confident to teach ICT.

Most schools have comprehensive systems for tracking pupils' progress, but a minority do not use this information to identify areas for improvement, particularly for groups of pupils, such as those with additional learning needs. This is because they tend

Figure 2.7: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



to focus too much on a single year's data rather than analysing broader trends over time. Where teachers' marking and feedback are particularly effective, teachers provide constructive advice that identifies what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils have time to respond to teachers' comments, and teachers check that pupils have improved the identified area in subsequent work. However, concerns raised last year about the quality of feedback to pupils remain. In schools where feedback is ineffective, pupils' targets for improvement do not relate to their work in lessons and teachers' marking does not take account of these targets.

## Care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance is good or better in around 93% of schools. Nearly all schools have appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. In most schools, there is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take regular exercise through timetabled physical education lessons, access to a variety of physical play equipment at playtimes, and extra-curricular activities. Most schools have suitable policies and procedures to address bullying and to promote good behaviour. Promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength in most schools.

Over the past few years, most schools have focused closely on improving pupils' attendance and generally have appropriate systems to support this. However, they do not always monitor how effective these systems are in improving attendance or act quickly enough when problems arise. An increasing number of schools have strong links with services to support vulnerable families. They help families to understand what their child is doing in school and how they can help them. They also make them aware of the importance of good attendance. Most schools have appropriate procedures to identify and support pupils with additional learning needs. They keep parents informed about their child's targets and progress, and use external services to access specialist advice. As last year, nearly all schools have suitable arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

## Learning environment

Most schools are welcoming and inclusive. Staff take good account of pupils' individual needs and ensure that they have equal access to all opportunities. Most schools emphasise the importance of celebrating diversity through the curriculum, through assemblies and in displays that acknowledge pupils' achievements and enhance their learning about different cultures.

Most schools have good or better learning environments. Where there are limitations of size and design, staff often use additional space creatively to develop learning areas or to organise and store equipment so that it is accessible to pupils. A few schools do not have easy access to outdoor areas from Foundation Phase classrooms and this limits pupils' choices about how and what they would like to learn.

### Drama into writing

**St Gwladys Bargoed Primary School** has used the process and techniques of drama to motivate speakers, readers and writers in lessons. All staff have gained knowledge of a range of drama techniques, which they have integrated into lessons to engage pupils, and help them to shape the content of their writing.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

## Leadership and management: Primary schools

Leadership and management are good or better in seven in ten schools. This is the same as last year.

### Leadership

In the very few schools where leadership is excellent, senior leaders and governors agree a clear strategic direction. They establish a vision based on continuous improvement among staff and share this effectively with the parents and the school community. They create an ethos where staff collaborate and have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Pupils contribute well to school improvement and leaders take account of their views. Staff analyse information about pupils' performance systematically, and regular, robust monitoring of standards informs improvement planning. Leadership at all levels is particularly strong, ensuring that staff know what is expected of them and nurturing a strong culture of accountability. The headteacher builds the leadership capacity of all staff by providing opportunities for less experienced staff to shadow those in management or co-ordinator roles.

Where leadership is at least good, senior and middle leaders challenge and support their colleagues to drive forward improvement. They model good or excellent teaching themselves and address underperformance in teaching and standards. Good schools share leadership roles among staff at all levels to develop leadership skills in more practitioners. They define leadership roles clearly and focus these on improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, headteachers occasionally take on too many new initiatives at the same time, not all of which need to be priorities for their school. Also, in a few schools, headteachers rely too heavily on one solution to a complex issue, for example using a single published scheme that promotes literacy or numeracy, but narrows the curriculum. Stronger headteachers resist these pressures, focus on the areas that require most improvement and ensure that the curriculum is

broad and balanced. Most schools have appropriate arrangements to manage the performance of staff. However, few use performance management to develop the skills of potential leaders.

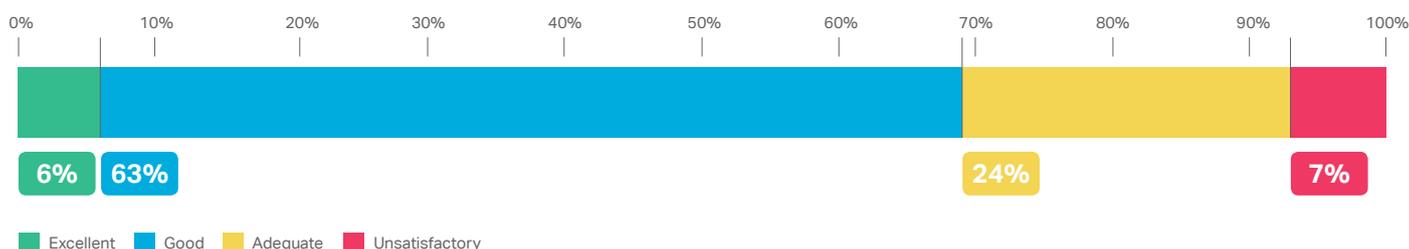
Just over a quarter of schools inspected have a recommendation to improve the work of the governing body. Many governors now provide more challenge to school leaders than in the past, but improving the ability of governing bodies to challenge school leaders remains a recommendation in around 15% of schools. In a few schools, governors are not involved enough in self-evaluation and improvement planning or in setting the school's strategic direction.

### Improving quality

A majority of schools have effective processes for improving quality, and the priorities identified in school development plans are being linked better to the findings of self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is most effective when it is an ongoing process and not carried out just for inspection. In a minority of schools, self-evaluation focuses too much on provision and plans rather than standards achieved by pupils. For example, schools consider how teachers mark books instead of considering the difference that marking makes to the standards pupils achieve.

Many schools use a wide range of data to analyse pupil performance and to track their progress. More schools are using data effectively to track the progress of specific groups of pupils, but this remains underdeveloped in a few schools. Where the analysis of performance data is most effective, it raises questions and informs judgements on how well the school is doing, as well as adding to a range of first-hand evidence on pupil standards and the quality of provision.

Figure 2.8: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



## Partnership working

Most schools have strong partnerships with parents and provide them with useful information about school activities, increasingly through social media. A few schools provide opportunities for parents to participate in lessons alongside their children to gain a better understanding of how and what they learn. Many schools have successful partnerships with local companies and organisations that enhance the curriculum and provide purposeful contexts for learning, such as visiting a restaurant to learn about food safety and healthy eating. Nearly all schools link with local secondary schools to aid pupils' transition to their next stage of learning. Only a few schools ask pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of this process.

## Resource management

Around two-thirds of schools provide good or better value for money. In these schools, leaders deploy staff well, and teachers and support staff have roles that make the best use of their expertise and experience. Schools usually have suitable arrangements for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time and, in many cases, these help teachers teaching similar age groups to plan together. Performance management arrangements identify and meet staff development needs and link appropriately to school improvement priorities. There is a wide range of learning resources of good quality, and staff use the accommodation well to enhance pupils' learning. Networks of professional practice focus on improving teaching and learning. The allocation of financial resources relates closely to priorities in the school improvement plan and to the professional development needs of staff. In the minority of schools where resource management is less effective, leaders and managers do not measure the impact of spending plans on outcomes for pupils.

Leaders in many primary schools use the funding available through the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) well. They plan and spend the money on a variety of strategies that improve the progress, attainment and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils. Designated staff in leadership roles usually co-ordinate and evaluate the provision for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders in a few

schools that make excellent use of this funding ensure that nearly all disadvantaged pupils, including the more able, make good progress. In a minority of schools, leaders do not plan or evaluate the impact of initiatives on pupil outcomes well enough. A very few schools make poor use of the funding. For example, they use it to maintain staffing levels, with the grant having little or no impact on the pupils who should benefit from it.

### Involving pupils in school policies

**Llanmiloe C.P. School**, Carmarthenshire, involves all pupils in the school self-evaluation process. Pupils are given the opportunity to contribute their thoughts on school policies and have helped to create the 'Pupil Anti-Bullying Policy'. Children feel valued and take more responsibility for their learning.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

### Peer observation

**Romilly Primary School** has set up a Peer Observation Project that allows teachers to observe lessons being delivered by their colleagues. Having identified an area of perceived weakness in a year group, teachers plan collaboratively for a forthcoming lesson, then observing as it is delivered, prior to formal feedback. This has ensured greater consistency in delivery of lessons across classes.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

## Follow-up activity: primary schools

### Primary schools

During 2014-2015, we revisited all of the primary schools that required special measures or significant improvement in 2013-2014. Inspectors have removed all of these schools from further follow-up. Most primary schools that required Estyn monitoring following inspection in 2013-2014 have made good progress and no longer require follow-up. A very few primary schools requiring Estyn monitoring during 2013-2014 have not made enough progress. They now require significant improvement. A few primary schools identified as requiring monitoring by their local authority in 2013-2014 have also made slow progress, particularly in improving pupils' attendance, and they continue to require monitoring.

**Rogerstone Primary School** is in Newport local authority. In December 2013, inspectors judged that the school needed significant improvement. In February 2015, inspectors found that it made very good progress and no longer requires monitoring.

A key factor in the school's progress has been the stability of leadership and management responsibilities, enabling leaders and teachers to develop their roles well. The remodelled self-evaluation and school improvement planning systems are robust and leaders and staff now understand the school's strengths and areas for development.

There is a clear annual assessment timetable. Teachers work with staff from other schools to standardise and moderate pupils' work, using portfolios of levelled work to ensure reliable and valid judgements. Teachers' predictions of what pupils will achieve are realistic and based on sound evidence. Teachers have an accurate picture of what pupils can do and clear expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Cross-phase curriculum teams for literacy, numeracy and ICT enable staff to share the responsibility for school improvement. Short-term plans provide a coherent and progressive approach to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Curriculum team activities enable staff to develop and refine their leadership skills and help to raise staff morale.

The school has raised the profile of the Welsh language across the school considerably. Pupils enjoy Welsh lessons, make good progress in speaking, reading and writing in Welsh and use the language confidently around the school.

Pupils now use the extensive school grounds effectively to enjoy a variety of play opportunities in a safe environment. Pupils recognise that changes have resulted in happier playtimes.

For more information, please click on the [monitoring visit report](#)





The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report Secondary schools

In January 2015, there were 207 secondary schools in Wales. This is six fewer than in January 2014. The number of pupils in secondary schools continues to decrease. In January 2015, the number on roll was 182,408, a decrease of around 4,000 pupils from the previous year. This year, we inspected 37 secondary schools.

## Summary: Secondary schools

This year saw a polarisation in inspection outcomes. There was an increase in the proportion of excellent schools and those with unsatisfactory judgements.

In 2014-2015, nearly one in six schools were judged to have excellent outcomes (16%). This is the highest proportion since 2010. Inspectors identified excellent practice in 38% of secondary schools inspected this year. This is 13 percentage points higher than last year. Around one in four schools inspected this year were judged to have excellent leadership. In these schools, senior leaders have established a shared sense of ambition and pride, and an ethos of co-operation, support and trust. Leaders at all levels make improving teaching a key priority.

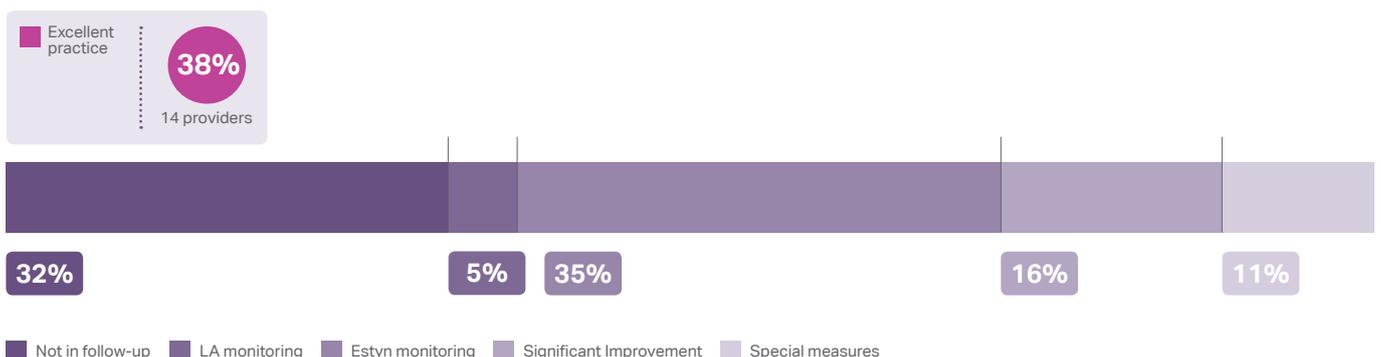
The number of schools requiring monitoring by Estyn decreased from 17 last year to 13 this year. Most of these schools have poor performance in one or more of the core subjects. In these schools, teaching and assessment are generally effective, but in a minority of instances there are important shortcomings and pupils make less progress than they are capable of, particularly in mathematics, English or Welsh. In many of these schools, leaders are beginning to address these shortcomings, but do not compare their performance with that of similar schools.

This year, 10 schools were placed in a statutory category compared with one last year. Six schools were judged to need significant improvement and four were placed in special measures. All of these schools have significant shortcomings in their quality improvement processes.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)



Figure 2.9: Percentages of secondary schools in levels of follow-up



# Outcomes: Secondary schools

## Standards

Standards are good or better in two-fifths of secondary schools. This figure is lower than it was last year.

There is an increase in the proportion of schools where inspectors judged standards to be excellent. In schools where standards are excellent, pupils of all abilities make very good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. They develop their subject knowledge well and apply this knowledge thoughtfully to make predictions, reach conclusions and develop analogies. In these schools, pupils' examination performance (including in English or Welsh and mathematics at key stage 4) is consistently well above expectations. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is better than in similar schools and both boys and girls perform better than pupils in similar schools. However, only in a few of these schools do pupils apply their ICT skills well across the curriculum.

In many of the other schools inspected this year, pupils write at length for different purposes and audiences across the curriculum. A majority of pupils express their ideas clearly and write mainly accurately. However, a minority of pupils make too many basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In general, boys do not write as well as girls. They do not express themselves as clearly and tend to produce shorter, poorly structured responses to written tasks. A minority of pupils offer only short, underdeveloped answers to their teachers' oral questions. This shortcoming tends to be more common among girls than boys. In the majority of these schools, many pupils are competent readers, but a minority, particularly boys, lack confidence and read without much expression.

In just over a half of schools, pupils use their numeracy skills well in appropriate contexts across the curriculum. In the remainder, pupils do not use their numeracy often enough or in challenging contexts in subjects other than mathematics. In a minority of schools, pupils have a poor grasp of basic numeracy skills, such as multiplication,

making accurate measurements and using decimals and fractions. In these schools, pupils' examination performance is consistently below that in other similar schools, often because of weaker progress in mathematics.

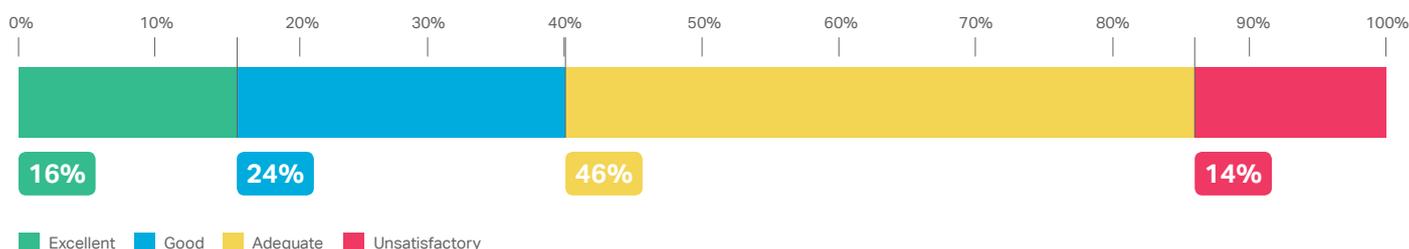
Most pupils are enthusiastic users of ICT and generally learn how to use unfamiliar software quickly. However, in most schools, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their ICT skills in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils tend to use low-level skills, such as word processing or producing simple slide presentations.

In many schools, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their targets. Many pupils with specific difficulties in reading, literacy or numeracy develop these skills well when selected to work for a limited period in separate groups. Most then apply and improve their reading skills when returning to mainstream lessons, catching up with other pupils of the same age. However, writing often remains a weakness for many of these pupils.

In the majority of good schools, the performance and progress of pupils eligible for free school meals generally compare well with those of the same group of pupils in similar schools. In a minority of schools, pupils eligible for free school meals do not make enough progress and perform less well than those in similar schools in examination indicators that include English or Welsh and mathematics.

In Welsh-medium schools, most pupils are fluent in Welsh and use the language well in lessons, although a minority of pupils do not always use their Welsh across the curriculum or beyond the classroom. In English-medium schools, standards in Welsh are improving slowly in key stage 3, but from a low base. In general, pupils do not practise their Welsh often enough outside Welsh lessons to gain the confidence to use the language.

Figure 2.10: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Wellbeing

Wellbeing is good or better in around two-thirds of schools.

In the few schools where wellbeing is excellent, pupils enjoy school, and attendance compares well with that in similar schools. In many of these schools, pupils express their views regularly on aspects of teaching and learning. Pupils are involved in decisions about how and what they learn and this increases their engagement in learning. However, in a majority of schools, pupils do not have a significant input to the development of teaching and learning.

In most schools, pupils make good progress in their understanding of how to eat healthily and of the importance of exercise in leading a healthy life. Participation in extra-curricular sporting activities is high in many schools. However, participation decreases as pupils get older. Many pupils take part in activities in their local community and raise funds for charities.

In general, most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are punctual to lessons and only a very few display negative attitudes towards their work or disrupt the learning of others. Most pupils feel safe in school and many think that their school deals well with bullying. In most schools, many pupils are polite, considerate and respectful to each other and to their teachers.

Most pupils understand the importance of regular attendance. Attendance rates continue to improve and the variation in attendance between schools continues to reduce. In many schools, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is improving, although there remains a gap of around five percentage points between this group of pupils and others. A minority of schools have recommendations to improve attendance.

### School council initiatives

**Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi** has shown an inclusive ethos through the activities of the school council. The council regularly undertakes projects on aspects of school provision, providing pupils' opinions on teaching strategies, reviewing the quality of marking and feedback, and raising awareness of all types of bullying, working closely with the Senior Leadership Team.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

## Provision: Secondary schools

Provision is good or better in around half of secondary schools inspected this year. This is a lower proportion than last year due mainly to shortcomings in provision for developing pupils' skills and inconsistency in the quality of teaching or assessment.

### Learning experiences

A few schools offer pupils exceptional learning experiences. Innovative curriculum arrangements have a significant impact on the quality and breadth of provision, on the development of pupils' skills, and on their attitudes to learning and outcomes. These innovations include discrete lessons focusing on elements of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and opportunities for pupils to take part in extended activities that capture their interest.

Around a half of schools have suitable plans to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. These schools also provide useful support for pupils experiencing difficulties with these skills. However, in almost half of schools, planning and co-ordination for progression in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are weak. Often, planned activities offer pupils very low challenge, for example tasks in which they copy text, perform simple calculations or cut and paste rather than analysing and summarising information.

In the majority of schools, the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is patchy and poorly co-ordinated. Only a very few schools have embraced the use of new technologies, such as tablet computers, across the curriculum.

In the majority of English-medium schools, although many pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh, there are not enough planned opportunities to develop their confidence in speaking the language.

A few bilingual schools do not make sure that pupils who previously learnt through the medium of Welsh in key stage 2 and key stage 3 continue to make enough

progress in Welsh in key stage 4. In addition, they do not promote the social use of the language well enough. In the majority of English-medium schools, although many pupils have positive attitudes towards speaking Welsh, there is not enough planning to develop their confidence in speaking the language.

Many schools offer a wide range of courses to meet the interests of most pupils as well as a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Most schools have suitable provision for the development of pupils' understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship.

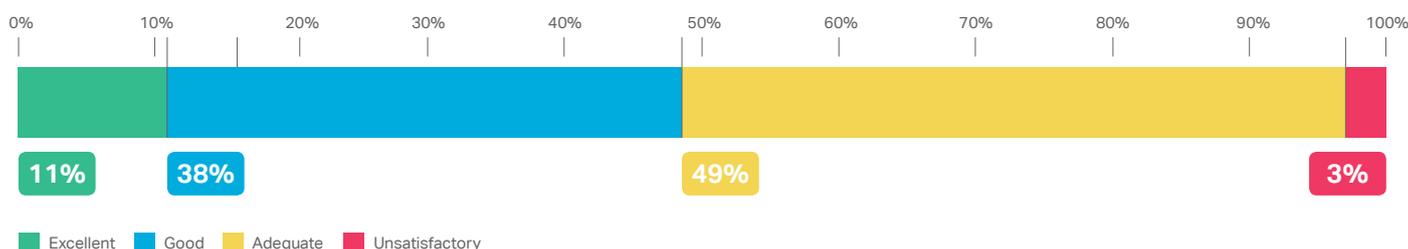
### Teaching

Teaching is good or better in about half of schools. In these schools, teachers have clear learning objectives for their lessons and plan to ensure a suitable pace and a variety of activities. They use assessment information to ensure that activities meet the needs of pupils across the ability range. They monitor pupils' progress carefully and provide them with useful feedback so that they understand what they need to do to improve their work.

In the very few schools where teaching is outstanding, teachers create an atmosphere in which pupils feel confident to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Lessons are planned meticulously to provide high levels of challenge. Teachers capture pupils' interest with imaginative and relevant activities. They ask probing and challenging questions that encourage pupils to become curious, independent learners.

In about a half of schools, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and activities are not challenging enough. In about half of lessons, teachers do not adapt work to stretch more able pupils or support those of lower ability. Lessons often proceed at too slow a pace. Teachers' questioning is superficial and focuses too much on the recall of facts. A few teachers offer pupils too much direction and explanation, rather than encouraging them to think for themselves.

Figure 2.11: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



In around half of schools, teachers give pupils useful written and oral feedback about their work. They pay close attention to subject skills, the clarity of expression and the accuracy of writing. A few teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to improve their work through redrafting or completing similar tasks in light of their feedback. However, there are important shortcomings and inconsistencies in assessment in the remaining schools. Although marking is up-to-date, is it often superficial and does not give enough guidance to pupils on how to improve. Expectations about how pupils should respond to marking are unclear and inconsistent across departments.

