

Section 2: Follow-up inspection activities

Annual Report 2011-2012



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As part of the new inspection arrangements that started in September 2010, we introduced three new types of 'follow-up' activity after inspection:

- best practice;
- Estyn monitoring; and
- local authority monitoring.

The two statutory categories into which providers may be placed continue to be used. They are:

- in need of significant improvement; and
- special measures.

In last year's Annual Report (2010-2011) we reported on how many providers fell into each of these new categories. This year, we can report on the outcome of the visits we made to these providers during 2011-2012. We also include case studies from schools and settings to show how our follow-up activities are helping providers to improve.

Inspectors ask providers with 'excellent' judgements to provide a best practice case study so that they can share their successful practice more widely. We place a selection of these case studies in the Best Practice section of our website.

However, we re-visit schools and settings whose areas for improvement require follow-up monitoring, either by Estyn or by their local authority, according to the extent of the challenges they face. Figure 2.1 illustrates the numbers of providers that we identified as needing follow-up activity in 2011-2012 and in 2010-2011.

Figure 2.1: Chart of the number of primary schools, secondary schools and settings identified as requiring follow-up activity during core inspection in 2011-2012 (2010-2011 figures in brackets)

	Primary	Secondary	Settings
LA monitoring	36 (51)	3 (6)	31 (10)
Estyn monitoring	56 (43)	16 (6)	21 (7)
Significant improvement	8 (8)	5 (1)	-
Special measures	6 (4)	1 (0)	-
Focused improvement (settings only)	-	-	0 (1)

In this section of the Annual Report we report on the outcomes from monitoring visits undertaken in 2011-2012. Figure 2.2 shows how many providers were removed from follow-up.

Figure 2.2: Chart of the number of primary schools, secondary schools and settings removed from follow-up in 2011-2012 which were placed in follow-up in 2010-2011

	Primary	Secondary	Settings
LA monitoring	31	6	6
Estyn monitoring	33	6	5
Significant improvement	6	0	-
Special measures	0	0	-
Focused improvement (settings only)	-	-	1

In most cases, by the time that Estyn or the local authority make a follow-up visit, schools and settings have made good progress in relation to the recommendations in their reports and they are removed from the need for further follow-up. For example, of the 38 primary schools and six secondary schools that received an Estyn monitoring visit during this year, 33 primary schools and six secondary schools had improved significantly and no longer needed monitoring. The providers that have not come out of follow-up have either:

- been moved to another, more serious, level of follow-up as a result of local authority monitoring, Estyn monitoring or re-inspection;
- closed or amalgamated with another provider; or
- not yet been visited.

Primary schools

Primary schools that we have removed from follow-up have a clear focus on improving standards and provision for pupils. These schools have largely addressed all of the recommendations from their inspection reports. Senior leaders and the governing body have reviewed progress in addressing inspection recommendations regularly and have involved all staff in this process. Typically, these schools have strengthened leadership and management, especially the school's systems for quality assurance. As a result, there is now more consistency across the school in important areas such as teaching and assessment. There is also better additional support for pupils with weak literacy skills. In many instances, teachers have benefited from opportunities to observe good practice in their own and in other schools.

Case study: Coming out of Estyn monitoring

Peter Lea Primary School is situated in Fairwater on the outskirts of Cardiff. It has 284 pupils. About 37% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is much higher than the national average.

We placed the school in Estyn monitoring following the March 2011 inspection. As a result of the good progress the school had made in addressing the inspection recommendations, we removed the school from follow-up in summer 2012.

The standard of teaching has improved considerably. All teachers now use data to monitor pupils' progress and provide additional support where necessary. In 2012, there was a big improvement in the results in English writing to well above the family of schools average. The school has been particularly successful in reducing the gap between the performance of boys and girls in writing. This has closed the gap in assessment outcomes by around 36 percentage points. In English and in science, there has been a large increase in the number of pupils achieving at the higher levels, placing the school in the top 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals.

The school was prompt in responding to the recommendations from the inspection, even before the inspection report was published. A key factor in the progress the school has made was to involve all staff and governors from the start of the process of improvements. This included linking a governor to each recommendation, which helped in carrying out regular reviews of progress.

