

Section 3: Sector report

Annual Report 2011-2012



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Primary schools

In January 2012, there were 1,412 primary schools in Wales. This is 23 fewer than in January 2011. There were 262,144 pupils in primary schools in January 2012, an increase from 259,189 in the previous year. This is the second consecutive annual rise in primary pupil numbers. This year, we inspected 218 primary schools.

Performance and prospects

Current performance is good or better in just under three-quarters of the schools inspected this year. This is six percentage points lower than last year. Performance is excellent in 3% of primary schools and adequate in just over a quarter. Current performance is unsatisfactory in one school.

Judgements on prospects for improvement represent the level of confidence that inspectors have in the ability of the school to drive its own improvement in the future. Prospects for improvement are excellent in 6% of primary schools. They are good or better in four-fifths of primary schools. This represents a five percentage point increase on the previous year. Prospects are adequate in 17% and unsatisfactory in 4% of primary schools.

In many schools where current performance is adequate but prospects for improvement are good, this is because a relatively new headteacher or leadership team are implementing appropriate initiatives to secure improvement.

Follow-up

The number of primary schools we asked to provide us with case studies of excellent practice has increased to 30 this year from 20 last year. This year, we included schools where we awarded an 'excellent' judgement for one or more quality indicators.

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

This year, we identified 7% of the schools we inspected as schools causing concern¹ because of poor leadership and standards. This is an increase of two percentage points on last year.

Of the schools requiring Estyn monitoring last year, 77% have secured improvements and do not need any further follow-up. Sixty-one per cent of schools requiring local authority monitoring have also made improvements and have been removed from further follow-up.

None of the schools that were placed in special measures last year or this year has yet secured the necessary improvements to be removed from the category.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

¹ Schools causing concern are those placed in categories where they require 'special measures' or are 'in need of significant improvement'.

Outcomes

Standards are good or better in just under three-quarters of schools. This year, in just over a quarter of the schools inspected, standards are only adequate. In many of these schools, pupils' rate of progress in different year groups varies too much. In just over a quarter of schools, staff do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

In a significant minority of primary schools, more able pupils do not make enough progress. Although most go on to achieve the expected level for their year group, too few of these pupils gain the higher levels in the assessments at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. Often this is because the tasks they are set do not challenge them

well enough or because teachers do not challenge and support them to make the progress they are capable of making.

In 2012, 83% of pupils achieved the expected level in English or Welsh, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 2. In many schools, pupils with additional learning needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points.

In very few schools are standards excellent. In these schools, nearly all pupils make better than expected progress when compared to their attainment on entry to the school. In these very few schools, most pupils develop and apply their literacy, numeracy and thinking skills particularly

well and to a high standard across the curriculum.

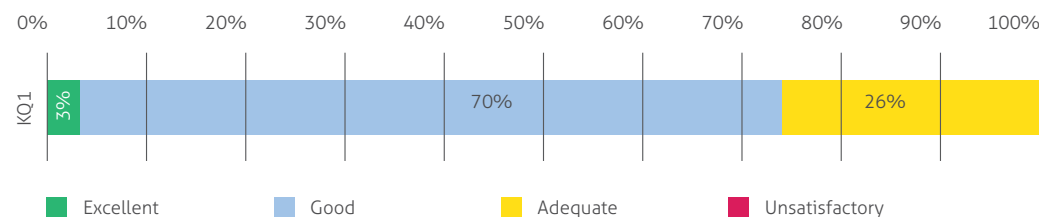
In over four-fifths of schools, most pupils in the Foundation Phase listen carefully and speak confidently with a growing vocabulary. Many pupils read appropriate texts with a good degree of accuracy and understanding and use their knowledge of phonics to work out unfamiliar words. In around four-fifths of schools, Foundation Phase pupils acquire good numeracy and information and communication technology skills. In over one-fifth of schools, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills well enough across all areas of learning.

At key stage 2, many pupils speak clearly and effectively in discussions and are able

to explain their thinking. In around four-fifths of schools, pupils acquire appropriate skills in English and mathematics lessons. However, in around two-fifths of schools, pupils do not solve problems, or use mathematical reasoning or higher-level information and communication skills well enough in other curriculum areas.

Tackling the link between disadvantage and poor performance remains an issue. Pupils' outcomes are good or better in around four-fifths of the primary schools inspected this year where less than 24% of its pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is only true for around half of schools that have more than 24% of pupils entitled to free school meals. In a few schools in the highest free-school-meal range (over 32%), pupils

Figure 3.1: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



make very good progress. In these schools, there is a clear link between how well the schools develop pupils' social, behavioural and life skills and how well they are helping pupils to make consistent progress in acquiring literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.

This year, we reported that, in 40% of primary schools, standards in English or Welsh first language needed to improve. Pupils' standards in writing, in particular, remain a concern. In the Foundation Phase, a minority of pupils make basic spelling and punctuation errors or have poor letter formation. In over a quarter of schools, a significant minority of pupils in key stage 2 have weak writing skills and do not transfer the grammar and spelling skills they have learnt in language sessions to their writing in other subjects without the teacher's support. They are unable to structure their written work independently or write at length for a range of purposes, such as explaining how they carried out a science investigation.