A majority of schools have robust systems for tracking pupils' progress. In these schools, staff monitor pupils' progress closely and make sure that there is support for those with literacy and numeracy difficulties or who are underperforming. In around half of schools, leaders use tracking information well to monitor the performance of different groups of pupils and plan to address their needs. However, in a minority of schools, information inputted to tracking systems is not accurate enough to enable teachers and leaders to monitor performance.

## Care, support and guidance

A majority of schools have well-established arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe and receive useful support and guidance. These schools are particularly successful in helping pupils who are experiencing difficulties, or those with additional learning needs or are disadvantaged. Many schools have developed a wide range of external partnerships to support pupils and ensure that they can access external support agencies or bespoke advice and guidance. In a few schools, there is highly effective targeted support for the most vulnerable pupils. This includes a comprehensive range of personalised support, as well as diagnostic testing to identify and track the progress of pupils. Many schools have suitable systems to identify pupils in need of support. They provide useful advice and guidance, and communicate regularly with parents or carers. In a few schools, individual educational plans for pupils with additional learning needs do not give teachers enough guidance about pupils' specific needs or identify useful strategies about how to support them in mainstream classes.

Most schools promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies and form tutor periods. In a few schools, form tutor time is not used effectively and activities do not engage pupils. As we reported last year, most schools have suitable arrangements for safeguarding pupils. In a very few schools, these arrangements are not comprehensive enough to address bullying and any poor behaviour.

## Learning environment

Many schools provide an inclusive learning environment where pupils are encouraged to participate in all aspects of school life. These schools make it clear that pupils are valued highly and expect all to succeed. They provide a stimulating and caring atmosphere, where pupils thrive and respond positively to each other and to staff. In most schools, the accommodation is stimulating, attractive and well maintained.

A few schools have not succeeded in ensuring that all pupils share a sense of belonging or understand the value of working hard. These schools have low expectations of the standards, behaviour and attendance required of pupils. In a very few, there are health and safety issues related to the school buildings and grounds. These shortcomings include insufficient arrangements to monitor how and when older pupils leave the school site during the school day and concerns about site safety.

### Teaching practices create high quality learning experiences

**Stanwell School** is focused on creating a climate of mutual respect between teachers and pupils. The school has high expectations, which have boosted success rates across the curriculum for all groups of learners.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

# Leadership and management: Secondary schools

## Leadership

Leadership and management are good or better in 43% of the schools inspected this year.

Where leadership is excellent, in around a quarter of schools, headteachers and senior leaders provide a clear vision and strategic direction. They promote a shared sense of ambition within an ethos of co-operation, support and trust. Leaders at all levels make improving teaching a key priority in securing outstanding outcomes. They challenge and support staff to improve through clear performance management arrangements. Leadership of initiatives is often shared widely among staff, promoting a strong sense of teamwork. Consistency in leadership is also a key feature.

However, leadership is adequate at best in nearly three in five schools. In these schools, responsibilities are often not distributed effectively among staff. Records of senior and middle leaders' meetings vary in detail and quality, limiting leaders' ability to monitor work and ensure accountability. In a minority of cases, meetings focus mainly on administrative matters, rather than on improving teaching and learning, and clear action points are not identified. Performance data and information from lesson observations are not used to monitor progress or to improve teaching and standards. In a few schools, instead of planning to improve learning in lessons, leaders arrange additional lessons and revision sessions.

In a very few schools, leadership is unsatisfactory. This is because of a lack of direction, insufficient focus on important aspects that need improvement and the absence of procedures to hold staff to account for standards and teaching.

In many schools, governors have a clear understanding of their role. They recognise the importance of challenging leaders to promote high standards and improve teaching and assessment. Many governing

bodies have developed links with subject departments that enable them to have a better understanding of what is happening in the school. In a minority of schools, governors do not know enough about the significance of performance data and do not challenge leaders enough.

## Improving quality

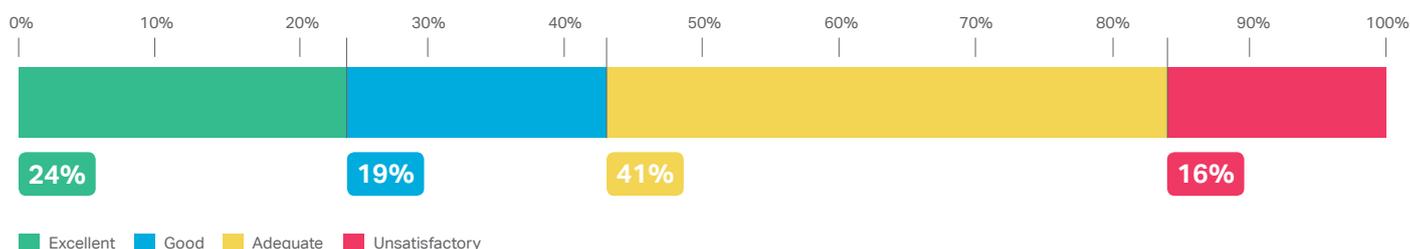
Although improving quality is excellent in around one in five schools, over half of schools have important shortcomings. In over a quarter, it is unsatisfactory. In these schools, there have often been recent changes to policy and procedures, and new ways of working that have not had enough time to impact on teaching and learning.

In the few schools where improving quality is excellent, leaders have established systematic and thorough processes to enable staff at all levels to review strengths and identify areas for improvement. This includes comprehensive arrangements for leaders to scrutinise pupils' work and compare their findings with information from lesson observations and performance data. Leaders understand and evaluate data well and set suitably ambitious targets for improvement. As well as sustaining high performance, this improves consistency in teaching and in feedback to pupils.

In a majority of schools, there is a clear link between self-evaluation and improvement planning. Where improving quality is good or better, self-evaluation reports are comprehensive and evaluative. They identify strengths and areas for improvement objectively, relate planning for improvement directly to these reports and prioritise areas for improvement. These schools also make swift progress in addressing recommendations from previous inspections.

In a minority of schools, whole-school and departmental evaluation reports are too long, descriptive, and overly generous. They do not evaluate the impact of teaching, marking and provision on standards. Improvement

Figure 2.12: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



plans do not prioritise the main areas for development. In a few cases, planned actions are vague or leaders do not use evidence from lesson observations to make commonly identified shortcomings a focus for improvement. Often, leaders judge their success by comparing their results with previous outcomes in the school, rather than with results in similar schools.

In just over a quarter of schools, self-evaluation is unsatisfactory and important aspects, such as teaching and assessment, are missing from self-evaluation reports. The link between self-evaluation and planning for improvement is unclear, and these schools do not address the most important weaknesses identified from self-evaluation rigorously enough. As a result, shortcomings in standards and provision persist.

## Partnership working

Many schools have strong links with a wide range of partners to improve the quality of provision and support pupils. A strength in partnership working is the way in which schools work with each other and local further education colleges to extend the range of courses available to pupils. Many schools have suitable arrangements for quality assuring these courses.

Many schools have strong links with a range of agencies to support disadvantaged or vulnerable pupils well. This includes partnerships with other providers and community groups that help to improve standards and attendance and reduce exclusions.

Almost all schools have worthwhile partnerships with their partner primary schools to ensure that pupils settle well when they join the school in Year 7. However, a minority of schools have not developed close enough curriculum links with their primary partners. As a result, pupils spend too much time in Year 7 and Year 8 repeating work that they have already done or completing tasks that are not challenging enough.

Most schools have positive relationships with parents and the majority provide regular and useful updates to parents about school life. However, a few schools have poor relationships with a significant proportion of parents. Often websites are out of date or contain limited information and parents do not feel that their concerns are taken seriously enough.

## Resource management

Resource management is good or better in around two-fifths of schools.

A minority of schools provide a comprehensive range of professional development opportunities for staff, including middle leader development and fixed-term secondments to senior leadership. These schools create a culture of collaboration and share good practice in teaching approaches, assessment and skills development. Working groups focus well on developing provision for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. In these schools, staff reflect on the success of their teaching practices to develop their long-term planning. However, in a minority of schools there are limited opportunities for structured staff development.

In many schools, the headteacher and governors monitor spending closely and manage resources well, although a quarter of schools have budget deficits (supported by agreed recovery plans).

A majority of schools make effective use of PDG funding through well-designed activities to improve outcomes and attendance of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Strategies include tailored support for specific pupils by learning support assistants, improving engagement with families and practical measures to ensure that they are in school and ready to learn. In a minority of schools, leaders have not evaluated the impact of the PDG plans formally.

### Professional learning through classroom-based research raises standards in literacy and numeracy

**Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr**, Swansea, is committed to raising standards in literacy and numeracy as well as improving the level of achievement of more able and talented pupils. Teachers formed working groups to observe pupils and fed back in training sessions. Strategies were then developed to help pupils to develop their skills. As a result, not only have staff skills been strengthened, but pupils' results have improved.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

## Follow-up activity: Secondary schools

Of the 15 Estyn monitoring activities undertaken in 2014-2015, three schools were removed from Estyn monitoring. Two schools were placed in significant improvement following poor examination results. The other 10 schools had made some progress, but overall had not improved enough. In six of these, there had been changes of leadership since the inspection. Another four had moved from local authority monitoring to Estyn monitoring last year and had not sustained progress against the original recommendations.

At the beginning of the year, there were four schools in need of significant improvement. During the year, two were removed from this category. In these schools there were considerable improvements in the extent and rigour of self-evaluation, which led to improvements in teaching and learning and in outcomes and examination results. In the other two schools, progress in improving the quality of leadership and teaching was too slow and had not had enough impact on improving outcomes. These schools still need significant improvement.

At the beginning of the year there were seven schools in special measures. During the year, three made good progress and were removed from this category. All three schools demonstrated improvements in leadership and the quality of teaching that led to improvements in outcomes and examination results. One school closed while in special measures. The other schools have made limited progress in addressing the recommendations from the core inspection. Leadership in these schools has not secured improvements in self-evaluation, improvement planning, the quality of teaching or provision for skills. Shortcomings identified in teaching and learning at the time of the core inspection remain and progress in improving examination results has been slow or has declined.

**Ysgol Gyfun Brynrefail** in Gwynedd was identified as requiring significant improvement following its core inspection in November, 2012. Inspectors judged its performance and prospects for improvement to be adequate because of shortcomings in standards, provision and leadership. During a monitoring visit in November 2014, inspectors found that the school had made strong progress towards nearly all the recommendations from the core inspection. It no longer requires follow-up from Estyn.

For more information, please click on the [monitoring visit report](#)



## Section 2: Sector report Maintained special schools

In January 2015, there were 39 maintained special schools in Wales. This is three fewer than in January 2014. 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 slightly year-on-year. In January 2015, the number on roll was 4,444, an increase of 106 pupils from the previous year.

This year we inspected seven maintained special schools.

For more information about the seven schools inspected, please click on the inspection reports:

- [Maesgwyn Special School](#)
- [Ysgol Rhydygors](#)
- [Canolfan Addysg Y Bont](#)
- [Ysgol Maes-y-Coed](#)
- [Ysgol Hen Felin](#)
- [Ysgol Penmaes](#)
- [Mounton House Special School](#)

## Summary: Maintained special schools

This year, we identified three special schools as having excellent practice in one or more areas. No school was judged as excellent overall. In two of the schools with excellent practice, there are highly effective multi-agency partnerships that contribute exceptionally well towards improving pupils' health and wellbeing. In one, the partnership with an independent training provider supports staff to develop consistent approaches to behaviour management. Along with training and advice for parents on how to manage their children's challenging behaviour, this work helps pupils to improve their behaviour and develop their communication skills and wellbeing. As a result, pupils' levels of engagement and attendance have improved and the number of exclusions has reduced.

Five out of the seven schools inspected this year require follow-up. In four of these schools, there are shortcomings in self-evaluation. For example, three of the schools failed to identify important areas that need improvement and one school has just begun to develop its processes for self-evaluation. Two of these schools were placed in statutory categories. Both of these schools provide for pupils whose main needs are emotional, social and behavioural.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

Figure 2.13: Numbers of maintained special schools in levels of follow-up



# Outcomes: Maintained special schools

## Standards

Five of the schools inspected this year have good standards and two other schools have adequate standards. This is the first year in this cycle of inspection that no school was judged to have excellent standards.

Where standards are good, pupils develop their communication skills well. Nearly all pupils listen attentively. They respond to questioning and answer verbally or with appropriate alternatives, such as selecting relevant pictures to describe the weather. In these schools, nearly all pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills well. For example, they count change in the café, measure ingredients in the kitchen and buy items in the local shop. More able pupils develop their thinking skills, for example learning how to keep safe in the kitchen. As they progress through the school, most learn how to complete tasks more independently. In the two schools where standards are adequate, pupils make limited progress in using their skills, particularly numeracy and ICT.

In all schools, many older pupils gain relevant qualifications and proficiency in work-based skills that prepare them for future life. These achievements represent significant progress. Only a very few school-leavers do not go on to further education, training or a job.

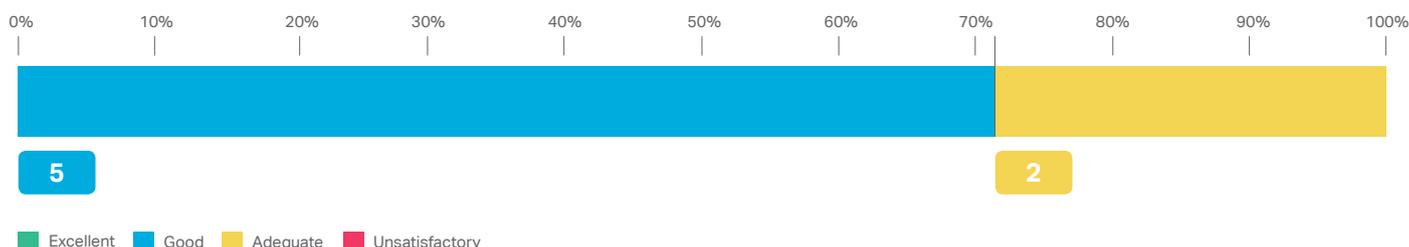
## Wellbeing

Five of the schools have good outcomes for pupils' wellbeing, although it is adequate in one school and unsatisfactory in the other. In schools where wellbeing is good, pupils behave well. They show respect for others, help each other during lessons and support younger pupils around the school. They develop life skills by working with their community, through activities such as hosting coffee mornings or funding raising events. In two schools, a few pupils do not attend well and their poor behaviour has led to increases in fixed-term exclusions.

In all schools, the school councils are working well. The pupils involved develop their understanding of their rights, learn to listen to the views of others and take on positions of responsibility. For example, in one school, pupil members have been actively involved in shaping the curriculum and contributing to self-evaluation. As a result, travel training that supports independence has increased and the school has developed a pupil-friendly prospectus.

Most pupils develop a good understanding of how to be healthy and fit. They make sensible food choices and take part in break-time sport and team games. A few are particularly successful and compete internationally.

Figure 2.14: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision: Maintained special schools

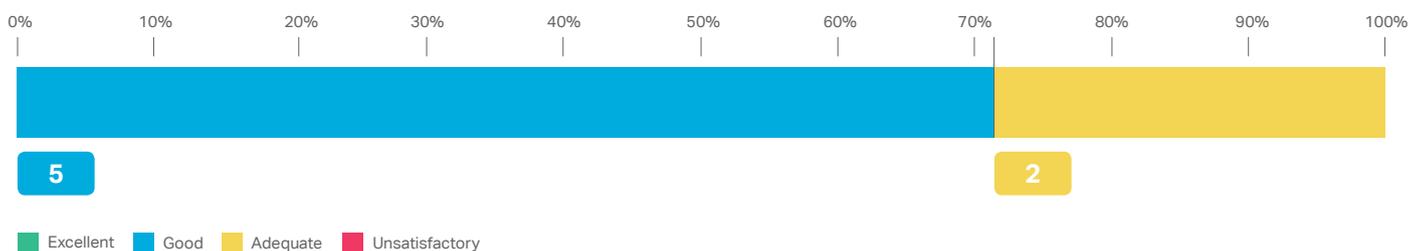
The quality of learning experiences is good in five schools and adequate in two. In six schools, staff plan effective strategies to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' individual needs. As pupils move through these schools, the curriculum builds well on their knowledge, understanding and skills. Staff use their knowledge of the pupils to plan a wide range of interesting learning opportunities. For example, in one school, on 'Wellie Wednesday' pupils use the outdoors to practise their social, literacy and numeracy skills in the wider community. In one school, pupils do not have access to the required range of subjects.

Across all schools, the majority of staff have high expectations of pupils. They extend pupils' subject knowledge and develop their skills through practical experiences, such as running the school shop. In two schools, a minority of lessons lack pace, teachers do not maintain pupils' interest and this has a negative impact on pupils' behaviour.

Planning, co-ordination and monitoring of opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills are progressing well, although, in two schools, ICT and numeracy are not as developed. In five schools, planning for communication is innovative and encourages pupils' full participation. Specialised technology and therapy, such as eye-gaze and voice-activated switches, help pupils towards independence and better access to the curriculum.

Typically, care, support and guidance are strong in special schools. However, in three schools inspected this year, the quality of care, support and guidance is only adequate and in one school it is unsatisfactory. These schools do not plan and co-ordinate personal and social education well enough. Aspects of safeguarding are a cause for concern in three schools because policies and procedures are not sufficiently robust or comprehensive.

Figure 2.15: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management: Maintained special schools

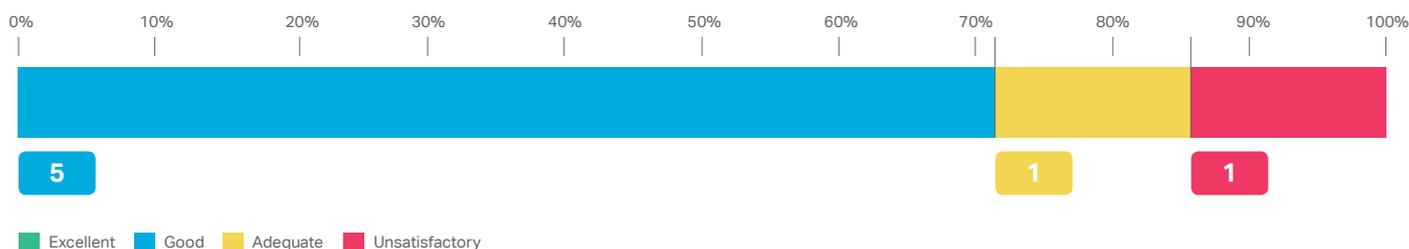
Five schools inspected this year have good leadership. In one school, leadership is only adequate and in another it is unsatisfactory. In the schools with good leadership, the headteacher creates a culture of high expectations and gives clear direction to the school. Leaders in two of the schools are slow to implement plans and initiatives. Generally, governors provide effective support to nearly all schools, although they are still developing their ability to challenge leaders robustly.

Only three schools have effective processes for improving quality. Here, staff evaluate pupils' performance through observations, scrutiny of work, and analysis of data. They use this information to identify priorities and link these to development plans and staff development objectives. However, self-evaluation arrangements in the other schools lack rigour and do not identify areas for improvement. These schools do not use data well enough to monitor and evaluate progress or to inform future planning.

Two schools have developed excellent partnership working, which is lower than the proportion identified in previous years. One school is adequate and four are good in this area of their work. Nearly all schools have well-established links with a suitable range of partners. In one school where partnerships are excellent, a strong partnership with the local health board means that pupils and their families benefit from outpatient clinics with paediatricians at the school, as well as physiotherapy and support from school nurses. These integrated services contribute exceptionally well towards improving pupils' health and wellbeing. In a minority of schools, partnerships with mainstream schools to improve pupils' learning experiences are underdeveloped.

Five schools manage their resources well. They use the talents and expertise of staff effectively, including support staff working particularly closely with teachers to contribute to pupils' learning and wellbeing. All schools provide a stimulating learning environment and offer a wide range of specialist resources. Around half of schools provide a valuable advice and guidance service to mainstream schools through outreach programmes.

Figure 2.16: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



## Follow-up activity: Maintained special schools

This year, we carried out a follow up visit to one school which was placed in Estyn monitoring in 2013-2014 due to shortcomings in leadership. In this school, leaders now provide strategic direction, focused clearly on raising standards. Leaders use a range of evidence to analyse pupil progress, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and think strategically. A consistent approach to curriculum planning and an effective system of distributed leadership have led to successful planning for improvement throughout the school. This school has made good progress and does not require any further monitoring visits.

### Developing partnerships paves way to greater pupil engagement

With an ever increasing demand for their services, **Ysgol Hen Felin** managed to maintain a happy learning environment for pupils with severe behavioural and sensory difficulties. Recognising the specialism of one of their partners, they developed a new approach to manage pupils' behaviours. This led to higher pupil wellbeing and lower behaviour incidents.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)





## Section 2: Sector report Independent special schools

In January 2015, there were 33 independent special schools in Wales. These schools educate approximately 550 pupils 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.

During 2014-2015, one new independent special school opened. Two schools closed during the year. They were not educating any pupils at the time.

In July 2015, four schools had no pupils. This is because there were no young people in the linked children's homes or because the young people residing in the homes were attending mainstream schools or alternative educational provision.

In addition to full inspections, Estyn carries out regular monitoring inspections of independent special schools. This year, we inspected two independent special schools and carried out 19 monitoring visits.

For more information about the two schools inspected, please click on the inspection reports:

[Craig Y Parc School](#)  
[Cilddewi Uchaf](#)

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## Summary: Independent special schools

Neither of the schools inspected this year was identified as having excellent practice.

### 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. Both of the schools inspected this year met all of the standards.

Six of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process did not meet all of the standards. Five of them failed to comply with Standard 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils. In many of these schools, policies relating to safeguarding, educational visits or anti-bullying do not provide clear enough guidance for staff.