The headteacher says that being in follow-up helped the school to see the need to give priority to key areas. This was especially the case in relation to standards and consistency in teaching and assessment. As a result, there is now a clearer focus when observing lessons on standards and pupils' progress so that staff can share a common understanding of expectations.

Case study: Coming out of significant improvement

Priory Church-in-Wales Primary School is in Brecon. It has 128 pupils. About 23% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is higher than the national average. About 5% of pupils speak Eastern European languages and no pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes.

The school was identified as requiring significant improvement following the inspection in October 2010. The overall judgements for both performance and prospects for improvement were only 'adequate' and the report identified five recommendations, including the need to improve pupils' behaviour and develop pupils' key skills of listening, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum.

When inspectors returned to monitor the school's progress just over a year later, it was judged to have improved significantly and was taken off the list of schools requiring significant improvement. Local authority advisers had worked closely with the school and provided plenty of support in important areas. There was a new discipline policy in place that staff, pupils and parents had contributed to and understood, and incidences of poor behaviour had decreased considerably. Improvements in the way teachers planned for pupils to develop and use their key skills in all subjects had raised standards in reading, writing and information and communication technology.

A few schools in follow-up have failed to make enough progress in addressing inspection recommendations. As a result, these schools will receive more intensive follow-up. In these schools, there has often not been enough improvement in self-evaluation and planning. As a result, teaching and assessment are of uneven quality, and pupils do not make the progress they should be making.

Best practice case study

Thirty primary schools were asked to provide us with case studies of best practice this year compared with 20 last year. This year, we included schools where we awarded an 'excellent' judgement for one or more quality indicators. The case studies we have published on our website cover a wide range of aspects, including best practice in leadership, provision for Welsh, supporting more able and talented pupils, and improving standards in literacy.

Local authority and Estyn monitoring

This year, we identified 48% of the primary schools for follow-up. This is a three percentage point increase on last year. The proportion of schools requiring Estyn monitoring has increased from 18% to 26%.

Recommendations in inspection reports of schools requiring Estyn monitoring often relate to improving pupils' achievements, especially in reading and writing. In these schools, there is also a need to improve the thoroughness of self-evaluation and the role of the governing body as a critical friend.

Schools requiring significant improvement or special measures

This year, we identified 7% of schools as requiring special measures or being in need of significant improvement because of serious concerns about leadership and standards. This is an increase of two percentage points on last year.

No schools that were placed in special measures either last year or this year have yet secured the necessary improvements to be removed from follow-up. Most schools are making steady progress in addressing inspection recommendations. However, they have not yet showed they have the ability

to identify and tackle well enough their continuing areas of under-performance. In some instances, schools in special measures find it difficult to make progress because of continuing instability or turnover in senior leadership posts at the school.

Secondary schools

All of the secondary schools placed in Estyn monitoring or local authority monitoring last year have addressed their inspection recommendations successfully by taking a systematic and well-planned approach to the identified weaknesses. Many of these schools have improved the standards achieved in key stage 4 through better use of performance data and careful tracking of pupils' progress throughout the key stage. Teachers have based targets for individual pupils on high expectations and they have arranged suitable mentoring and support for those likely to underachieve.

To improve the quality of teaching, schools have usually increased their use of lesson observations and have focused on particular weaknesses such as challenging the more able pupils or increasing the consistency of curriculum and lesson planning. The evaluation of these lessons has become more analytical and honest, although in a few cases there is still not enough focus on the progress pupils make. Teachers have used lesson observations as a means of sharing good practice on teaching methods and assessment.

In many of the schools that were monitored, there have been improvements in the provision for skills, especially in literacy. Staff have co-ordinated their approaches to the curriculum and introduced a sharper focus on aspects of literacy such as spelling and persuasive writing. In one school in particular, departments such as science, history and geography have reduced the use of worksheets and increased the opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of different styles and different purposes.

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“Teachers have used lesson observations as a means of sharing good practice on teaching methods and assessment.”

Case study: Coming out of Estyn monitoring

Ysgol Friars is a bilingual 11-18 mixed comprehensive school situated in Bangor, Gwynedd. It has 1,328 pupils, including 235 in the sixth form. Over 14% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is lower than the national average. Approximately 4% of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes and 13% of pupils learn English as an additional language.