Three schools that were registered in 2013-2014 received follow-up registration visits to check compliance with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

Figure 2.17: Numbers of independent special schools that met regulations / did not meet all regulations



# Outcomes: Independent special schools

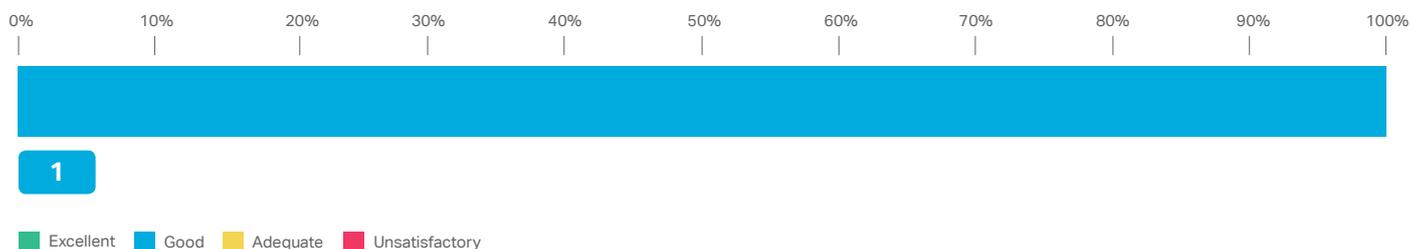
## Standards and wellbeing

One of the two schools inspected in 2014-2015 has fewer than five pupils. Because of this, Estyn did not make judgements on standards or wellbeing.

For more information about standards and wellbeing in the school with more than five pupils, please click on the [inspection report for Craig Y Parc School](#).



Figure 2.18: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision: Independent special schools

Provision is good in one of the schools inspected and adequate in the other. In the school where provision is good, there is a wide range of enriching and stimulating learning experiences that engage pupils across all age ranges. These include sensory experiences for pupils with the most complex needs.

At the school where provision is adequate, teaching staff plan individual programmes for pupils that match their abilities and needs. They have responded well to pupils' requests by introducing a course in childcare, for example. However, planning for literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not co-ordinated effectively and opportunities for developing these skills are often missed.

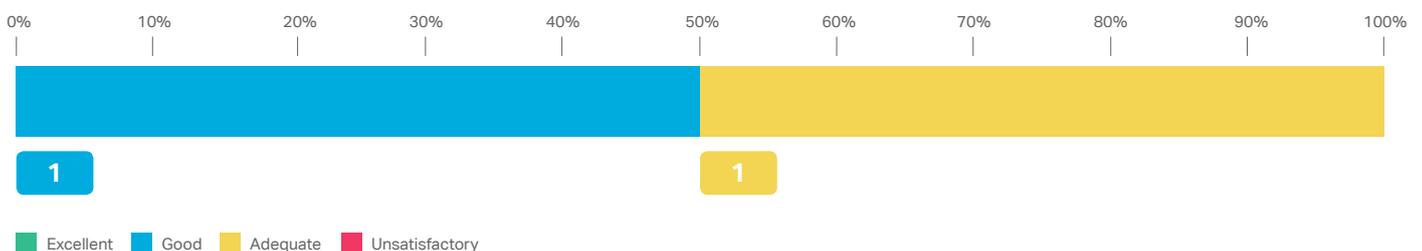
One of the strengths identified at most of the schools visited as part of the regular monitoring process is that staff plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of individual pupils.

The quality of teaching is good at one school inspected and adequate at the other. Where teaching is effective, staff plan challenging and stimulating activities that gain and hold pupils' interest. In one school where many of the lessons are taught by care staff, a minority of the staff do not have high enough expectations for pupils' learning and do not motivate them to take part in the planned activities.

In both schools inspected, education staff work well with care staff and specialist services to meet the emotional and health needs of the pupils. Similarly, one of the strengths identified in many of the monitoring visits carried out is effective joint working between staff, which has a positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils who have previously found it difficult to cope in mainstream education.

Nearly all of the schools visited as part of the inspection and monitoring processes provide a positive, nurturing environment in which pupils gain in confidence.

Figure 2.19: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management Independent special schools

Leadership and management are adequate in one of the schools inspected and unsatisfactory in the other. In the school where leadership and management are adequate, the recently appointed principal and deputy headteacher have started to provide direction to the strategic management of the school. The school uses its performance management system to help staff to make improvements. For example, performance management has resulted in training for support staff, to help them work with pupils who have communication difficulties. In this school, the self-evaluation report provides an evaluative and generally accurate picture of the school and the improvement plan prioritises suitable targets for action. Leaders collect a range of data on individual pupils, including the progress they make in their learning. However, the school does not use data well enough to analyse performance and plan for whole-school improvements.

In the school where leadership and management are unsatisfactory, there is no clear strategic direction. There are no formal meetings to discuss strategic issues relating to education and self-evaluation processes are not regular or systematic. Staff do not use data effectively to monitor performance or inform planning.

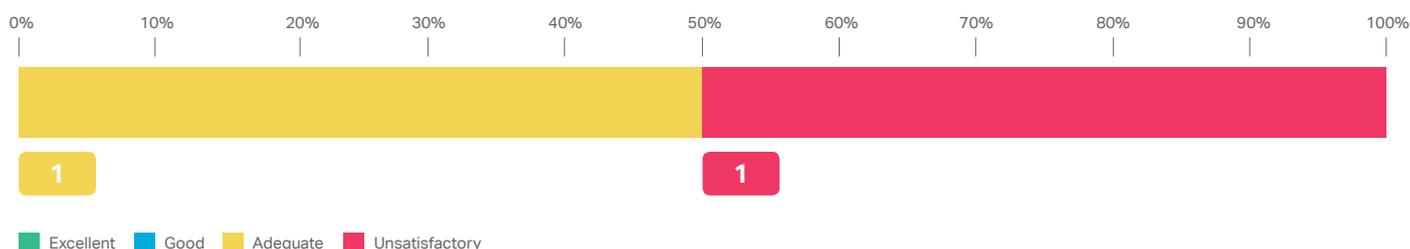
In nearly all of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process, leaders have a clear vision for the school that they share effectively with staff and other stakeholders. One of the shortcomings identified in a minority of these schools is that self-evaluation is underdeveloped. Where schools carry out regular lesson observations, these do not focus clearly enough on what pupils achieve in the lessons.

Partnership working is good in one of the schools inspected, and unsatisfactory in the other. In the school where it is good, the school links well with mainstream schools, further education colleges and other providers. This widens opportunities for study for pupils and ensures that they are well supported as they plan their future.

In the school where partnership working is unsatisfactory, the school has developed very few successful partnerships that have a positive impact on pupils or staff.

In around a third of the schools visited as part of the monitoring process, there are effective examples of partnership working. One of these schools has good working relationships with the local authority and consortium, which provide appropriate training opportunities for staff.

Figure 2.20: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?







The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## **Section 2:** **Sector report** Independent mainstream schools

In January 2015, there were 34 independent mainstream schools in Wales. This year, we inspected four of these schools. Three of the schools inspected are all-age schools providing for pupils across the primary and secondary phases and the other school provides solely for pupils from the age of 11 to 16 years.

For more information about the four schools inspected, please click on the inspection reports:

- [Castle School](#)
- [St Gerard's School Trust](#)
- [Howell's School](#)
- [St Clare's School](#)

## Summary: Independent mainstream schools

We identified one school this year as having excellent practice. This school has exceptionally strong collaborative partnership arrangements with a wide range of stakeholders and an innovative learner induction programme. This combination makes a highly effective contribution to pupils' learning experiences and has a positive impact on their standards and wellbeing.

### Compliance with Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003

In the inspection of independent schools, the inspection team makes a judgement on the extent to which the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. This year, the four schools inspected met all of these regulations.

We carried out follow-up monitoring activities with the two schools that had not met all of these regulations during inspections in 2013-2014. One of these schools has made satisfactory progress towards complying with the regulations and the other has made limited progress. We also completed focused follow-up inspections to three schools where the Welsh Government had concerns about one or more of the registration standards. In four of the five follow-up schools, we found shortcomings related to the standard for welfare, health and safety of pupils.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

Figure 2.21: Numbers of independent special schools that met regulations / did not meet all regulations



4

Met all regulations Did not meet one or more regulations

# Outcomes: Independent mainstream schools

## Standards

Standards are excellent in one school and good in three schools.

In all schools, most pupils are well motivated and have a positive attitude to their learning. They generally make at least good and often excellent progress in extending their knowledge and developing their skills. Many pupils recall previous learning quickly and accurately and apply their knowledge confidently to new situations.

One school has excellent standards. This is an all-age school where pupils achieve high standards at all stages of their learning. At the end of key stage 4 and in the sixth form, pupils' performance in public examinations is outstanding when compared with that of other schools in the maintained and independent sectors.

In all schools, pupils have strong communication skills. Most listen well to the views and opinions of others and speak confidently, using subject-specific terminology accurately. As they progress through school, most pupils make good progress in developing appropriate reading strategies and, relative to their age, most read fluently and with suitable expression. Many older pupils show strong analytical and thinking skills when responding to a range of literary texts or analysing information from different sources in subjects across the curriculum.

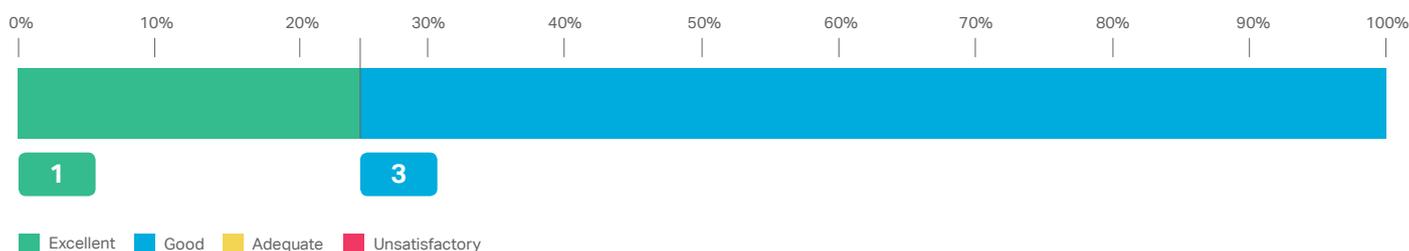
Throughout their time in school, most pupils make systematic progress in developing their writing skills and adapting their work to suit a range of purposes in different subjects. However, in all schools, a very few pupils make occasional spelling and grammatical errors and the written work of a very few older pupils is poorly presented.

In all schools, pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills by applying the techniques they learn in their mathematics lessons in different subjects and contexts.

## Wellbeing

Pupil attendance rates are high in all schools. Nearly all pupils behave particularly well in lessons and in activities beyond the classroom. Pupils undertake a wide range of peer or community leadership roles that make a valuable contribution to developing their social and life skills.

Figure 2.22: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision: Independent mainstream schools

Provision is good in three of the schools inspected and excellent in the other.

All schools provide a balanced curriculum, suited to pupils' ages and abilities, that meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. In two all-age schools, the link between the different phases of the school is not strong enough in a few curriculum areas.

All of the schools provide a range of extra-curricular activities that enrich pupils' learning experiences and make a valuable contribution to their social and personal development.

In three schools, the provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is generally effective. However, in the other, planning for the development of pupils' skills across the school is not co-ordinated thoroughly enough.

Teaching is good or better in three schools and adequate in the other. In all schools, nearly all teachers have good subject knowledge, strong working relationships with pupils and well-established classroom routines that maximise the time for pupils' learning.

In one school where teaching was judged to be excellent, many teachers use their subject knowledge particularly well. They provide detailed explanations and ask probing questions to encourage pupils to think carefully, engage in productive dialogue and acquire an extensive understanding of new concepts and skills.

However, in three schools, the teaching in a few lessons does not challenge pupils well enough and limits their progress. This is because learning activities are not always appropriate for pupils' age and ability and do not engage them or provide enough opportunities for independent learning. In all schools, there are generally sound arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.

Overall, there is a high level of care, support and guidance in all schools, which makes a positive contribution to pupils' standards and wellbeing. However, there are shortcomings related to a few specific aspects of provision for pupils with additional learning needs in three of the schools.

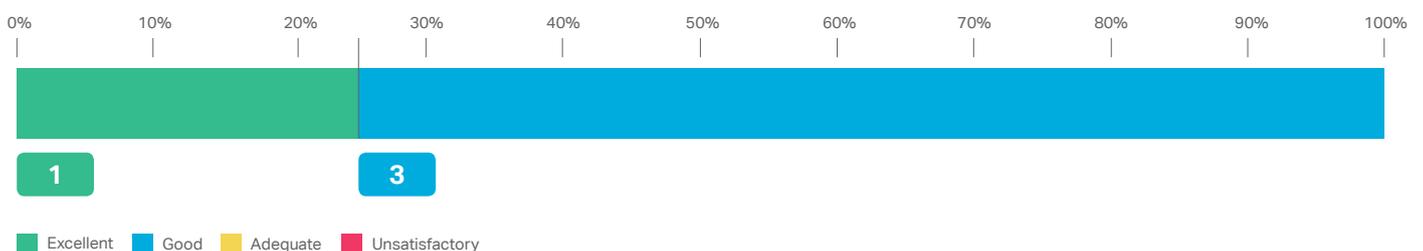
All schools are inclusive communities where pupils feel valued as individuals.

### A programme to help pupils in their 'First 50' days of secondary school

Howell's School in Llandaff places high levels of wellbeing at the heart of its approach to helping pupils settle in. The school introduced 'First 50' – a wellbeing programme that provides pupils with a series of experiences over the first 50 days of Year 12 to ensure that the move to a new school was a positive experience.

For more information, please click on the [case study](#)

Figure 2.23: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management: Independent mainstream schools

Leadership and management are excellent in one school, good in another, and adequate in two schools.

In the school where leadership is judged to be excellent, senior leaders work together exceptionally well to promote a clear ethos and values, and to provide firm direction in pursuing the school's aim of nurturing excellence. Leaders at all levels strive to improve the school's practices and they are keen to innovate in a considered way. This contributes positively to the outstanding standards that pupils achieve and their high levels of wellbeing.

In all schools, senior leaders are successful in promoting clear values and a shared vision that underpins all aspects of their school's work. In two schools where leadership is good or excellent, the proprietors of these schools are well informed of their school's performance and provide strong levels of challenge and support.

In both schools where leadership is judged adequate, line management structures across the school do not provide clear lines of accountability. This means that arrangements for monitoring aspects of provision, such as the quality of teachers' work or the progress of pupils towards targets in individual education plans, are not robust enough.

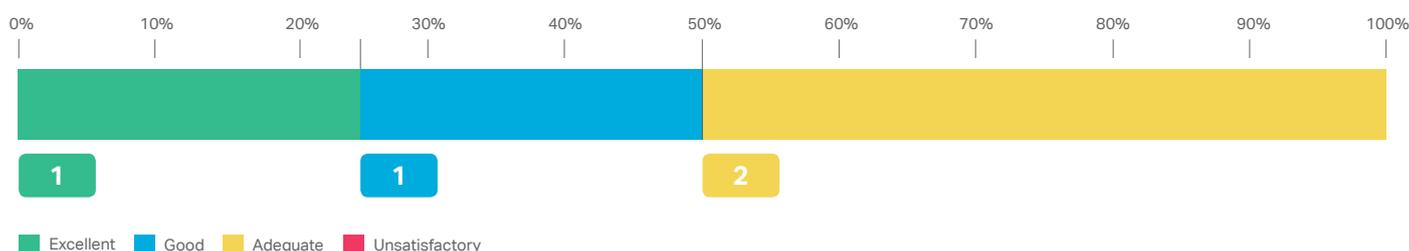
Two schools have good arrangements for improving quality. They both use a wide range of quality assurance activities and thorough data analysis to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of all areas of their work. This contributes to their strong track record of improvement.

In two schools, development planning is not secure enough to provide a sound basis for improving quality. This is mostly because self-evaluation activities do not draw well enough on first-hand evidence from teaching and learning and, in one school, lesson observations do not take enough account of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

All schools' arrangements for partnership working are good or better, with particularly strong partnerships with parents and guardians.

All schools have good or better arrangements for resource management.

Figure 2.24: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



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The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report Independent specialist colleges

During 2014-2015, there were six independent specialist colleges in Wales. These colleges educate approximately 220 learners aged 16 and over. The colleges cater for a range of needs, including autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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In addition to full inspections, Estyn carries out annual monitoring inspections of independent specialist colleges. This year, we inspected two independent special colleges and carried out three monitoring visits.

For more information about the two colleges inspected, please click on the inspection reports:

[Penggwn College](#)  
[Coleg Plas Dwb](#)

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## Summary: Independent specialist colleges

One of the colleges inspected this year was identified as having excellent practice. At this college, a strategic approach to managing learners' challenging behaviour resulted in a significant reduction in the frequency and severity of behaviour-related incidents.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

**Figure 2.25: Numbers of independent specialist colleges found to have excellent practice**



# Outcomes: Independent specialist colleges

## Standards

Standards are good in both of the colleges inspected this year. Nearly all learners make steady progress against their individual targets.

More able learners extend their vocabulary well, and show a good understanding of subject-specific language. They explain their work clearly, for example when describing how to set up an electric fence on the farm, and use their reading skills in practical situations, when reading recipes and ordering work clothes. Less able learners develop their communication through signs and symbols and electronic devices.

In both colleges, many learners make steady progress in developing their numeracy skills. For example, in one college, learners learn to handle money and apply these skills in the college shop. In the other, they work out how much money is raised at the Christmas fair.

In one college, learners achieve a wide range of appropriate vocational qualifications. This helps them to gain the skills they need when they leave college. All eight leavers over the past two years gained employment or progressed to further training, including fork-lift truck driving, work as a teaching assistant, and training to be a plumber.

## Wellbeing

Wellbeing is good in both of the colleges inspected. All learners feel safe and are confident to approach key members of staff if they need help or advice. In one college, more able learners demonstrate a thorough understanding of on-line safety when using technological devices and programmes and are aware of the dangers of social media.

Most learners take part in regular physical activity, for example swimming and cycling. In one college, a very few learners train with local football clubs and take part in international competitions.

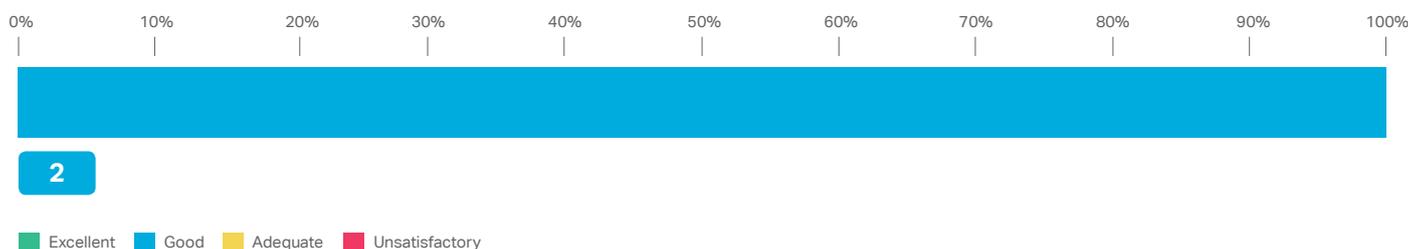
In both colleges, most learners attend well, although not all arrive at sessions on time. This means that these learners do not develop important time-keeping skills required for future employment and training. Similarly, in one of the colleges visited as part of the annual monitoring process, a minority of learners do not attend well enough or are persistently late.

Nearly all learners engage well in sessions. They enjoy their learning and remain on task throughout activities.

Many learners contribute effectively to decision-making. At one college, learners are involved in the appointment of new staff. This includes showing potential candidates around the college and providing feedback on their suitability.

Learners in both colleges engage well with the local community, for example when taking part in sports activities, selling produce at a local shop and tidying gardens.

Figure 2.26: Numbers of colleges and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision: Independent specialist colleges

The quality of learning experiences is good in both colleges inspected. Staff focus appropriately on developing learners' literacy and numeracy and they have many opportunities throughout the college day to develop these skills.

In one of the colleges, learners have the opportunity to gain nationally accredited qualifications that are well matched to their long-term goals. However, at the other college, a few more able learners do not have enough opportunities to follow specific vocational qualifications.

One of the colleges visited as part of the annual monitoring process has increased the range of courses on offer to learners. This includes wood working and level 1 awards in music, technology and art and design.

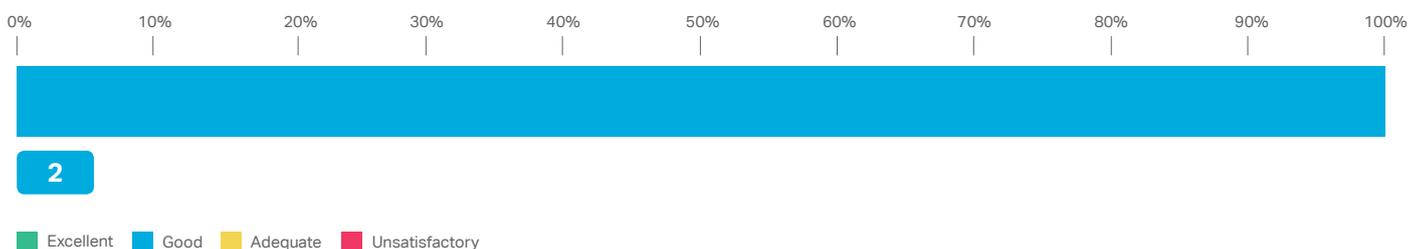
Teaching is good in both colleges. Tutors have a clear understanding of the learners' needs and abilities and use this information well to plan and deliver interesting sessions. Both colleges use assessment data to set appropriate targets for the individual learners.

In both colleges, staff create an ethos in which learners are encouraged to do their best. On occasions, staff at one college do too much for the learners, instead of allowing them to complete tasks independently.

In both colleges, staff manage challenging behaviour well and help learners to settle down promptly.

Care, support and guidance are excellent in one of the colleges inspected and good in the other. In the college where they are excellent, the college therapy team provides innovative in-session support for individual learners and staff. In this college, a strategic approach to managing challenging behaviour led to a reduction in the severity and frequency of incidents. The other college provides effective support for learners who experience difficulties such as bereavement or other family issues.

Figure 2.27: Numbers of colleges and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management: Independent specialist colleges

In both colleges inspected, leaders have a clear vision, which is shared with all staff. Staff meet regularly and meetings focus clearly on college improvement.

In both colleges, performance management processes identify individual and whole-college training needs well.

Leaders at both colleges understand the strengths and areas for development of the college, and these are reflected well in the self-assessment reports. Staff seek the views of learners regularly through student meetings. However, the colleges do not always seek the views of external stakeholders well enough.

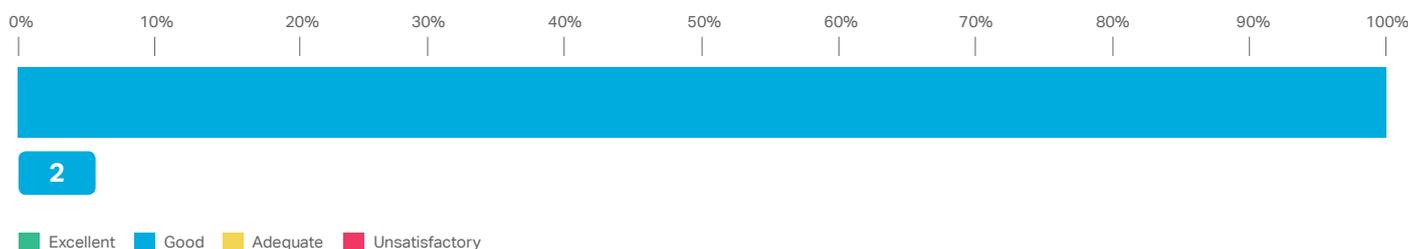
In both colleges, self-assessment reports link closely to the quality development plans. Both colleges have made important improvements that have had a positive impact on the quality of provision and outcomes. For example, one college identified the need to improve the management of challenging behaviour. Changes were implemented successfully and had a positive effect on learners' behaviour. The other college improved its recording of learner progress and the quality of lesson planning, with an increased focus on essential skills.

Both colleges collect a range of data and are improving their use of data to track learner progress and inform planning. One college uses data well to identify college priorities. The other uses individual learner data to plan appropriate programmes and interventions.

Both colleges work with a range of partners to broaden the opportunities available to learners. For example, strong links with local sporting clubs give learners at one college access to high-quality coaching. Effective links with local businesses enable learners at the other college to take part in relevant work experience, for example working in a community shop.

One of the colleges visited as part of the annual monitoring process has made good progress in addressing shortcomings identified during its inspection in 2014. However, progress in the other two colleges visited has been slow. In one of these colleges, managers do not have a good enough understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. In the other college, links between the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan are unclear. Neither of these two colleges uses data well enough to track learner progress or to inform planning.

Figure 2.28: Numbers of colleges and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



## Multidisciplinary approach to behaviour management

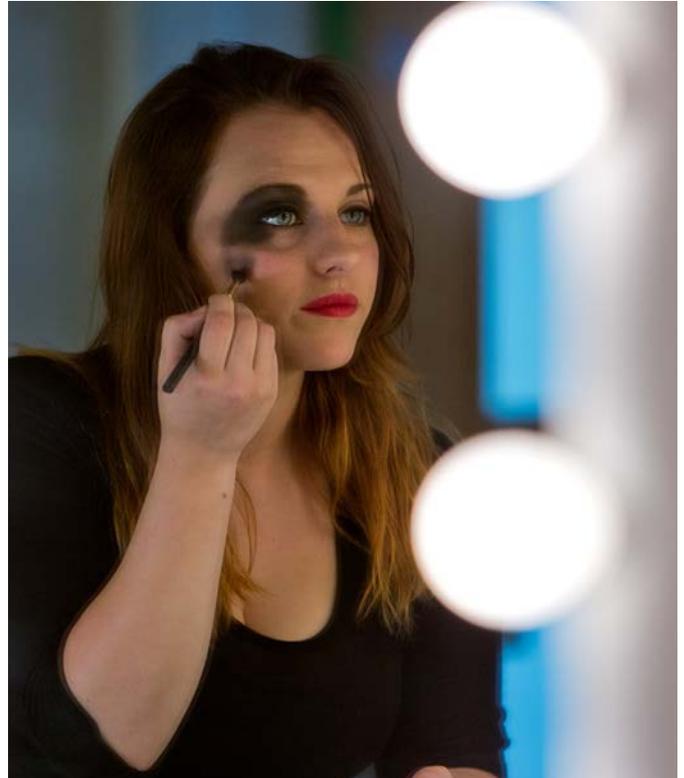
**Cambian Pengwern College** is an independent specialist college providing education for up to 75 learners aged 16 to 25 with moderate to profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical disabilities and autistic spectrum conditions. There are currently 55 learners at the college, 25 who attend on a daily basis and 30 who have residential placements.

The college had a cohort of non-verbal male learners with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and severe learning difficulties. When anxious, they often presented extremely challenging behaviour that disrupted their learning and that of others. Staff were able to manage these behaviours at college, but needed to help the learners to improve their interactions with their peer group. As anxiety was the main source of the challenging behaviour, it was necessary to implement a strategy that would help reduce anxieties, identify triggers and improve behaviour.

A multi-disciplinary approach between education, care and health professionals, along with accurate recording and monitoring of behaviours, helped staff to focus the right resources and expertise on individuals and areas of need. This included a full review of the incident paperwork, development of positive intervention strategies and improved use of data to track incidents.

The college developed a bespoke behaviour recording sheet for each student, with a clear focus on positive changes in behaviour. Education, care and health staff use this information to decide what support strategies to put in place.

This holistic approach has resulted in a significant reduction in the severity and frequency of incidents. It has increased the wellbeing of students in the group and social interaction and participation in college-based social events has improved





The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report Pupil referral units

In January 2015, there were 28 registered pupil referral units (PRUs) in Wales, educating approximately 600 pupils. This is seven fewer PRUs than there were last year. In part, this is due to the development of 'portfolio' PRUs, where a number of previously separate PRUs have closed and a new, often split-site, PRU opens under a single management committee.

PRUs cater for pupils with a wide range of needs who are not suited to education in mainstream schools or have been excluded from them. This includes pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, those with mental health issues, and young mothers.

Although most PRUs already have a management committee, this became statutory from 2015.

This year, we inspected three PRUs. Two of these are portfolio PRUs with multi-site provision. One PRU is a Foundation Phase assessment centre.

For more information about the three PRUs inspected, please click on the inspection reports:

[Denbighshire PRU](#)

[Flintshire Portfolio PRU](#)

[Canolfan Enfys](#)

We also undertook a thematic survey to highlight good practice in settings that provide education other than at school (EOTAS), including PRUs.

For more information about this survey, please click on the [thematic report](#), 'Education other than at school: a good practice survey'.

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## Summary: Pupil referral units

No PRUs were identified as having excellent practice. This is the first year in this inspection cycle that no PRU has been placed in a statutory category of follow-up.

Two PRUs were identified as needing Estyn monitoring. Both of these PRUs have weaknesses in their self-evaluation processes. They do not record or analyse performance data robustly to set appropriate targets for improvements. Observations of teaching are in the early stages of development and do not link to improvement planning. As a result, leaders and managers do not have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

Figure 2.29: Numbers of pupil referral units in levels of follow-up



# Outcomes: Pupil referral units

## Standards

Standards are good in two PRUs, and adequate in the other. This is better than last year when standards in over half of PRUs were adequate or worse. This year, the adequate judgement is mainly due to pupils' limited progress in writing and numeracy.

In all three PRUs, pupils progress well over time. Many pupils enter the PRU with reading skills well below those expected for their age and are reluctant writers. Many of these pupils make good progress over time in improving the accuracy and fluency of their reading and also make steady progress in their writing. For example, very young pupils show their understanding of text by matching symbols to events in a story, older pupils make sensible attempts when spelling unknown words, and more able pupils use a variety of sentence structures and paragraph their work appropriately. However, pupils at one PRU do not improve their written work well enough in relation to their age and ability and they continue to repeat basic errors in relation to punctuation and letter formation.

Over time, many pupils develop their basic numeracy skills during mathematics lessons and become more confident, without the fear of failure holding them back. They develop practical skills, such as weighing and measuring when cooking. A minority of pupils do not apply their numeracy skills well enough in subjects other than mathematics. Many find it difficult to solve problems and more able pupils are not always challenged to achieve their potential in mathematics lessons.

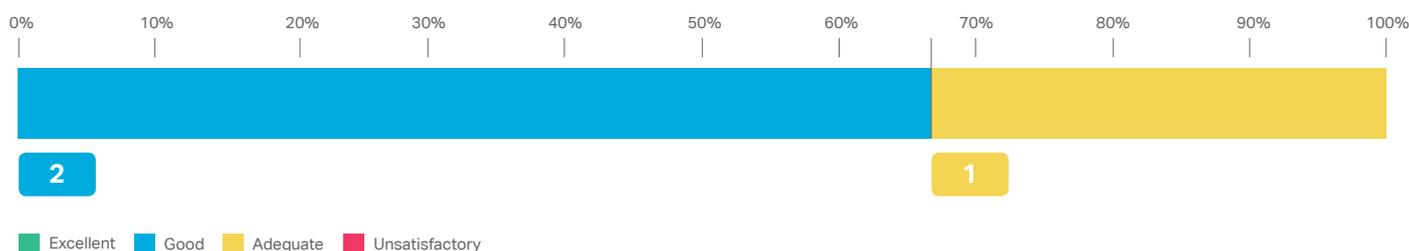
## Wellbeing

In two PRUs inspected, pupils' wellbeing is good and it is adequate in the other. In all PRUs, pupils who previously had very low attendance now attend more regularly. However, in one PRU overall attendance is too low and, in another, a few key stage 4 pupils still attend irregularly. Their low attendance has a negative impact on their standards and wellbeing. At one PRU, high levels of non-structured time do not prepare pupils well for working life.

When pupils start at the PRUs where wellbeing is good, they often have little confidence, difficulty controlling their behaviour, and a history of poor attendance. However, nearly all pupils improve their behaviour over time. They learn to manage their emotions and reduce conflict with staff and other pupils. Pupils with high levels of anxiety gain confidence and become more willing to take part in group activities and express themselves. Pupils and parents recognise how these positive changes improve the quality of their lives. Many pupils achieve well against their individual behaviour and attendance targets and exclusions are low.

Nearly all pupils develop the confidence and social skills necessary to move successfully to other schools, further education, training or work.

Figure 2.30: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision: Pupil referral units

Provision is good in all three PRUs inspected this year. This is better than last year, when it was no better than adequate in six out of the eight PRUs inspected.

All three PRUs provide good learning experiences for pupils. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils and focuses appropriately on personal and social education. Staff draw well on the expertise and services of external agencies, such as the Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team, to help pupils to keep safe and understand their responsibilities as citizens.

Generally, the PRUs plan well to develop speaking, listening and reading skills in a range of subjects. However, planning for writing and ICT is underdeveloped.

One PRU focuses particularly strongly on re-integrating key stage 3 pupils into mainstream schools. The curriculum supports this approach very well. Pupils divide their time between the PRU and mainstream schools and gradually increase their time in school. As a result, most build up the confidence they need to return to and stay in school.

Teaching is good in two PRUs and adequate in the other. In all the PRUs, teachers and teaching assistants know and understand their pupils well. They have high expectations for behaviour, set clear boundaries and respond quickly if issues arise. In the best practice, teachers set clear learning objectives and use a wide range of teaching strategies and resources that match pupils' needs and abilities. However, a few teachers do not provide enough practical work to engage pupils fully or to reinforce learning.

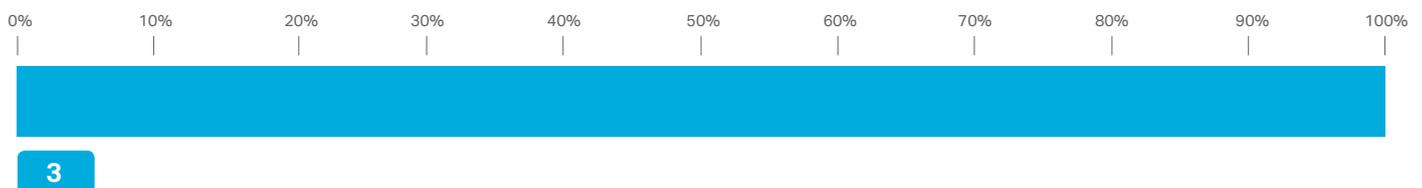
In two out of the three PRUs, staff make effective use of a wide range of assessment strategies, including focused observations, to record pupils' progress. This assessment data provides a clear picture of each pupil's strengths and areas for development. As a result, staff set clear, relevant targets for individuals. However, in one PRU, staff often do not use the information they have about pupils' progress to plan suitable work. Staff in PRUs generally give constructive oral feedback to pupils that motivates and helps them to remain on task. Despite the high expectations of many staff, a few do not always encourage pupils to work independently.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils in the PRUs generally meet requirements, although one PRU has a few areas of concern. These concerns relate to updating policies regularly, site security and the consistency in recording the physical interventions that staff need to take when a pupil's behaviour is poor.

All three PRUs have appropriate strategies in place to improve the behaviour of pupils. Positive relationships between staff and pupils and a calm environment promote good behaviour. Guidance and support from specialist services, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and the police, support the PRUs in meeting pupils' wider needs.

The learning environment in the PRUs is usually good. However, broken furniture and stained carpets at one PRU do not provide pupils with welcoming surroundings. The toilet facilities at this PRU do not meet requirements.

Figure 2.31: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management: Pupil referral units

Leadership and management are good in two PRUs and adequate in one. This year, for the first time since 2010-2011, there are no PRUs where leadership is unsatisfactory overall.

In the two PRUs where leadership is good, staff feel valued and work well as a team. Their roles are clear and they understand their responsibilities. In one PRU, the overall leadership and management arrangements do not result in a consistent approach across all of its provision.

Better leadership from the local authority has led to improved management committees in two PRUs. However, in all three PRUs, the role of the management committee remains underdeveloped. Members do not evaluate pupil performance data well enough, nor do they challenge the PRU over actions taken.

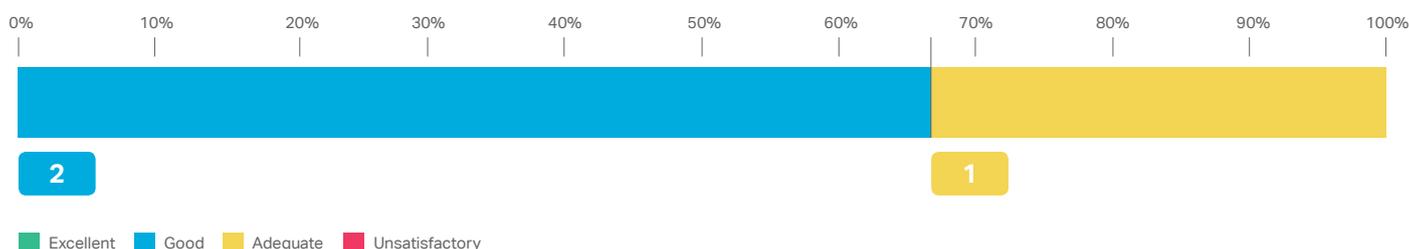
The arrangements for improving quality are adequate in two PRUs and unsatisfactory in the other. There are shortcomings in self-evaluation in all PRUs. Leaders do not consult well enough with teachers and management committees, and self-evaluation reports are too descriptive. In the two portfolio PRUs, leaders consider each site separately and do not have a good enough understanding of the strengths and areas for development across the whole PRU.

In all three PRUs, self-evaluation and improvement planning generally link well, but staff do not use data well enough to inform improvement plans and to measure progress in addressing targets.

All PRUs have strong links with a range of partners that contribute to improving standards and wellbeing. For example, in one PRU, effective work with other agencies makes sure that pupils receive prompt specialist assessments. In another, good relationships with local schools help high proportions of pupils to return to school. In all PRUs, staff are in close contact with parents and carers, who feel well supported and able to ask questions and express concerns.

The management of resources is good in two PRUs and adequate in one. Staff in all PRUs have a good range of experience and are suitably qualified to deliver the curriculum. In nearly all PRUs, support staff make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning. Training and staff development match the priorities of PRUs appropriately. However, not all teachers have access to performance management and support, including lesson observations, target setting and performance review.

Figure 2.32: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



## Follow-up activity: Pupil referral units

Of the six PRUs that needed follow-up after their core inspections in 2013-2014, three made good progress and were removed from follow-up. These PRUs all acted promptly to address recommendations. For example, one PRU introduced systematic practices to manage and record behaviour and improved their data analysis to identify trends. This data analysis showed an increase in disruptive behaviour at morning break times and, when staff changed routines, the number of incidents reduced, and pupils engaged better in the lessons after break time.

The other three PRUs that needed follow-up were closed or amalgamated. The amalgamated PRU was visited and identified as requiring significant improvement.

**Glanynant Learning Centre**, a PRU in Caerphilly, was identified as requiring Estyn monitoring after its core inspection in May 2014. In June 2015, a team of inspectors visited again and judged that it had made strong progress overall and no longer needed follow-up.

The PRU has made strong progress in addressing the recommendation related to safeguarding. All staff have received relevant training and the PRU complies with reporting requirements.

Teachers and leaders now record, monitor and analyse data on attendance, exclusions, behaviour and pupil performance effectively. They use this information well to identify trends and plan improvements. Changes to the way they manage disruptive behaviour during break times have reduced the number of serious incidents and improved pupil engagement and attendance in lessons.

Teachers use data and assessment effectively to track pupil progress and inform planning. They use this information to plan lessons and make changes to the curriculum, including the introduction of a new mathematics intervention programme to address the underperformance of a minority of pupils in mathematics.

Improved assessment of pupils' literacy and numeracy standards on entry to the PRU helps staff to identify pupils' needs more accurately. Ongoing assessment and tracking of pupils' work provide a comprehensive overview of pupils' achievements. Teachers set appropriate targets for pupils and use a suitable range of interventions to support pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. A revised assessment and marking policy sets out clear expectations for staff. In almost all cases, marking identifies positive features and at least one area for improvement, and this helps pupils to understand how they can make their work better.

Leaders have established a cycle of quality assurance activities to monitor and review the PRU's work. The self-evaluation process considers a wide range of evidence, including audits by external partners, evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. The self-evaluation report draws on the views of all major stakeholders, including pupils, parents and staff. Generally, the self-evaluation report links well to the PRU's plans for improvement. The plan identifies clear targets, suitable success criteria, appropriate timescales, staff to lead on each area for development and suitable strategies to secure the intended improvements.

Since the core inspection, the PRU has introduced new policies and updated existing ones. Although there are still improvements to make in this area of the PRU's work, leaders are developing clearer, more systematic approaches to recordkeeping and reviewing policies.



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## **Section 2: Sector report**

### Local authority education services for children and young people

Estyn inspected all 22 local authority education services for children and young people between 2010 and 2014. Fifteen local authorities required some follow-up activity following their initial inspection. During 2014-2015, inspection focused on monitoring the progress made by those authorities still needing follow-up.

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## Local authority education services for children and young people

Estyn's approach to monitoring local authorities requiring follow-up depends on the nature and seriousness of the recommendations made during the original inspection. Estyn inspectors work with authorities to agree a programme of follow-up activity that allows enough time for the authority to show progress. This programme involves between one and three monitoring visits. Two authorities, Blaenau Gwent and Pembrokeshire, had full re-inspections because of their serious shortcomings. At the final monitoring visit or re-inspection, inspectors evaluate progress against all the recommendations and decide whether the authority still requires follow-up.

By July 2015, four authorities remained in special measures (Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen) and one authority (Cardiff) remained in need of significant improvement. Each authority had a recovery board appointed by the Welsh Government. All these authorities made slow progress initially in addressing recommendations from their inspections.

The authorities did not act quickly enough to address shortcomings in leadership and management or in creating a culture that would help them improve. In these authorities, plans focused on improvement activities without giving enough attention to outcomes. Internal monitoring and self-evaluation activities also focused too much on whether actions were being delivered on time and to budget and not enough on the impact of the actions on children and young people. Where school performance was particularly weak, responsible officers or headteachers have often not been held to account or managed appropriately. In the majority of these authorities, school improvement services, provided through regional consortia, were unsatisfactory. However, school improvement services are now provided almost exclusively through the regional consortia and the effectiveness of each consortium service will be evaluated by whether schools in local authorities improve or not.

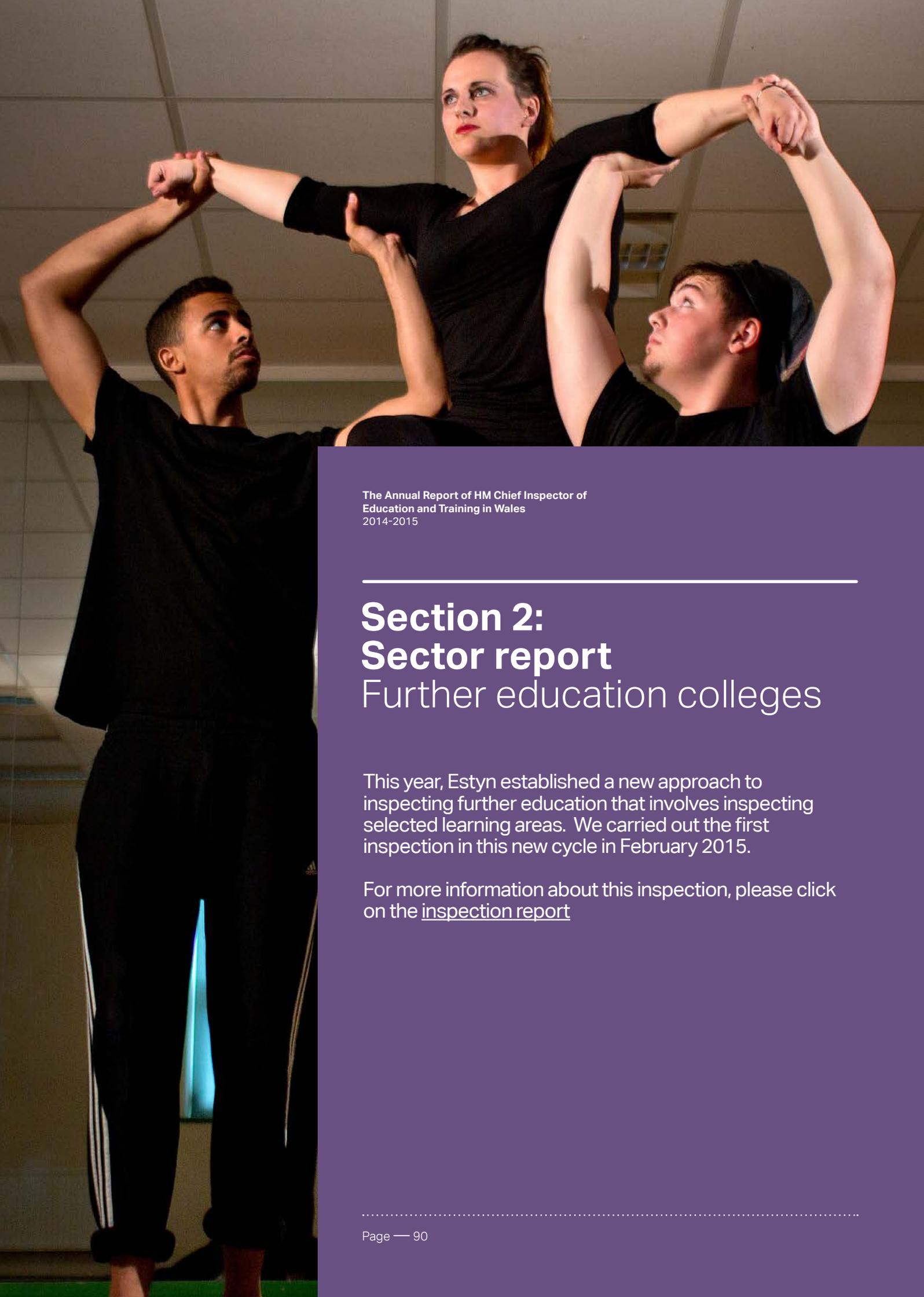
During 2014-2015, Estyn inspected the progress made by regional consortia. At that time (between November and January), inspectors found that regional consortia are better at challenging schools about their current performance than supporting them to improve (Estyn, 2015). Interventions from the regional consortia in poorly performing schools have, in the majority of cases, contributed to better outcomes in 2015 in the local authorities that require special measures or are in need of significant improvement.