We placed the school in Estyn monitoring following the September 2011 inspection. As a result of the good progress the school had made in addressing the inspection recommendations in a relatively short time, we removed the school from follow-up in the autumn term 2012.

The school's performance at both key stage 3 and key stage 4 has improved since the inspection.

Particularly good progress has been made in improving the co ordination and monitoring of literacy. There is a new literacy coordinator, a cross-department working group and a literacy action plan. The school has amended its marking policy to focus more sharply on aspects of literacy, and trained staff on how to teach literacy skills.

Similarly good progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and marking. There has been an increase over the year in the amount of good or better lessons and lessons are now more challenging, varied and stimulating.

The key factor contributing to these improvements has been the rigour and consistency of the procedures for monitoring and evaluation. The school has a comprehensive self-evaluation system that focuses strongly on standards and the quality of teaching, and sets out clear expectations of leaders and staff. Evaluations are based on specific and well-understood criteria, and much work has been done to improve the consistency and accuracy of judgements.

The common methods of recording evaluations, including a well-designed lesson observation form, are detailed and clear, and the outcomes are entered in a sophisticated database. The database permits the close analysis of strengths and areas for improvement across the school within different aspects of teaching and learning. Instances of under-performance are robustly addressed. Leaders at all levels are held appropriately to account through well-structured and sharply-focused line management arrangements.

The headteacher says that being in follow-up has provided additional impetus to plans to restructure and refresh the school's middle management. This not only sharpened the focus on standards, leading to improvement in a number of key stage 4 indicators, but also facilitated better-distributed leadership, a step change in the quality of monitoring and the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum.



This year, 54% of secondary schools needed a follow-up visit, which is an increase from last year.

Best practice case study

Eight schools were asked to provide a best practice case study last year. This year, once again eight schools were asked to provide a case study. Five out of the eight schools had a judgement of excellent both for their current performance and prospects for improvement, and the rest had a judgement of excellent for their prospects. This meant that these schools were judged excellent against at least three of the quality indicators and often against several of them. The case studies therefore were drawn from across the quality indicators, but focused on the key factors that had contributed to the positive overall judgements. These included best practice in partnership-working, professional development to support teaching, improving attendance, and pupils' skills development.

Local authority and Estyn monitoring

Last year, around 40% of secondary schools needed follow-up visits. Six required an Estyn monitoring visit and we asked the local authority to report on progress in a further six schools.

All schools that were monitored by the local authority or by Estyn have improved enough not to require further monitoring.

This year, 54% of secondary schools needed a follow-up visit, which is an increase from last year. Although the number of secondary schools to be monitored by the local authority fell from six to three, there was an increase from six to sixteen of those schools to be monitored by Estyn.

The schools to be monitored by the local authority have many good features and

usually good prospects for improvement. However, there are important areas for improvement in standards, especially at key stage 4, and often in a minority of the teaching sessions seen and in the marking of pupils' work.

Schools that need a monitoring visit by Estyn have more important areas for improvement in performance, but usually also have more shortcomings in their prospects for improvement. Often, self-evaluation reports do not identify important areas for improvement and improvement plans are not challenging enough. Attendance rates and skills are also areas of concern.

Schools requiring significant improvement or special measures

This year, the number of secondary schools in need of significant improvement increased from one to five. One school was placed in special measures. The school in need of significant improvement last year has made progress on addressing the recommendations in its inspection report, but many of the improvements are at an early stage and so Estyn will visit the school again to monitor progress.

Settings for children under five

In settings that have improved, leaders know what they need to do to improve and the quality of learning experiences is much better. Activities have a clearer purpose and are better suited to the age of the children.

Common approaches that have helped settings come out of Estyn or local authority monitoring include being given planning formats from the local authority, an overview of skills development, and extra support for observational assessment. Advisory teachers have worked through models of self-evaluation with the settings to agree strengths and areas for improvement and have helped with planning.