From September 2014, 40 secondary schools facing 'the largest challenge in terms of circumstance and stage of development' received significant additional resources through the Schools Challenge Cymru programme (Welsh Government, 2014a). Estyn's inspection found that the regional consortia for those local authorities still in follow-up were unclear about their working relationship with their schools in the programme or how to evaluate their contribution to improving these schools.

In 2016, Estyn will inspect the four regional education consortia and monitor the progress of each consortium a year later. A new cycle of inspections of local authority education services for children and young people will start from September 2017.

For more information about the regional education consortia, please click on the [thematic report](#), 'Improving schools through regional education consortia'.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report Further education colleges

This year, Estyn established a new approach to inspecting further education that involves inspecting selected learning areas. We carried out the first inspection in this new cycle in February 2015.

For more information about this inspection, please click on the [inspection report](#)

## Further education colleges

Inspectors also visited all further education colleges this year, as part of our link work with each college. The visits focused on two themes: how well colleges use labour market information and the quality of provision for learners aged 14 to 16.

Overall, further education colleges use labour market information effectively when planning their provision. Managers have a comprehensive knowledge of their local area and what employers require, and they use this information well when planning courses. A few colleges use a commercial, on-line research programme to monitor employment trends. In the best cases, tutors and college learners use this programme to find which localities offer the best job opportunities for them and to identify alternative employment opportunities.

Nearly all colleges revise their curriculum annually to reflect changes in the labour market. For example, a college in West Wales adapts its courses in media and performing arts to meet new developments in the film and television industry. Many colleges work with a range of partners to design courses that are relevant to the local area. For example, a college in North West Wales has worked with the Welsh innovation farm network to develop a course in animal breeding.

A few colleges work with other further education colleges, higher education institutions and employers to offer courses that prepare learners to meet specific gaps in the labour market. These include beauty courses for the health spa industry and specialised courses in butchery and bakery.

However, overall, advice and guidance for learners throughout their education do not provide enough opportunities for learners to develop a good understanding of the labour market and employment opportunities. This means that many learners do not appreciate the importance of considering employment opportunities when they choose their college course. Many choose not to take up newer courses, preferring to join traditional established routes. This means that colleges have withdrawn courses that have a high employability value, such as fashion and retail, due to low numbers.

All colleges offer courses to 14 to 16-year-old learners in schools. This arrangement widens the range of subject options available for school learners, and provides opportunities for them to sample college

courses and decide whether to remain in school or attend further education at the end of key stage 4. Colleges aim to provide 14 to 16 year-olds with courses that schools are not able to offer easily. Most of the courses offered are vocational courses, such as hair and beauty, construction, and film and media. A minority of colleges also offer academic courses, particularly where they have expertise in specific teaching areas, such as photography, computing or Spanish. The number of subject choices offered by colleges varies considerably between providers, from a few subjects at a few levels to a comprehensive range of vocational and academic programmes.

Outcomes for the 14 to 16-year-olds on these courses are monitored and tracked carefully by the colleges. In the best providers, staff are familiar with a range of value-added and contextualised data, including Fischer Family Trust data, and use this analysis well to monitor and track progress in the same way that schools do. Learners benefit from this consistent approach. Many further education providers produce useful and informative mid-year and end-of-year reports for individual pupils. In nearly all providers, there is a robust strategy for reporting non-attendance to the schools, and follow-up of pupil absence by nearly all schools is effective.

Nearly all further education colleges work in collaboration with partner schools to decide on the curriculum options they make available to 14 to 16-year-olds. In the best cases, the schools and colleges work well together to help pupils gain a clear progression route through the various courses and levels. The local authority supports this and is an active partner in designing the curriculum and in ensuring that pupils can access the most appropriate choices. Where this happens, pupils have a good range of choices that enhance their learning options, they achieve their learning goals, aims and qualifications, and they progress to further study or appropriate employment. Where a further education college works with more than one local authority, there is often a considerable difference between the authorities. In the local authorities that do not promote these collaborations or the college courses well enough, too many pupils miss out on these benefits.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)



## Section 2: Sector report Work-based learning

Work-based learning is the term used for learners undertaking training and assessment in their workplace. The learning may also involve off-the-job training or assessment at a provider's training centre or in a further education college, such as courses to give young people the skills they need to gain employment. Work-based learning providers deliver a wide range of training, designed to meet the needs of learners and employers, in vocational areas such as hair and beauty, construction and the built environment, retail and commercial enterprise, and engineering and manufacturing technologies.

In many cases, learners undertake apprenticeships in the workplace at levels 2 to 5. The programmes generally take two to three years to complete. Most learners undertake off-the-job training for one day a week. Many apprentices become valued members of their employer’s workforce over time. However, they often face a range of barriers, including weak literacy and numeracy skills, that prevent them from gaining and sustaining employment, or progressing to the next level of training.

In 2014-2015, the number of work-based learning lead providers in Wales reduced from 22 to 20, as a result of the Welsh Government reviewing its contracting arrangements. The 20 providers work in partnership with a total of over 100 consortium members and sub-contractors, serving 65,875 learners. Of these learners, 20,860 were undertaking apprenticeships, 25,335 were undertaking foundation apprenticeships, and 19,680 were undertaking other training including preparation for employment programmes. This year, we inspected four providers and completed a monitoring visit of another provider.

For more information about the four providers inspected, please click on the inspection reports:

- [Babcock Training](#)
- [Rathbone Training](#)
- [B-WBL](#)
- [T2 Group](#)

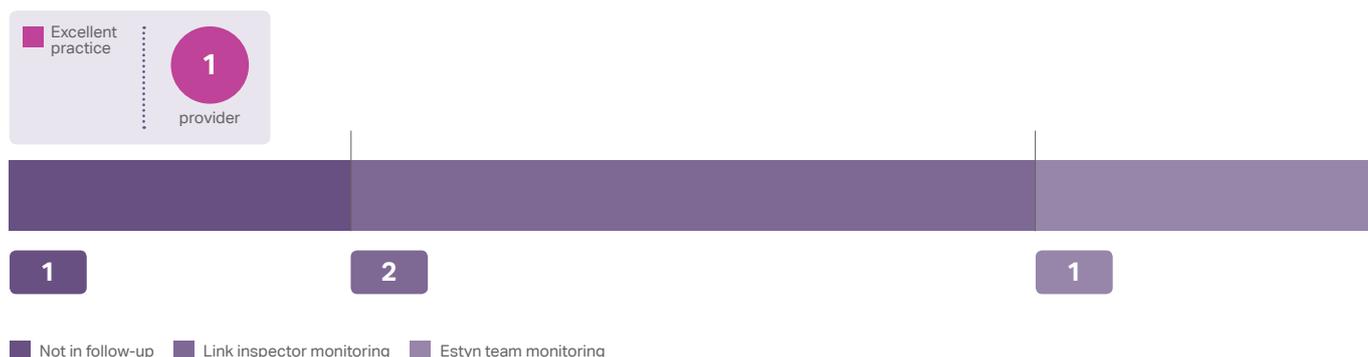
## Summary Work-based learning

This year, one provider was judged to have excellent practice because of strong leadership and management. Three providers require follow-up visits by Estyn inspectors because they were awarded an adequate judgment for standards and for outcomes. Shortcomings include learners achieving their training framework

at rates below the national average and making slow progress in developing their practical competence and theory knowledge.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

Figure 2.33: Numbers of work-based learning providers in levels of follow-up



## Outcomes: Work-based learning

### Standards

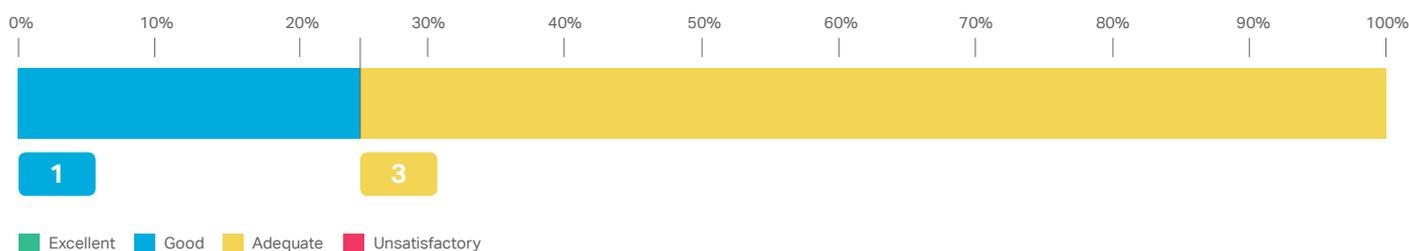
Standards are good in one provider and adequate in three. In the providers inspected, learners achieve their apprenticeship frameworks at rates close to or just above the national comparator. Most learners on traineeship, work ready and preparation for work programmes complete at rates around the national average. In all of the providers, most learners achieve their qualifications in basic skills, such as Essential Skills Wales, at the level required or better. The majority of learners improve their literacy skills appropriately, with a minority achieving at a higher level. However, in some cases, tutors and assessors do not give learners written feedback to help them to improve their performance, so a minority do not make enough progress.

Many providers have increased the opportunities for learners to do part of their training in Welsh. However, the number of learners who undertake their training and assessment in Welsh is still too low. Very few learners choose to write assessments in Welsh.

### Wellbeing

In all of the providers inspected, wellbeing is good. Most learners are enthusiastic, work well with their employers and are motivated to complete their training and progress to the next level. Involvement in community activities, such as fundraising for charities helps to develop and improve learners' social and life skills.

Figure 2.34: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



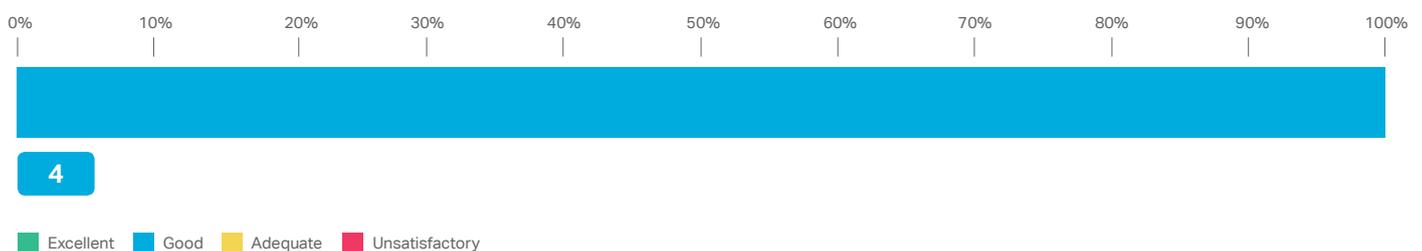
## Provision: Work-based learning

Provision was judged to be good in the four providers inspected. They deliver training in a wide range of learning areas at appropriate levels and meet the needs of learners, employers and their contract. A minority of providers give learners opportunities to complete aspects of their training in Welsh, but generally providers do not encourage bilingual learners to undertake aspects of their training in Welsh often enough. Providers integrate ESDGC into most programmes, but do not challenge learners to improve their knowledge and understanding in this area. All providers promote an ethos of equality, diversity and inclusivity.

The standard of teaching, training and assessment is good in all four providers. Most trainers and assessors have good subject knowledge and industrial experience, which they use well to give learners high levels of personal support on and off-the-job. A minority of tutors and assessors do not challenge or support learners well enough to achieve higher-level practical competence and improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills. A minority do not mark learners' written work in accordance with the providers' marking strategy or give learners constructive written feedback that helps them to improve their future performance. Learners with additional learning needs access a wide range of specialist support and trained staff when a need is identified.

All four providers have suitable procedures for care, support and guidance, including appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. During induction and regular progress reviews, trainers and assessors develop learners' understanding of health and wellbeing well. Off-the-job training facilities are often of good quality.

Figure 2.35: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management: Work-based learning

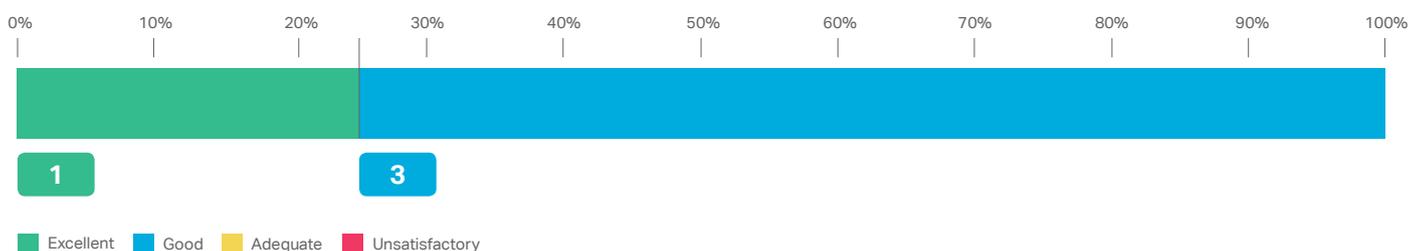
Leadership and management are excellent in one provider and good in the other three providers inspected. In the excellent provider, leadership supports highly-effective working relationships between consortium partners, local employers, schools and other training providers. Managers provide timely and helpful support for underperforming providers who join the consortium. Good partnership working and effective communication between trainers, assessors, employers and other key partners in all four providers enable learners and employers to develop a sound understanding of training opportunities and receive good levels of support from their employers. All providers use performance management and continual professional development to improve the performance of staff at all levels, including those from the consortium and sub-contractors.

All four providers have robust and comprehensive arrangements to self-assess and report on the quality of their work. However, these reports are not always sufficiently evaluative and do not state measurable targets for improvement clearly enough.

### Partnership working improves the quality of training and learner outcomes

**B-wbl** is a work-based learning consortium led by Pembrokeshire College. During its inspection in June 2015, inspectors identified sector-leading practice in a few quality indicators. In this work-based learning provision, the lead provider oversees and guides a highly effective consortium of partners. The provider supports new, underperforming consortium members effectively and helps them to improve their performance significantly. The partnership working arrangements of the consortium lead to improvements in the quality of training and rates at which learners achieve their training frameworks and other qualifications. Learners benefit from a wide range of learning experiences in their workplaces. When undertaking off-the-job training, learners work in environments and access resources that give them very good opportunities to develop their practical competence and theory knowledge. Trainers and assessors use a comprehensive range of learning resources effectively. The consortium has clear literacy and numeracy improvement procedures to improve the skills of all learners across the consortium. The consortium has improved its partnership working with employers and secondary schools significantly.

Figure 2.36: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



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## Follow-up activity: Work-based learning

The one provider that required an Estyn monitoring visit following its inspection in 2013-2014 has made strong progress in addressing most of the recommendations in the inspection report. Managers, trainers and assessors now use clear strategies and procedures to improve many aspects of training. As a result, the rate at which learners achieve their training frameworks and other qualifications has risen. The quality of learners' experiences across consortium members has improved, through better support from trainers and assessors and more consistent quality assurance across the consortium and its sub-contractors.





The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## **Section 2:** **Sector report** Adult community learning

Adult community learning partnerships are made up of education organisations in a local authority or regional area that work together to provide a range of learning opportunities for adults. A key part of their work is adult basic education, which helps adults to improve their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, including digital literacy and mobile technology. The partnerships provide tuition in English as a second language and most also provide opportunities for learners to improve their Welsh. In many cases, adult community learning partnerships work with other organisations, such as Communities First, for whom they provide short courses designed to help 'hard-to-reach' learners to improve their opportunities in the job market.

Most adult community learning partnerships also provide courses, such as art, craft, jewellery-making, language, history and exercise courses. These are usually aimed at learners who wish to learn new skills in their leisure time or who wish to set up small businesses. These courses are funded mainly through learners' fees. In a growing number of cases, learners return to classes year-on-year, not wishing to progress to a higher level of learning. They benefit from attending the class by undertaking personal projects and through having regular social contact. Where this is the case, adult community learning partnerships invite the class to become a club and provide support in setting up the club and in providing the venue. In most cases, this meets learners' needs well and contributes effectively to their wellbeing.

In 2014-2015, there were 15 adult community learning partnerships across Wales. During the year, the Workers' Education Associations North and South amalgamated to form one body for the whole of Wales. Late in 2014-2015, the new all-Wales Workers' Education Association further amalgamated with YMCACymru to form a new college, whose main focus is providing education for adults.

In 2015, in response to revised funding arrangements, each adult community learning partnership undertook a review of the extent to which the partnership can provide more than a core curriculum of adult basic education and English as a second language. In many cases, partnerships will not be able to offer more than those courses funded by the Welsh Government.

In 2014-2015, three adult community learning partnerships were inspected.

For more information about the three partnerships inspected, please click on the inspection reports:

- [Pembrokeshire Adult Community Learning Partnership](#)
- [Swansea Adult Community Learning Partnership](#)
- [Greater Gwent Adult Community Learning Partnership](#)

## Summary: Adult community learning

The three adult community learning partnerships inspected were judged to have good standards and to offer good provision, with learners' success rates improving. Partners plan the curriculum effectively to meet the needs of learners in their area and the quality of teaching is good. Two of the three partnerships have excellent prospects for improvement. This

is because leaders communicate a clear strategic vision to staff and learners and use robust and honest systems to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. In addition, each partnership works to help hard-to-reach learners and provide well-targeted courses in easily accessible venues. The third partnership has adequate prospects for improvement because it lacks robust quality assurance processes.

Figure 2.37: Numbers of adult community learning partnerships in levels of follow-up



For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

# Outcomes: Adult community learning

## Standards

Most adult learners achieve good standards and make significant progress in their learning. In two of the partnerships inspected, adult learners have improved success rates from eight to eighteen percentage points since 2011. In one provider, learners make adequate progress because they learn at the same level of qualification for too long.

Different groups of learners achieve well overall, particularly learners from deprived areas who succeed as well as learners from more advantaged areas.

Learners taking adult basic education courses generally make good progress relative to their starting points. Many learners taking English as a second language complete their courses successfully and often progress to courses in further and higher education.

Nearly all learners are well motivated and understand how to develop their skills, especially in some of the practical courses inspected, such as wood turning, painting and ceramics. In a few cases, tutors do not explain well enough to learners how to use individual learning targets to measure their own progress.

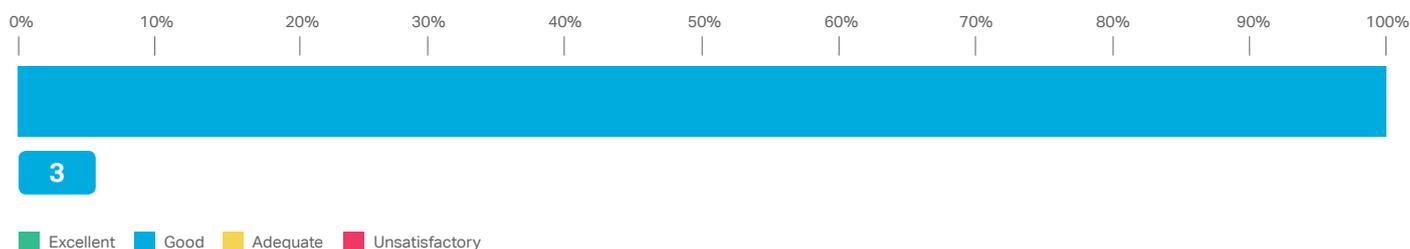
Many learners across a range of subjects improve their literacy and numeracy skills. In Family Literacy classes, many learners draw satisfaction in developing new skills with which to support their children's learning. For example, they learn how to present and read a story to their child in a lively and engaging way.

## Wellbeing

Nearly all learners engage well with their learning and discuss their work confidently with fellow learners and with their tutors. Many learners enjoy the friendships, learning and socialising developed in classes, which contribute significantly to their sense of wellbeing.



Figure 2.38: Numbers of partnerships and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision: Adult community learning

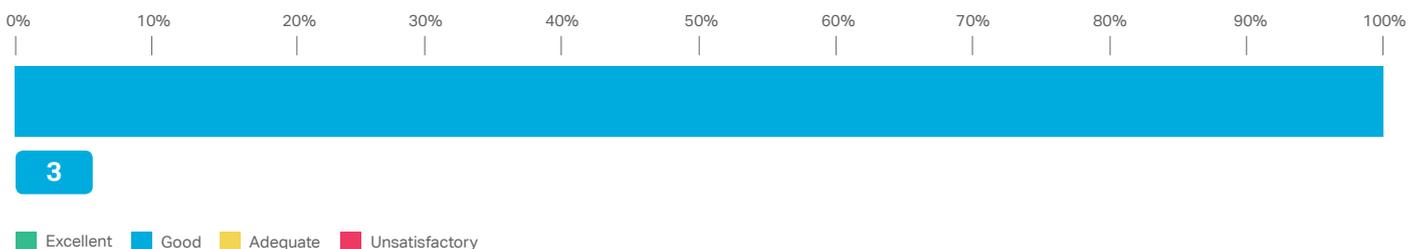
Partnerships work well to meet national and local priorities, taking account of a range of information, such as labour market intelligence, demographic information and local policies and strategies, to develop the curriculum offered. They address the needs of unemployed and vulnerable learners by providing well-designed courses to improve learners' qualifications. As a result, many learners gain in self-confidence and self-esteem, and they improve their employability through attending job clubs, where they can improve their curricula vitae and their interview and presentation skills. Non-accredited classes in craft, language, healthy eating and exercise, for example, help older learners to socialise and to remain healthy and independent.

Many partnerships provide good opportunities for learners to learn about the culture of Wales, for example through discussion of Welsh artists in art classes. However, the provision for learners to learn bilingually or through the medium of Welsh remains variable.

The quality of teaching across the learning partnerships is good overall. Nearly all tutors have up-to-date subject knowledge, plan sessions effectively and take good account of learners' goals and preferences. In many cases, tutors have high expectations of learners, ask challenging questions and provide a range of stimulating tasks and resources. They provide useful verbal and written feedback to learners and set targets to help learners progress. In the small amount of less effective sessions, tutors spend too long presenting the work and they do not provide enough opportunities for learners to work in pairs, in groups or independently.

The learning partnerships make generally good provision for learners with additional learning needs. In the best practice, a learning support team works across the whole partnership to provide consistent support to these learners, many of whom have complex needs.

Figure 2.39: Numbers of partnerships and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management: Adult community learning

The quality of leadership is good in two of the three adult community learning partnerships and adequate in the third. Where leadership is good, the learning partnership has a clear vision and values, which are communicated well to all stakeholders. Appropriate systems are in place to enable the learning partnership to monitor and deliver the provision effectively and to respond promptly to priorities and learners' needs. Where leadership is adequate, leaders do not set targets against their strategic priorities and do not monitor the network's priorities closely enough. As a result, the learning partnership cannot measure its progress accurately.

The use of data and self-assessment to improve quality is variable. In the best practice, one partnership has comprehensive procedures to collect a wide range of information relating to its work, including learners' opinions. It uses rigorous self-assessment to help identify underperformance, improve the quality of teaching and raise learners' success rates.

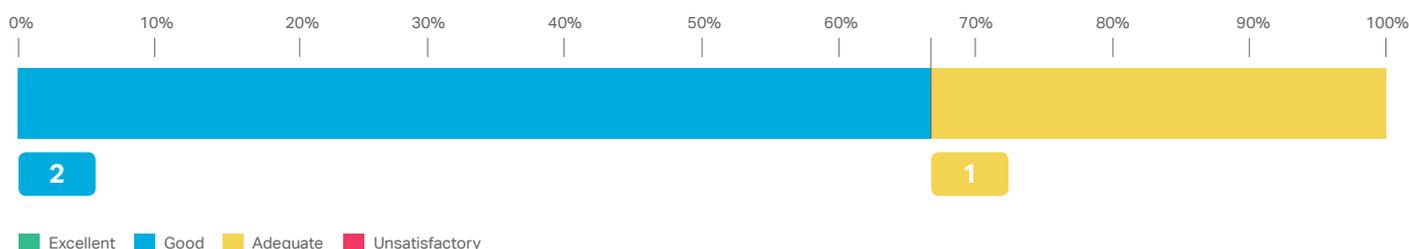
The quality of partnership working is good or better in two of the three partnerships. All learning partnerships distribute resources well to meet the needs of learners, providing good value for money. In the most effective partnership working, partners make the needs of learners and their locality central to their own work and that of their partner agencies. For example, by providing short vocational and capacity-building courses for vulnerable learners in Community First areas, they help learners to grow in confidence and progress to higher qualifications.

## Follow-up: Adult community learning

In 2014-2015, inspectors visited three adult community learning partnerships that Estyn placed in monitoring following inspection.

In the interim period between the inspections and follow-up visits, two of the three partnerships amalgamated. All of the partnerships in follow-up made good progress in addressing the recommendations, but the amalgamated partnerships made exceptionally good progress. This was because in each case senior leaders improved the effectiveness of the strategic leadership, management and co-ordination of the partnership and ensured that the partnership has a clear focus on raising learners' success rates. The partnership also improved substantially the quality of the data it collects. Senior leaders and middle leaders monitor the data regularly, enabling leaders to intervene in a timely manner to resolve problems. Senior leaders set clear expectations for teaching and learning across the partnership and they provide appropriate continuing professional development for all staff.

Figure 2.40: Numbers of partnerships and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?







The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report Initial teacher training

There are currently three regional centres of initial teacher training 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 2014-2015, the three regional centres between them trained approximately 750 primary school trainees and 880 secondary school trainees.

This year, we inspected one initial teacher training provider, the North and Mid Wales Centre of Teacher Education. The centre has been in operation since 2010. Managed jointly by Aberystwyth University and Bangor University, the centre comprises provision at both institutions, and trains primary and secondary teachers. The centre works with partnership schools across a wide area of Wales. In 2014-2015, the centre trained just over a third of all primary trainees and nearly a quarter of all secondary trainees in Wales.

Standards at the centre are unsatisfactory, provision is adequate and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The centre was judged to be non-compliant with the requirements for initial teacher training in Wales, and will be re-inspected by Estyn.

For more information about the centre inspected, please click on the [inspection report](#)

## Summary 2010-2015: Initial teacher training

We have inspected all three centres of initial teacher training in this cycle of inspections.

This table shows 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 where they have taken place.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

Figure: 2.41

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	

## Summary 2010-2015: Initial teacher training

All centres have some common good features:

- Most trainees meet the standards for QTS
- Trainees have a good understanding of curriculum requirements
- Trainees have positive attitudes
- There are a few examples of very high-quality teaching in university, and very good mentoring in schools

The main challenges in all centres are to improve:

- trainees' planning skills, especially the use of assessment information to inform planning and trainees' planning to develop pupils' skills
- 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

## Follow-up activity: Initial teacher training

During 2014-2015, Estyn re-inspected the South East Wales Centre of Initial Teacher Education and Training. The centre was inspected in 2013, when standards and provision were judged as adequate, and leadership was found to be unsatisfactory. When inspectors returned in 2015, they found that the centre had made strong progress in strengthening leadership, strategic direction and self-evaluation procedures, and improving the accuracy of assessment of trainees' progress and performance.

The centre has reorganised its leadership and managements structures. As a result, all staff across the centre have very good opportunities to take on leadership roles in the development of the centre. An executive board directs and challenges the work of leaders in developing the centre very effectively. The board communicates high expectations to all staff and holds them to account.

The centre has a clear vision for its future direction. This vision is linked closely to a clear strategic plan, coherent improvement plans, and valuable evaluation tools. All plans and processes place a strong emphasis on the characteristics of the teachers who will enter the education system as a result of training at the centre.

Self-evaluation is now informed by a reliable and valid evidence base. This has led to staff across the centre engaging in open and robust discussions about the strengths and areas for development of training programmes. As a consequence, the quality of the centre's self-evaluation has improved substantially, and there has been a marked improvement in the training provision.

The centre has implemented a number of comprehensive and thorough procedures to ensure that mentors and tutors assess trainees' progress more accurately against the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status. These processes include shared criteria for judging trainees' progress across their school experiences, mentoring and tutor training, as well as more rigorous and robust quality assurance procedures. This means that there is now much greater consistency and accuracy of feedback to trainees.

**The South East Centre of Teacher Education and Training** has improved the assessment of trainees' progress in teaching.

Centre leaders have introduced a framework for assessment that provides a useful structure to support mentors, tutors and trainees in assessing trainees' progress precisely against descriptors for each of the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status. The descriptors define how trainees on all programmes should progress through their school experiences. The framework helps mentors, tutors and trainees to consider where trainees meet the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status, and provides criteria for trainees who achieve good and excellent standards. It offers a common language for progress and target-setting, and a clear means of measuring development across all stages of a trainee's school experience.

Clear criteria have improved the quality of tutors' and mentors' written feedback to trainees. It is now more evaluative, focuses specifically on the impact of trainees' teaching on pupils' learning, and provides clear targets for trainees to improve. As a result of this work, the centre has identified that too many mentors are still untrained. To address this, the centre has developed online training materials and has published guidance materials and good practice case studies on the centre website.

To support the implementation of the framework, leaders have introduced quality assurance measures. At regular points in the academic year, mentors upload written evaluations of trainees' progress to the centre's electronic information systems. This helps middle leaders to monitor mentors' feedback to trainees, and to support mentors in assessing trainees.

Senior leaders analyse assessment information methodically to identify how well trainees make progress and to look for patterns in trainees' outcomes. They use this data alongside a scrutiny of trainees' files to check for accuracy in assessment. This rigorous quality assurance system means that senior leaders can hold

middle leaders to account for the accuracy of trainees' outcomes. These processes ensure consistency and accuracy of feedback to trainees.

The centre has developed the 'school experience quality matrix', a system to strengthen its quality assurance of trainees' school experience. This involves a series of integrated quality checks in schools, between schools and across programmes. The centre has piloted the matrix on the PGCE primary programme, and early indications suggest that, when used alongside the assessment framework, the quality matrix helps to improve trainees' school experience and to identify issues for improvement.





The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report Welsh for adults

This year, Estyn inspected Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre, one of six regional Welsh for adults centres. Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Welsh for Adults Centre is part of the School of Welsh in Cardiff University and is responsible for providing about 200 classes in 80 settings across the region. The region extends from St Mellons to Llantwit Major.

For more information about this centre, please click on the [inspection report](#)

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The Welsh for adults sector is currently being re-structured following the 'Raising our sights' report, produced by the Welsh for adults Review Group (Welsh Government, 2013a). One of the main recommendations in the report was to establish a national entity to plan and monitor the development of all aspects of Welsh for adults for the next seven years. An entity, called the 'Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol', has recently been established by the Welsh Government and aims to:

- set a national strategic direction for the Welsh for adults sector
- provide leadership for Welsh for adults providers
- raise standards in teaching and learning in Welsh for adults
- develop an engaging, appropriate and high quality National Curriculum and produce resources suitable for all kinds of learners (Maes Cymraeg i oedolion, 2015)

The entity will rationalise the number of providers by the end of March 2016. Existing providers and the six Welsh for adults centres will continue to offer courses until the end of August 2016, with the new provision due to start in September 2016.

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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## Section 2: Sector report

### Learning in the justice sector

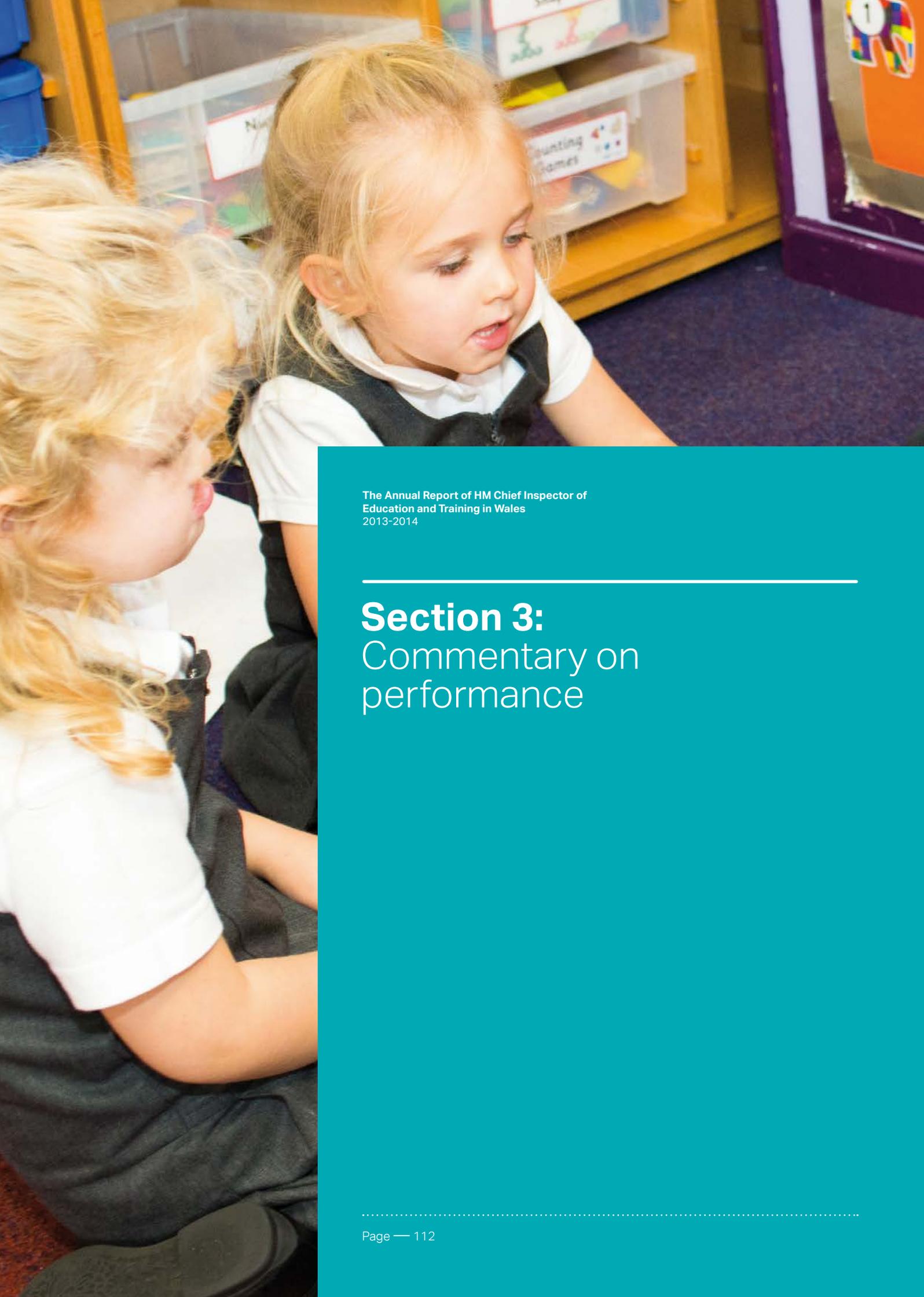
There are currently four prisons in Wales, one of which houses a Young Offenders' Institution. A minority of adults and young people serve their sentences in secure settings in England. This year Estyn worked with our partner inspectorate, HMI Prisons, to inspect Her Majesty's Prison Swansea. The inspection was led by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and their report can be found here:

[Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons](#)

For more details about inspection findings for all sectors, please visit [data.estyn.gov.wales](http://data.estyn.gov.wales)

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The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2013-2014

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## **Section 3:** Commentary on performance

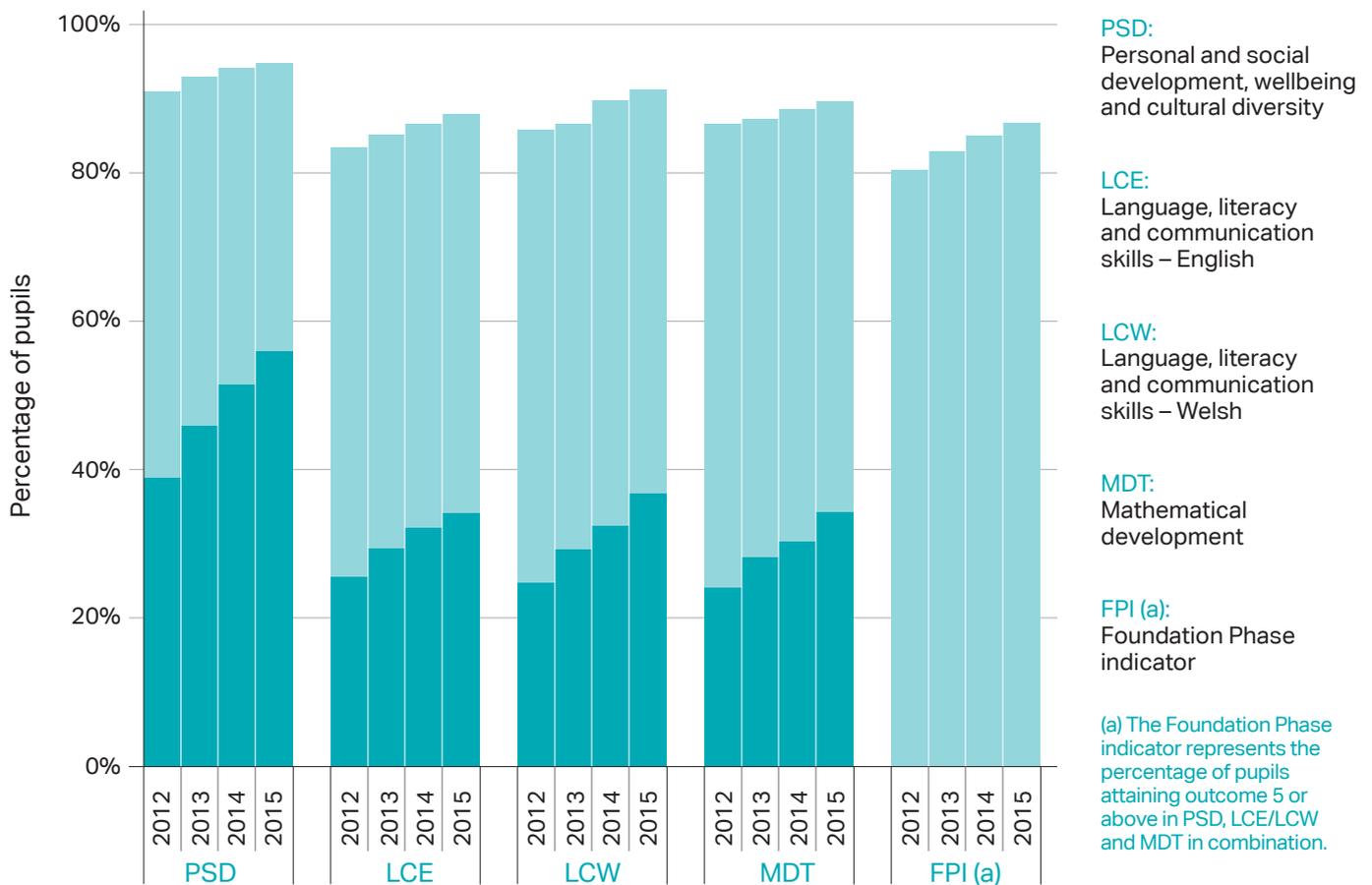
## The performance of pupils in the Foundation Phase

2015 is the fourth year for all seven-year-olds in Wales to be assessed by their teachers against the Foundation Phase instead of the National Curriculum levels. Pupils are expected to attain Foundation Phase outcome 5 by this age with the most able reaching outcome 6 or higher.

The chart below compares the results over the last four years to 2015.

**Figure 3.1: Foundation Phase – percentage of pupils achieving the expected outcome (outcome 5) or the expected outcome plus one (outcome 6), 2012 to 2015**

■ Achieving outcome 5+  
■ Achieving outcome 6+



Sources: Welsh Government, 2012, 2013b, 2014b, 2015a

In 2015, the percentage of pupils gaining at least outcome 5 increased for all areas of learning. Since 2012, the Foundation Phase indicator has increased by over six percentage points to 86.8%. Language, literacy and communication skills – English (LCE) has been the lowest performing area of learning for the last four years. In 2015, this measure is approximately seven percentage points below the personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSD) area of learning. It is also 3.4 percentage points lower than language, literacy and communication skills – Welsh (LCW), and 1.7 percentage points lower than mathematical development (MDT).

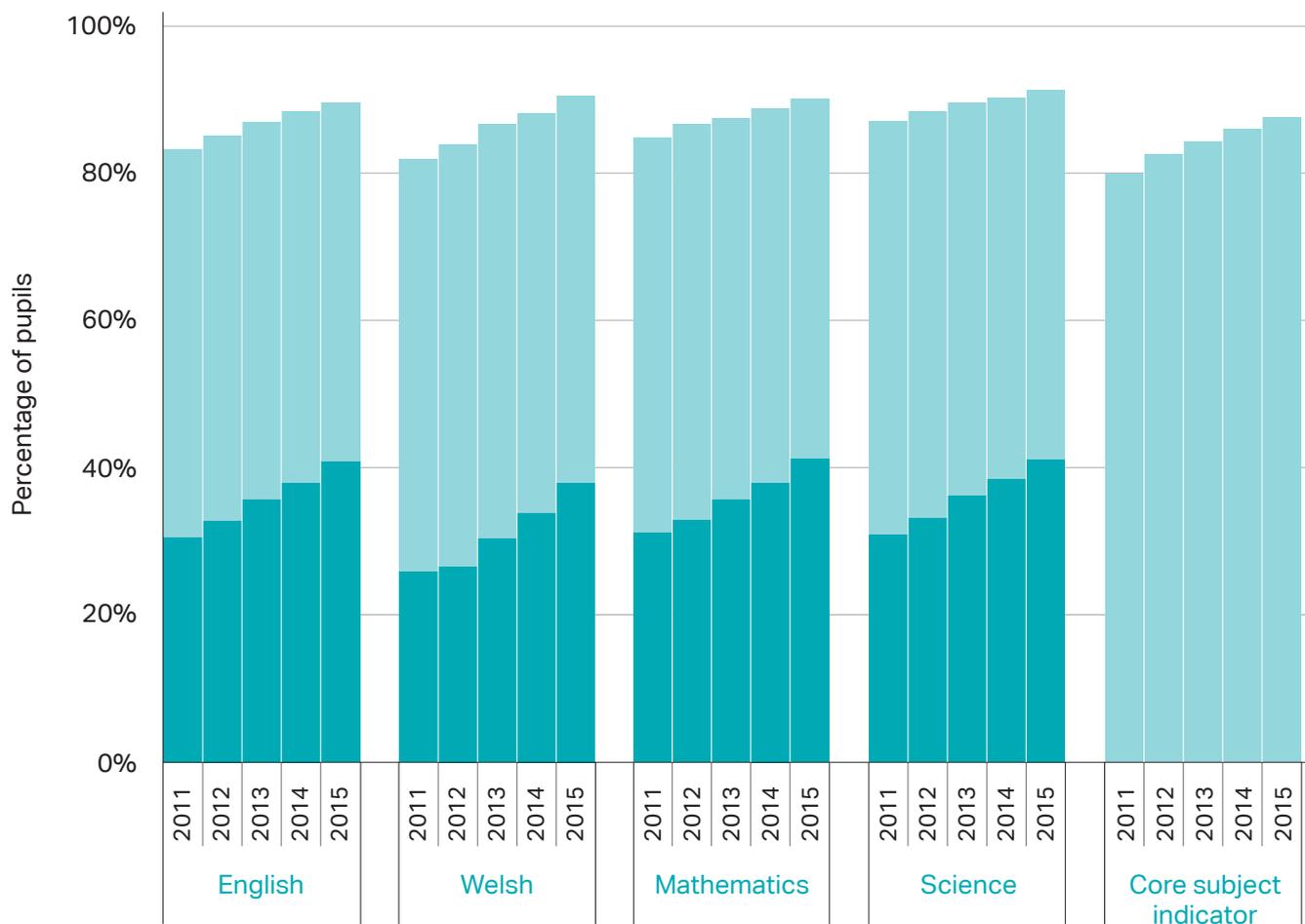
The percentage of pupils reaching the higher outcomes in all areas of learning continues to improve. Over a half of pupils achieve outcome 6 or higher in personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity (PSD) and around one third of pupils achieve outcome 6 or higher in English (LCE), Welsh (LCW) or mathematics (MDT). Over the last four years, mathematical development (MDT) has generally been the lowest performing area of learning for higher outcomes, although, in 2015, performance in this measure increased well and it is now in line with English (LCE).