Case study: Coming out of Estyn monitoring

Cylch Meithrin Penllwyn is located in the village hall at Penllwyn, near Aberystwyth. Most of the children who attend the Cylch live in the local community and the surrounding areas. Around half of the children come from Welsh-speaking homes. The Cylch is registered to cater for 20 children between two and a half and four years of age. The Cylch is a member of the Ceredigion Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It is also a registered member of Mudiad Meithrin.

We placed the setting in Estyn monitoring following the March 2011 inspection.

By the time of their monitoring visit in summer 2012, practitioners felt they had made such significant progress that they welcomed inspectors into the setting to witness the changes they had made to the provision. After the initial inspection, they had 'taken on board' suggestions for improvement from the local authority; tried new ways of doing things; and put into practice many ideas from training, both external and in-house, which have improved children's standards.

The setting has developed a manageable system for self-evaluation. This was a key factor in the progress that practitioners made. Self-evaluation is now an integral part of the setting's work and practitioners are well aware of the setting's strengths and areas for development. A suitable action plan, agreed by the management committee, ensures that practitioners take action to maintain good practice and implement change.

Children have better opportunities to use their skills across all areas of learning. Most children made good progress, particularly in their literacy and numeracy skills. A new recording system gives a clear summary of each child's achievements and practitioners update profiles to reflect progress.

The lead practitioners were excited about the monitoring visit and viewed it as a positive experience. They said that being in follow-up had focused their minds about what needed improving, and that making the improvements had strengthened the setting and made it a better place.

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“This year, we invited 19 settings to provide a best practice case study. Many of these describe best practice in partnerships or leadership, with a very few case studies on best practice in planning and assessment.”

Best practice case study

Last year, we asked nine settings to provide us with case studies of best practice. This year, we invited 19 settings to provide a best practice case study. Many of these describe best practice in partnerships or leadership, with a very few case studies on best practice in planning and assessment.

Local authority and Estyn monitoring

This year, 21% of settings need local authority monitoring and 15% require an Estyn monitoring visit. Last year, 9% of settings were placed in local authority monitoring and 8% in Estyn monitoring. Of the settings placed in local authority monitoring, the majority have made good progress and have been removed from follow-up.

Of the settings placed in Estyn monitoring, all have made good progress and all but one have been removed from Estyn monitoring. In the setting remaining in Estyn monitoring there were uncertainties about leadership and we will make another visit.

The areas for improvement which led to follow-up are as follows:

- standards in Welsh language development and information and communication technology;
- learning experiences, particularly planning and provision for Welsh and information and communication technology and use of the outdoors;
- assessment;
- the role of the management committee/ proprietor through better monitoring and clearer focus on areas for improvement; and
- self-evaluation procedures and planning for improvement.

Settings requiring focused improvement

Focused improvement is applied where settings are causing concern and this requires termly monitoring by Estyn.

This year, one setting was identified as needing focused improvement, because there were weaknesses in the leader's understanding of suitable activities for young children and in the overall quality of provision. One setting was also placed in focused improvement from Estyn monitoring. The local authority has now withdrawn its funding for education places at this setting.

Only one setting needed focused improvement last year. This setting made good progress against the recommendations for improvement and was removed from follow-up in March 2012.

Follow-up in other sectors

Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show the number of providers in different categories of follow-up in 2011-2012 and in 2010-2011.

Figure 2.3: Chart showing the number of providers identified as requiring follow-up activity during core inspection in 2011-2012 (2010-2011 figures in brackets)

	Special schools	Pupil referral units	Local authority education services for children and young people
Estyn monitoring	0 (1)	3 (1)	3 (3)
Significant improvement	0 (0)	1 (0)	1 (1)
Special measures	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)

One special school and one pupil referral unit were removed from Estyn monitoring in 2011-2012.

Figure 2.4: Chart showing the number of providers identified as requiring follow-up activity during core inspection in 2011-2012 (2010-2011 figures in brackets)

	Further education colleges	Work-based learning	Adult community learning partnerships	Initial teacher education	Welsh for adults
Estyn monitoring	0 (0)	1 (2)	2 (2)	1 (0)	0 (1)
Re-inspection	0 (1)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Link inspector visit	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Maintained special schools

Three of the schools inspected this year are excellent overall and were asked to submit case studies for our website. The other three schools inspected need no follow-up.