## Performance of pupils at key stage 2

When assessed by their teachers in the core National Curriculum subjects (English, Welsh in Welsh-medium schools, mathematics and science) pupils are expected to achieve level 4 by the end of key stage 2 when they are 11 years old and the most able are expected to achieve level 5 or higher.

**Figure 3.2: Key stage 2 - Percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4) and the expected level plus one (level 5), 2011 to 2015**

■ Achieving L4+  
■ Achieving L5+



Sources: Welsh Government, 2012, 2013b, 2014b, 2015a

At key stage 2, in 2015, results improved in all subjects. Science remains the highest performing subject at this key stage, although the gap between the outcomes with the other core subjects has narrowed. The percentage of pupils who gain the expected level in all three core subjects (known as the core subject indicator or CSI) has improved consistently over recent years. In 2015, 87.7% of pupils achieved the core subject indicator, an increase of nearly eight percentage points since 2011.

In 2015, the percentage of pupils gaining level 5 also improved in all subjects. Around two in every five pupils now reach this level in each subject. Since 2011, performance at this higher level has increased by over 10 percentage points in each subject. Further, between 1 and 1.5% of pupils now gain level 6 or above in English, Welsh or mathematics, which is up by over one percentage point since 2011. However, this is not the case in science, where, in 2015, only 0.2% of pupils attained level 6 or above.

## Performance of pupils at key stage 3

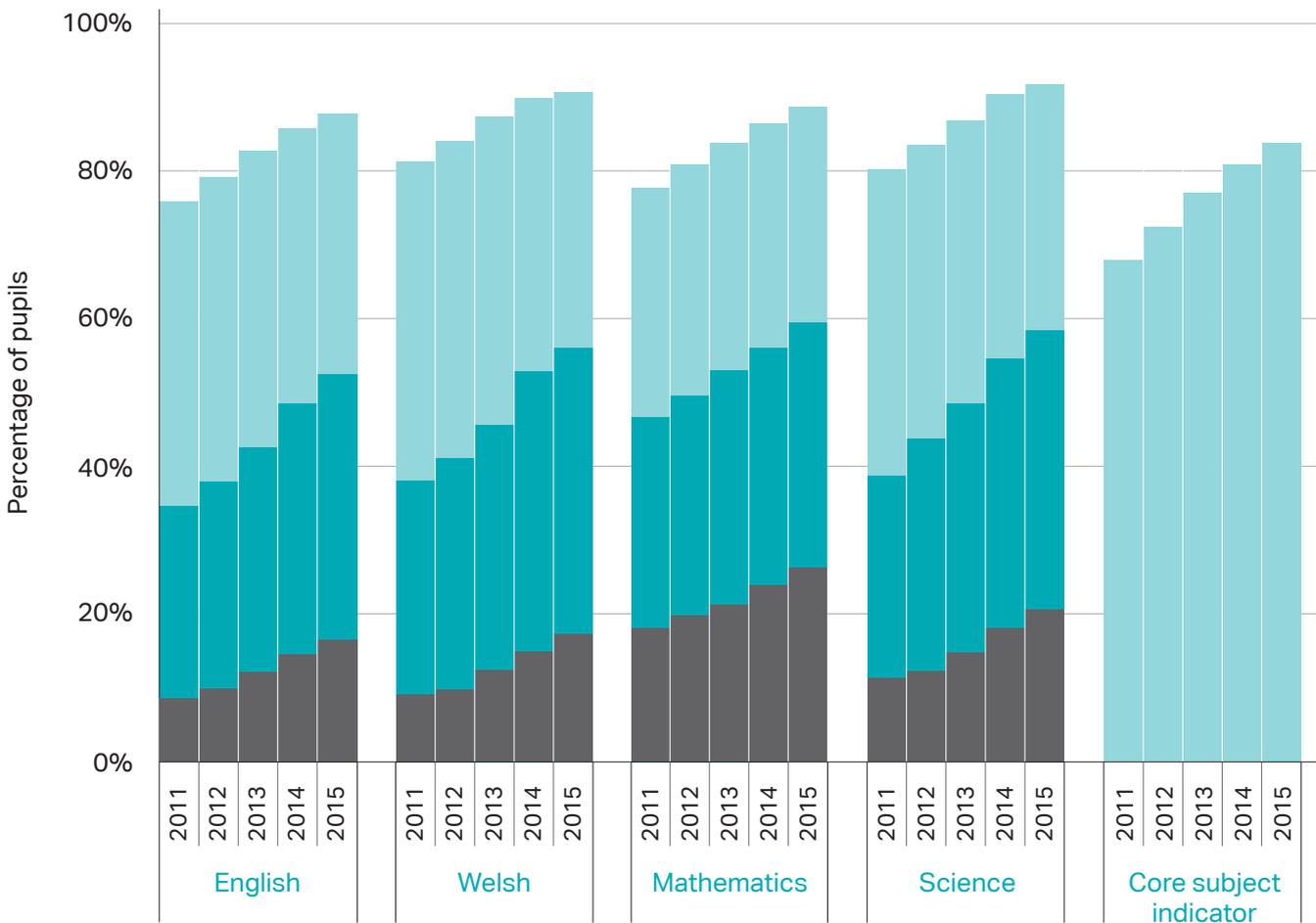
Pupils at the end of key stage 3, when they are 14 years old, are expected to reach level 5 with the most able reaching 6 or 7.

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in all three core subjects (the core subject indicator) improved in 2015 by around three percentage points. Over recent years, the key stage 3 core subject indicator has improved rapidly and in 2015 it was 16 percentage points higher than in 2011. Attainment in English and mathematics at level 5 and above increased by around two percentage points in 2015. In Welsh and science, the two subjects with the highest performance, both above 90%, attainment at level 5 and above increased by around one percentage point.

The percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels also continues to improve. In 2015, for the first time, over a half of pupils in each subject area now reached at least level 6. The subjects with the highest proportion of pupils gaining at least level 6 were mathematics and science, where nearly three in every five pupils achieved this outcome.

**Figure 3.3: Key stage 3 - percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 5) the expected level plus one (level 6) and expected level plus two (level 7), 2011 to 2015**

- Achieving L5+
- Achieving L6+
- Achieving L7+



Sources: Welsh Government, 2012, 2013b, 2014b, 2015a

## Summary of teacher assessment

The pattern of increases in outcomes across all subjects and levels of attainment in the Foundation Phase, key stage 2 and key stage 3 continues. These constant increases in outcomes across all levels continue to raise questions around the validity, accuracy and reliability of teacher assessments.

## Examinations at key stage 4

### Headline indicators

Figure 3.4	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold with English or Welsh first language and mathematics	50.1%	51.1%	52.7%	55.4%	57.9%
Percentage achieving the level 2 threshold	67.3%	72.6%	77.8%	82.3%	84.1%
Percentage points difference between these two indicators	17.2	21.5	25.0	26.9	26.2
Percentage achieving the level 1 threshold	90.3%	91.8%	93.2%	94.0%	94.4%
Average capped points score	311.6	323.5	333.1	340.8	343.5

Source: Welsh Government, 2015b

At the end of key stage 4, 15-year-old pupils take external examinations. In 2015, the percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A\*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics increased by two and a half percentage points. This is the second largest increase in this measure since the measure was introduced in 2007. The largest increase occurred in 2014. Performance in this key indicator has increased by nearly eight percentage points since 2011.

The proportion of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold increased in 2015, but at a slower rate than in previous years. In 2015, this indicator increased by nearly two percentage points, compared to an average increase of around four and a half percentage points over the preceding four years. In 2015, the percentage of pupils achieving the level 1 threshold increased by just under half of a percentage point to 94.4%.

The capped points score, a measure of the average of the best eight GCSE or equivalent results improved in 2015 by just over two and a half points. This compares to an average increase of around nine points over the preceding four years. This means that the rate of improvement for pupils' highest grades has slowed. Overall, in 2015, for their best eight GCSE or equivalent results, pupils achieved an average of around four grade C and four grade B outcomes.

## Core subjects

Figure 3.5	achieved A*-C in English/Welsh	achieved A*-C in English	achieved A*-C in Welsh	achieved A*-C in mathematics	achieved A*-C (or equivalent) in science
2011	63.7%	62.8%	74.6%	56.5%	65.9%
2012	63.5%	62.2%	73.8%	58.4%	70.6%
2013	64.0%	62.9%	73.5%	60.3%	74.8%
2014	67.2%	66.2%	73.7%	61.7%	82.3%
2015	69.7%	68.6%	75.2%	64.4%	84.0%

Source: Welsh Government, 2015b

Science remains the highest performing core subject in Wales, although in 2015 its rate of improvement slowed, up just over one and a half percentage points in 2015 compared to seven and a half percentage points in 2014. In 2015, outcomes in mathematics increased at the greatest rate, although mathematics remains the lowest performing core subject at key stage 4. Outcomes in mathematics at grade C and above are around four, 11 and 20 percentage points below English, Welsh and science respectively.

## Post-16 learners in school

Figure 3.6	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Percentage achieving the level 3 threshold	96.5%	96.9%	96.5%	97.1%	97.0%
Average wider points score	798.9	772.9	806.6	804.1	799.7

Source: Welsh Government, 2015b

In 2015, the percentage of post-16 learners in school achieving the level 3 threshold was 97.0%, which is a small decline from 2014. Since 2012 this measure has increased by just under half of a percentage point. The average wider points score attained by these learners also decreased over the last year by around four and a half points. This means that in 2015, overall, pupils achieved either fewer qualifications or lower grades, or a combination of both, when compared to pupils in the previous two years.

## Differences in performance between boys and girls

Figure 3.7	Girls 2015	Boys 2015	Percentage points difference 2015	Percentage points difference 2014
Percentage gaining Foundation Phase indicator	90.8%	83.0%	7.7	8.5
Percentage gaining key stage 2 core subject indicator	90.7%	84.9%	5.8	6.3
Percentage gaining key stage 3 core subject indicator	87.7%	80.3%	7.4	8.7
Percentage gaining key stage 4 core subject indicator	58.0%	51.7%	6.4	8.1

Sources: Welsh Government, 2015a, 2015b

In 2015, girls continued to outperform boys at all key stages. The least difference between the performance of girls and boys was in key stage 2.

Girls attain higher than boys in each area of learning in the Foundation Phase. However, in 2015, the difference between the performance of boys and girls in the Foundation Phase indicator decreased by just less than one percentage point compared to 2014.

In key stage 2, the difference in attainment of girls and boys decreased across all core subjects. This was most noticeable in Welsh as boys' performance increased by nearly four percentage points from 2014. Lesser increases in boys' attainment occurred in English, mathematics and science. In the core subject indicator, girls continue to outperform boys by around six percentage points.

In key stage 3, girls continue to outperform boys in the core subject indicator, but the gap has continued to narrow in recent years. In 2015, the difference between the performance of girls and boys was just over seven percentage points compared to a gap of around nine percentage points in 2014.

At the higher levels and outcomes from the Foundation Phase through to key stage 3, girls outperform boys in all areas.

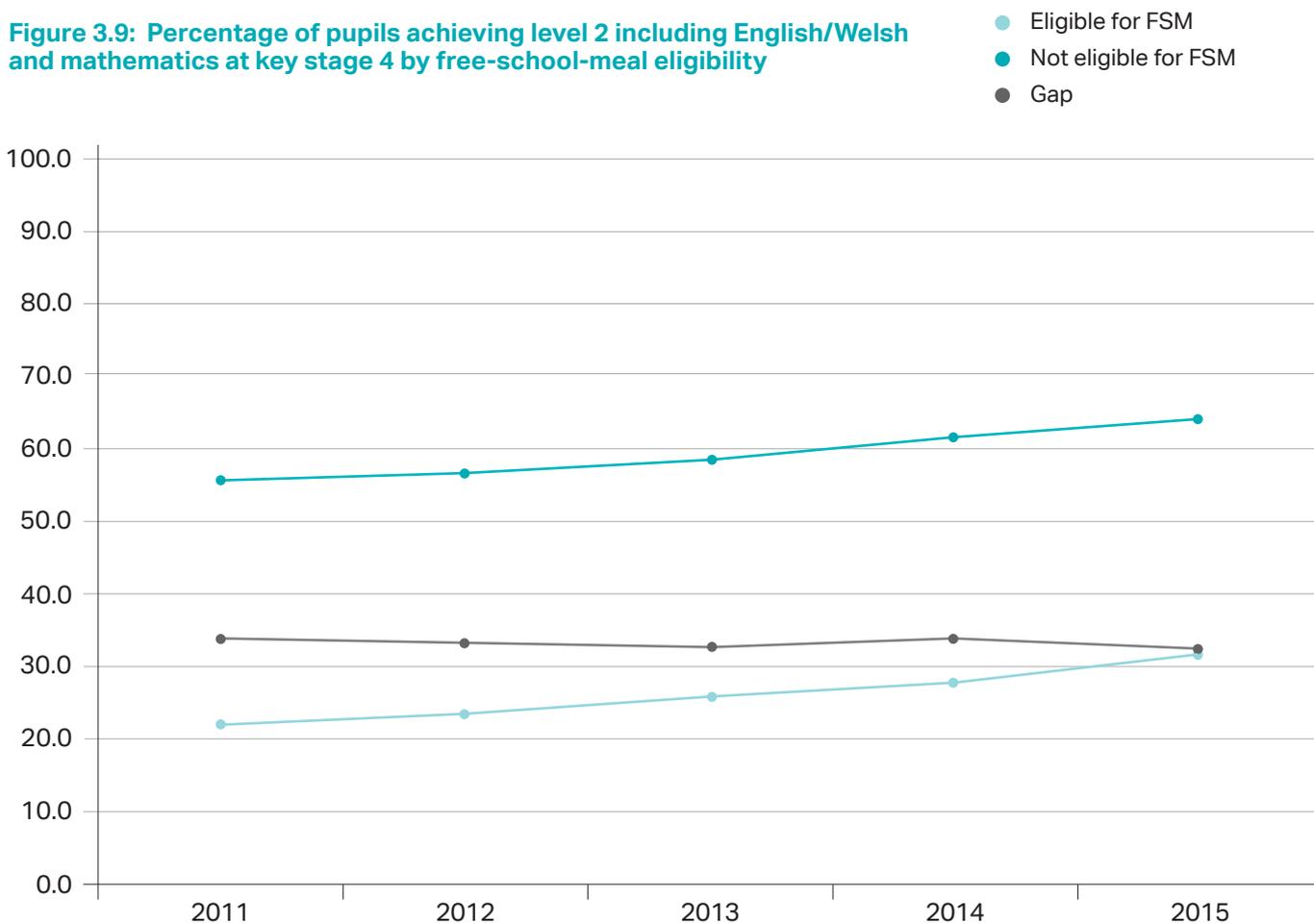
In key stage 4, girls outperform boys in the core subject indicator by around six and a half percentage points. This has been a fairly consistent pattern over recent years, although the gap narrowed by over one and a half percentage points in 2015.

## Performance of pupils eligible for free school meals

Figure 3.8	Not eligible for FSM 2015	Eligible for FSM 2015	Percentage points difference 2015	Percentage points difference 2014
Percentage gaining Foundation Phase indicator	90.0%	75.1%	14.9	16.3
Percentage gaining key stage 2 core subject indicator	90.8%	75.1%	15.7	17.7
Percentage gaining key stage 3 core subject indicator	88.1%	65.9%	22.2	24.3
Percentage gaining key stage 4 core subject indicator	61.2%	29.3%	31.9	32.4

Sources: Welsh Government, 2015b

**Figure 3.9: Percentage of pupils achieving level 2 including English/Welsh and mathematics at key stage 4 by free-school-meal eligibility**

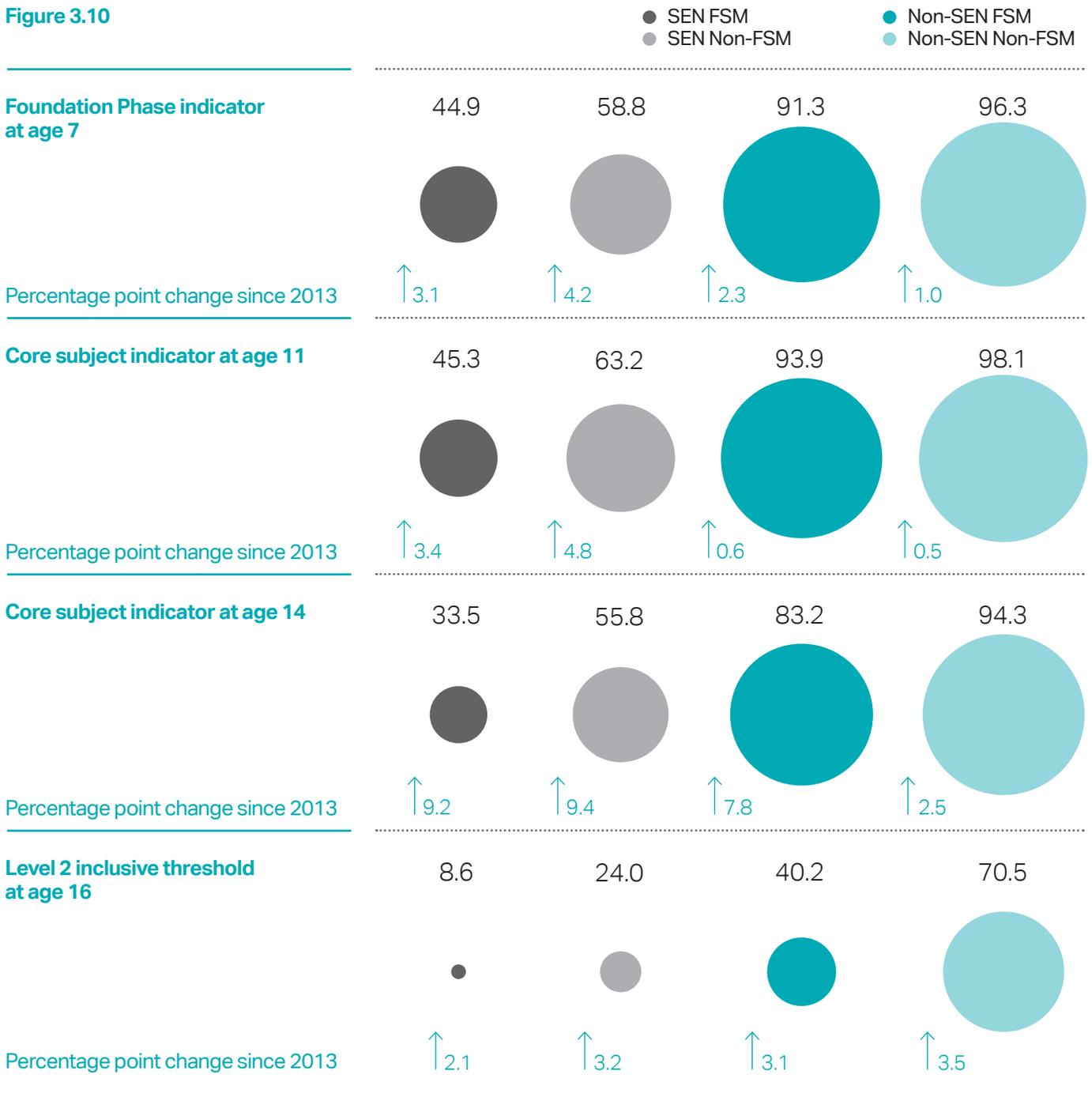


The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is considerably lower than the performance by pupils not eligible for free school meals across the Foundation Phase and all key stages. However, the performance by this group of pupils has improved in all phases. Furthermore, in 2015, the rate of improvement by pupils eligible for free school meals was stronger than that of pupils not eligible for free school meals in the Foundation Phase and key stages 2, 3 and 4. At key stage 4, the gap in the core subject indicator between pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible for free school meals is around 32% points. This is the smallest gap since 2009. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A\*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics increased slightly more than for those pupils not eligible for free school meals. The gap for this indicator is also the smallest since 2009.

## Achievement in selected indicators, by FSM eligibility and SEN status

Learners who are eligible for free school meals and have special educational needs (SEN) are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. The chart below shows that learners from relatively poor backgrounds achieve less well than their peers at every key stage of education, and that they perform even more poorly if they also have SEN. The achievement of all groups of learners has improved since 2013 across all indicators. Learners with SEN who are not eligible for free school meals improved at the greatest rate across all indicators with the exception of the level 2 inclusive threshold, where learners who are both not eligible for free school meals and have no SEN improved at the greatest rate.

Figure 3.10



## Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Figure 3.11: The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training, 2010 to 2014

Age	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
16-18	11.6%	12.2%	11.0%	10.9%	10.9% (p)
19-24	22.9%	22.3%	23.0%	21.1%	20.7% (p)

Source: Welsh Government, 2015d

(p) SFR: Year end 2014 is provisional

At the end of 2014, 10.9% of 16 to 18 year olds were not in education, employment or training. This equates to about 12,200 teenagers, and is similar to the 2013 figure. The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training in England is currently around one percentage point lower than the equivalent rate for Wales.