One maintained special school, placed in Estyn monitoring last year, has made good progress against the inspection report recommendations and needs no further follow-up.

Independent special schools

In all inspections of independent special 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, two independent special schools have met all of the regulations. In the other two schools, there are weaknesses in the quality of education provided, mainly because teaching and planning are not good enough. We shall re-visit these two schools to make sure that they have made the necessary improvements to maintain their registered status.

Independent schools

This year we identified two schools as having excellent practice. We invited these schools to provide case studies that covered learning experiences, improving quality and strategic direction and the impact of leadership.

In all inspections 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, we carried out follow-up monitoring inspections in three schools that had not met all of these regulations in inspections last year. All of these schools have taken appropriate action and made good progress to comply with the regulations. Two of the schools now comply fully with the regulations. The other school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements.

Pupil referral units

One of the seven pupil referral units (PRUs) inspected this year has prepared an excellent practice case study on the effective support and guidance provided for young mothers-to-be.

Three PRUs inspected require Estyn monitoring and one is in need of significant improvement. In these PRUs, leaders and managers do not make sure that work with pupils is always of good quality and nor do they use data or information from pupils' schools to plan improvements.

Pupils do not all access full time education or have a wide enough curriculum or attend well. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress. The buildings in three of these PRUs are not fit for purpose.

We monitored one PRU last year. This PRU made good progress against the recommendations for improvement and was removed from follow-up.

Local authority education services for children and young people

This year, we invited two authorities to provide case studies of best practice in leadership and school improvement.

Five of the eight authorities inspected require further attention to help them improve. One authority requires special measures and another requires significant improvement. Standards are unsatisfactory in both of these authorities.

Estyn will also monitor progress against inspection recommendations in the other three authorities where many aspects of their work are no better than adequate.

Often, authorities that require follow-up visits have not responded to the recommendations of previous inspections and many learners or groups of learners do not achieve as well as they should. In addition, these authorities do not evaluate their work robustly and do not hold themselves or partners to account successfully.

Further education institutions

We have completed seven inspections of further education institutions using the new framework. This year, we asked two colleges to prepare best practice case studies.

One college with judgements of adequate for current performance and prospects for improvement will require follow-up activity and its progress will be monitored by the link inspector. Last year, one college required a re-inspection as judgements for current performance and prospects for improvement were unsatisfactory, but we have yet to re-inspect it.

Work-based learning

We have completed 12 inspections of work-based learning providers using the new framework to date.

This year, two work-based learning providers require follow-up activity.

Last year, we judged two work-based learning providers as having adequate current performance and requiring Estyn monitoring. They are yet to be re-visited.

Adult community learning

We have completed five adult community learning partnership inspections using the new framework and one institutional inspection.

We judged four of the partnerships as adequate or unsatisfactory in one or more of the two overall judgements. All four have adequate or unsatisfactory arrangements for improving quality. Three of these partnerships have adequate or unsatisfactory leadership. Three partnerships have learners that achieve adequate or unsatisfactory standards. As a result, Estyn will continue to monitor the progress of these four partnerships.

Initial teacher education and training

This year, we inspected one provider of initial teacher training, the South West Wales Centre of Teacher Education and Training. This is the first inspection of providers of initial teacher education and training for this current inspection cycle.

Standards are judged as adequate because a minority of trainees do not have secure enough literacy skills in English and in Welsh, and need to improve their skills of planning and reflection. We also recommended that the provider improves the consistency of training across all programmes and that middle leaders monitor standards and training to secure improvement promptly and efficiently.

We found leadership overall to be good, and prospects for improvement are judged to be good. However, because, standards and current performance are judged as adequate, progress against the recommendations in the inspection report will be monitored by Estyn.

Welsh for adults

We have completed two Welsh for adults inspections using the new framework. This year, we asked the provider we inspected to provide a case study of best practice as prospects for improvement and partnership-working were excellent.

Last year, we judged the Welsh for adults provider inspected to have adequate current performance and prospects for improvement. This year, we monitored this provider. The provider has made good progress against the recommendations for improvement and no longer needs any further follow-up activity.