In 2014, 3.1% of Year 11 leavers were known to be not in education, employment or training. This compares to 3.7% in 2013. Over the last five years, the proportion of Year 11 leavers known to be not in education, employment or training has decreased by more than two percentage points.

At the end 2014, 20.7% of 19 to 24 year olds were not in education, employment or training. This equates to around 53,700 young people. This is a reduction from 2013 when 21.1% of 19 to 24 year olds were not in education, employment or training. Over the last five years, the proportion of 19 to 24 year olds not in education, employment or training has remained fairly constant at approximately one in every five young people.

## Attendance

**Figure 3.12: Attendance in Wales by pupils of compulsory school age, 2011 to 2015**

School phase	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Primary	93.3%	93.9%	93.7%	94.8%	94.9%
Secondary	91.4%	92.1%	92.6%	93.6%	93.8%
Percentage point difference*	1.9	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.1

\* Difference between primary and secondary school attendance

Sources: Welsh Government, 2015e, 2015f

Attendance rates in both primary and secondary schools continue to improve well. Over the last five years, attendance has increased in primary and secondary schools by 1.6 percentage points and 2.5 percentage points respectively. These increases mean that pupils attended school on average between approximately three and four days more in 2014-2015 than they did in 2010-2011.

Persistent absenteeism is the term given to pupils whose attendance rates are 80% or lower. This has continued to decline in secondary schools from 5% in 2014 to 4.5% in 2015. However, the rate of persistent absenteeism in secondary schools is around two and half times the rate in primary schools. In 2015, in secondary schools, pupils who are persistently absent accounted for just under a quarter of all absences. In primary schools they accounted for around 9% of absences. The proportion of pupils classified as persistent absentees in primary and secondary schools has approximately halved since 2008.

Schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals have on average higher absenteeism rates.

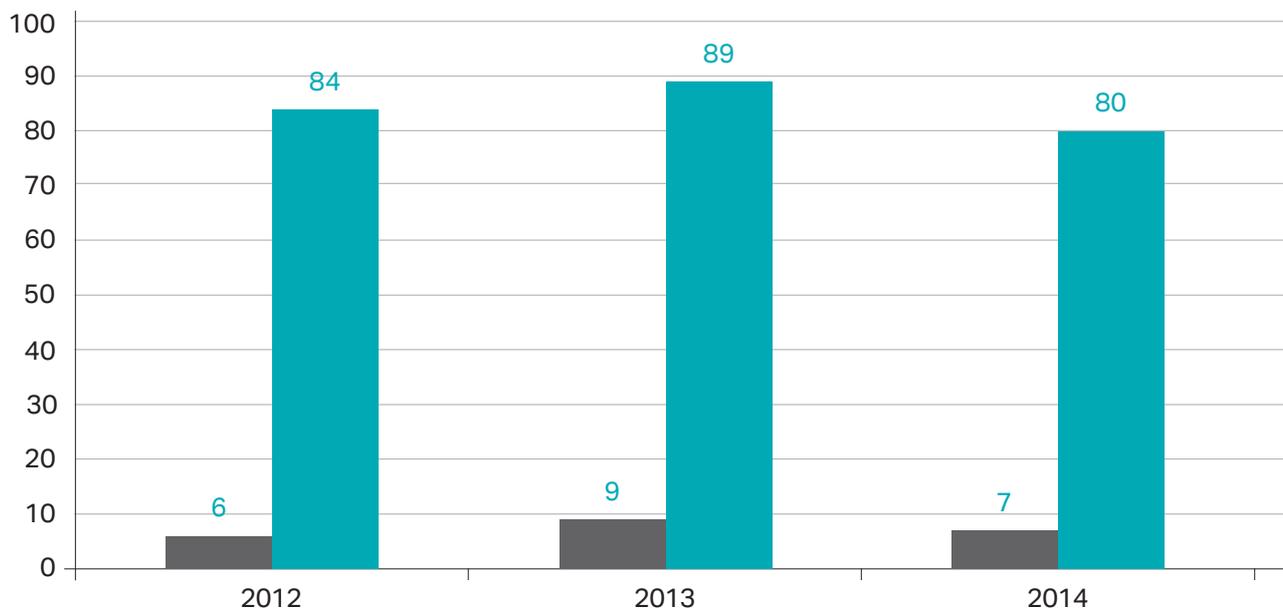
The rate of unauthorised absenteeism has remained fairly constant in both primary and secondary schools for the last three years at 1% and 1.3% respectively.

In secondary schools in 2015, nearly 70% of all absence was due to illness or medical appointments. Two per cent of absences were due to agreed family holidays and 1.6% of absences were due to pupils being excluded with no alternative provision provided. Over 6% of absences were authorised by schools but not covered by the standard school absence codes. In primary schools in 2015, around 66% of all absence was due to illness or medical appointments. Over 8% of absences were due to agreed family holidays and around 4% of absences were authorised by schools but not covered by the standard school absence codes.

## Exclusions

**Figure 3.13: Number of permanent exclusions from maintained primary and secondary schools in Wales, 2012-2014**

■ Primary  
■ Secondary

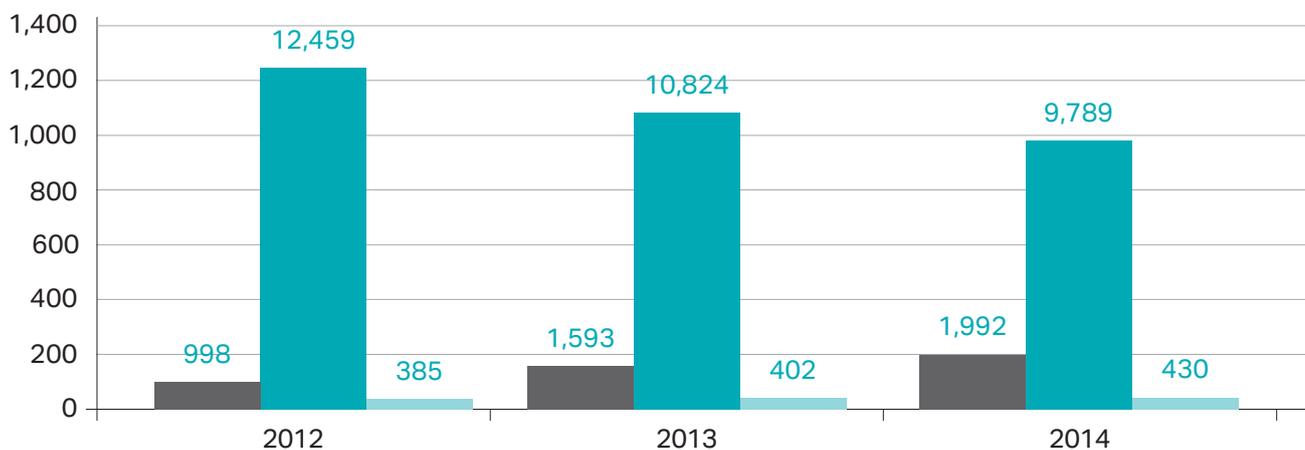


Source: Welsh Government, 2015g

The numbers of permanent exclusions has generally remained constant over the last three years in Wales. In 2014, 87 pupils were permanently excluded from primary and secondary schools. Pupils eligible for free school meals are four times more likely to be permanently excluded from school compared to pupils not eligible for free school meals. The most common reasons for pupils being permanently excluded in 2014 included drug and alcohol related incidents and verbal abuse and threatening behaviour against an adult.

**Figure 3.14: Number of fixed-term exclusions (five days or less) from maintained primary, secondary and special schools in Wales, 2012-2014**

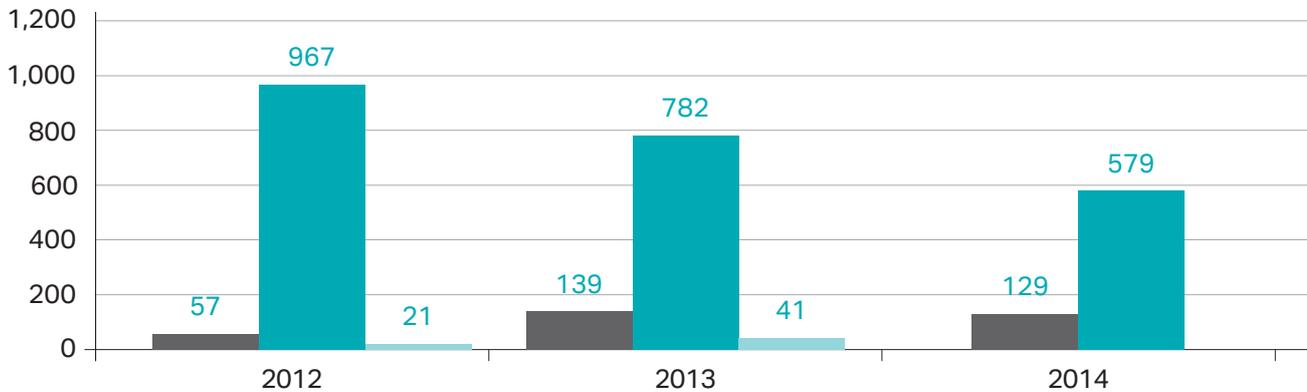
■ Primary  
■ Secondary  
■ Maintained special



Source: Welsh Government, 2015g

**Figure 3.15: Number of fixed-term exclusions (over five days) from maintained primary, secondary and special schools in Wales, 2012-2014**

■ Primary  
■ Secondary  
■ Maintained special



Source: Welsh Government, 2015g

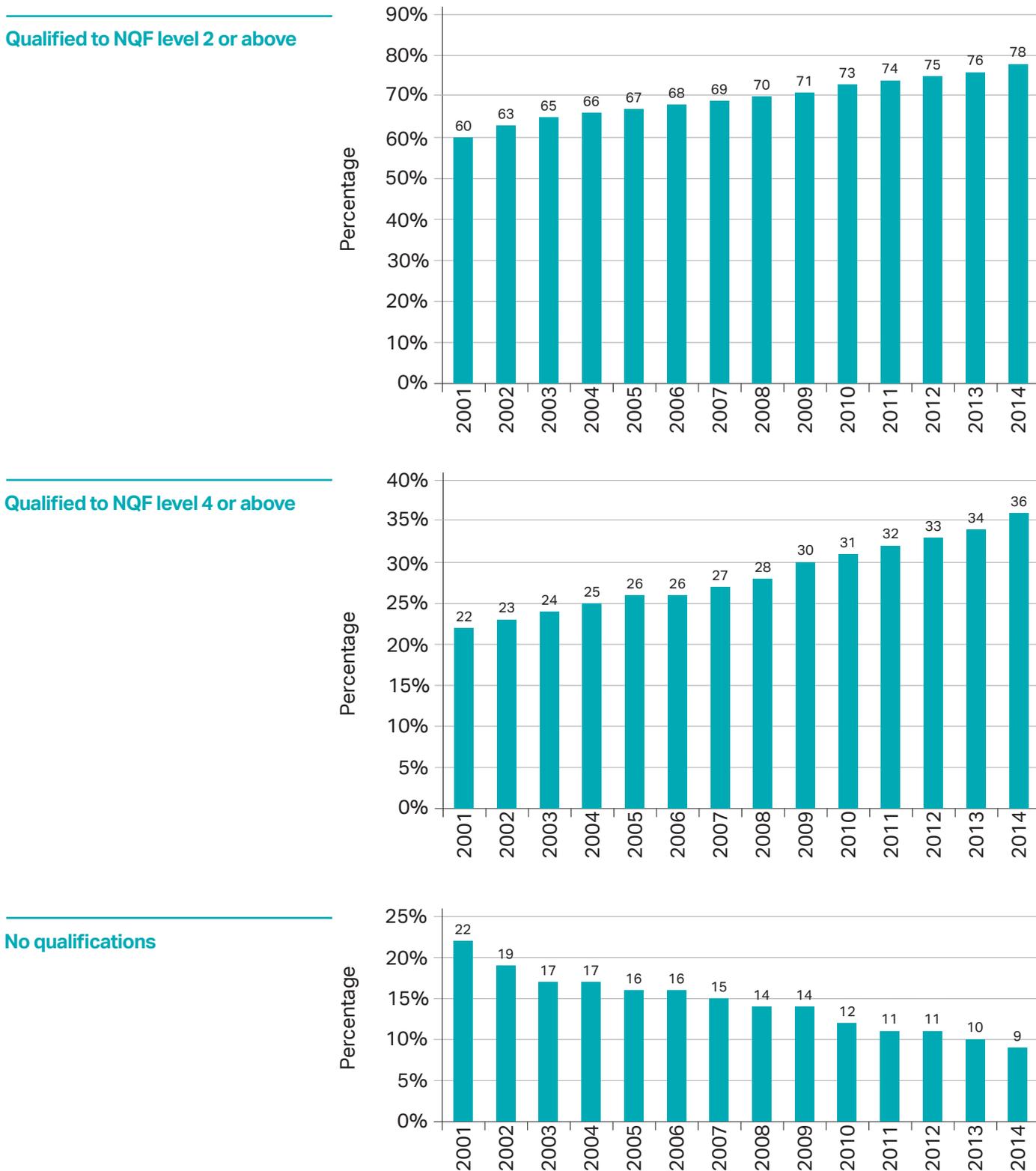
In 2014, the total number of fixed-term exclusions fell for the second year in a row. The number of fixed term exclusions of six days or more fell noticeably compared to the two previous years. The number of shorter exclusions of five days or less has also declined. This is due to a decrease in the number of such exclusions in secondary schools. However, the overall decline in the number of exclusions at five days or less is modest due to an increasing number in primary and special schools since 2012. In 2014, nearly 2,000 pupils were excluded from primary schools for five days or less, which is an increase of around 1,000 exclusions compared to 2012. In 2014, the most common reasons for pupils being excluded for six days or more or five days or less were due to persistent disruptive behaviour or threatening or dangerous behaviour.

In 2014, pupils with special educational needs accounted for around two thirds of all exclusions, while pupils eligible for free school meals accounted for just under half of exclusions. When considering pupils' ethnic background, pupils from black or mixed backgrounds have generally had the highest rate of exclusions over the last three years, although the rate for these two ethnic groups is only marginally higher than the rate for pupils from a white ethnic background.

## Skills, further education and lifelong learning

Overall, qualification levels in Wales increased in 2014, continuing a general upward trend. In 2014, slightly more than three-quarters of working age adults in Wales held at least level 2 qualifications and just over a third held qualifications at level 4 or above. In 2014, slightly less than 9% of working age adults in Wales reported having no qualifications – a slight improvement from 2013.

Figure 3.16: Level of highest qualification held by working age adults, 2001-2014



Source: Welsh Government, 2015h

In general, qualification levels were highest in Monmouthshire, The Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff, and lowest in the South Wales valleys authorities. In general, qualification levels in Wales were lower than in England, Scotland and the UK as a whole, but higher than in Northern Ireland.

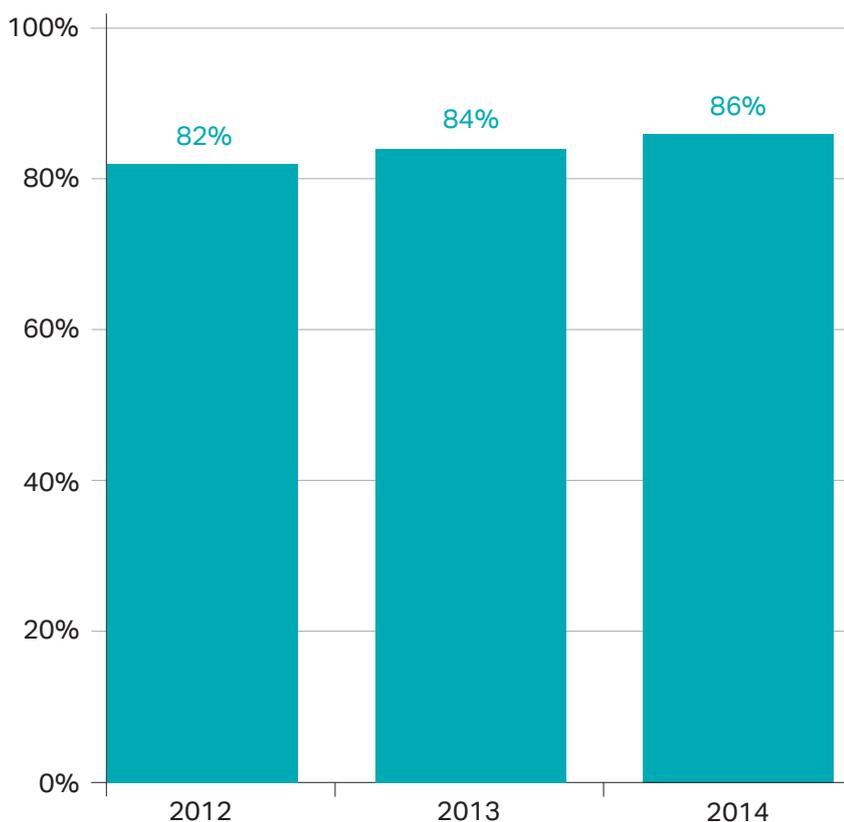
Twenty-two per cent of those who are either unemployed or economically inactive reported having no qualifications. This compares to 5% for those in employment (Welsh Government, 2015i).

## Further education

Across all further education programmes in 2014, 92% of learning activities were completed and, of those activities with an assessable outcome, 93% were attained.

Overall, 86% of learning activities were successfully completed and attained. This represents an overall increase of two percentage points from the previous year and continues a trend of gradual rising success rates.

**Figure 3.17: Overall learning activity success rates in further education colleges, 2012-2014**



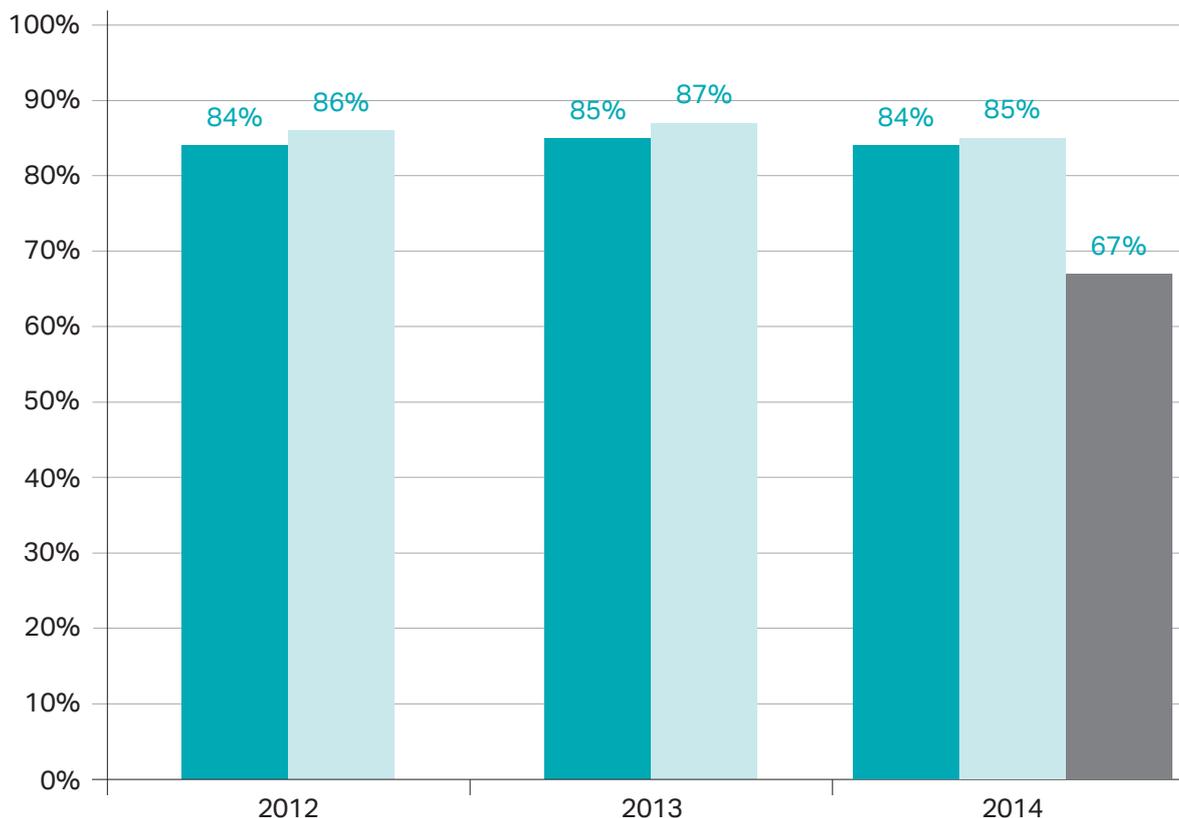
Sources: Welsh Government, 2013c, 2014c, 2015j

## Work-based learning

Learners on apprenticeship programmes have to achieve a range of qualifications in order to gain the full apprenticeship 'framework'. In 2014, the work-based learning framework success rates in Foundation Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships showed a small decrease in comparison with the previous year. The success rates in Foundation Apprenticeships decreased from 85% to 84% while those in Apprenticeships decreased from 87% to 85%.

Higher Apprenticeships were introduced in Wales in 2012. This is the first year that framework success rates for this programme have been published. In 2014 the overall framework success rate was 67%. Analysis of the data by the Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills statisticians shows that the relatively lower sector success rates are caused by data-quality issues at a small cohort of learning providers. The figures are therefore included in this report for future comparisons.

**Figure 3.18: Framework success rates in Foundation Apprenticeships, Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships, 2012-2014**



Sources: Welsh Government, 2013c, 2014c, 2015j

In Traineeships, overall learning activity success rates have increased by four percentage points from the previous year to 86% for Engagement programmes and by around one and a half percentage points to 79% for level 1 programmes.

In 2014 in Adult Employability programmes, which include Steps to Employment and Work Ready programmes, overall learning activity success rates also improved when compared with outcomes in 2013. Eighty per cent of participants for Work Focused Learning programmes were successful and 98% for Routeways to Work.

Within three months of completing their Traineeship programme, in 2014, 68% of trainees had progressed onto to employment or learning at a higher level, a slight increase on 2013. For trainees completing Adult Employability programmes, 55% had progressed onto to employment or further learning, which is broadly similar to last year (Welsh Government, 2015j).



The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of  
Education and Training in Wales  
2014-2015

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