In around four-fifths of schools, key stage 2 pupils use their reading skills appropriately in other areas of the curriculum. However, in one-fifth of schools, too many pupils read at a level below their chronological age and a minority do not make enough progress in learning to read with understanding.

There has been little change in pupils' standards in numeracy. In around four-fifths of schools pupils acquire appropriate skills in their mathematics lessons. However, in around two-fifths of schools, pupils' ability to solve problems and use their mathematical reasoning skills across the curriculum is limited.

In the majority of schools, pupils make a good start when learning to speak and listen in Welsh. In the Foundation Phase, most pupils make good progress during whole-group sessions and have a positive attitude towards speaking Welsh. Standards in key stage 2 are improving slowly but, in a significant minority of schools, pupils do not continue to develop their Welsh skills well enough. Often in these schools, teachers do not devote enough time to improving pupils' Welsh second language skills and many lack confidence in teaching Welsh, particularly to older key stage 2 pupils. Not even in one-in-ten schools do pupils make excellent progress in acquiring Welsh second language skills. In very few schools, nearly all pupils have a good understanding of their Welsh work across the curriculum. In these exceptional cases, pupils learn to use a wide range of sentence patterns accurately and effectively and, by the end of key stage 2, nearly all pupils read accurately and with expression.

The quality of pupils' wellbeing is good or better in most primary schools. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and behaviour is generally good. Most pupils are attentive and enthusiastic. In the very few excellent schools, nearly all pupils are highly motivated and fully engaged in their learning.

There remains a large gap in attendance levels between schools in the lowest and highest areas of social deprivation. In many schools, there is a correlation between the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals, the level of absenteeism, and pupils' end-of-key-stage outcomes.

In nearly all schools, most pupils have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Many take part regularly in physical activities and attend extra-curricular activities to keep fit.

In many schools, school councils work with the local community. They raise funds jointly for local charities and an increasing number work with community officers to improve the safety and cleanliness of the area around the school. However, in only a few schools do pupils play an important role in evaluating aspects of school life or in making decisions about how to improve standards and provision. In a few schools, pupils monitor

progress against agreed targets in the school development plan and evaluate the progress of their peers.

In nearly all schools, most pupils are considerate and respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. Many take responsibility for their own actions and are developing the skills that enable them to work productively with others.

Welsh language leads the way

Ysgol Comins Coch is leading the way in teaching Welsh as a second language. Pupils develop their skills through an intensive immersion programme and by undertaking activities through the medium of Welsh in other subjects.

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

Provision

Provision, overall, is good or better in just over four-fifths of the primary schools inspected.

Fewer than three-quarters of schools provide good or better learning experiences. In most schools, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant, and reflects the statutory requirements. In the Foundation Phase, although planning is generally appropriate, in a minority of schools six and seven-year-olds do not have enhanced and continuous provision. In key stage 2, in around two-fifths of schools, teachers do not adapt their planning well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. In a majority of these schools there is an over-reliance on the use of commercial schemes and too often all pupils, regardless of their ability, complete the same work.

Around three-quarters of schools plan appropriately to develop pupils' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology lessons. They provide useful opportunities for pupils to use their reading and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. However, in around a quarter of schools, planning for pupils' skills development, particularly planning for more able pupils, remains weak. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing and numeracy skills to the appropriate level, both within English and mathematics lessons and across a variety of subject areas. A very few schools with excellent provision adopt an enquiry-based approach that helps pupils to apply skills independently in most aspects of their learning. In these schools, pupils and staff discuss the skills that need to be used

over the course of a topic and pupils make their own decisions about how the tasks will be organised and presented.

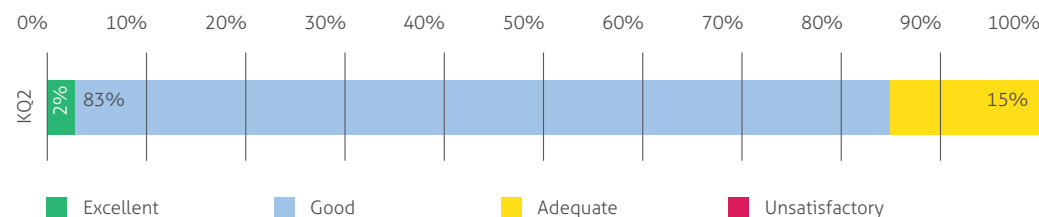
In most schools, provision for Welsh second language is good in the Foundation Phase. In key stage 2, provision is less well developed. Most schools place a good emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the history and culture of Wales. However, in a minority of schools, Welsh second language experiences do not build well on pupils' prior learning and schools do not devote enough time to teaching Welsh second language.

Most schools develop pupils' awareness of environmental and global issues well. Pupils estimate their global footprint regularly and take part in fair trade activities. Most schools provide suitable opportunities for pupils

to learn about education for sustainable development and global citizenship in a range of subjects.

Teaching is good or better in around four-fifths of schools. By now, most teachers have a good understanding of the Foundation Phase approach and provide a good balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities. In key stage 2, many teachers have good subject knowledge and share clear learning objectives with pupils. However, in a minority of these schools, teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils, particularly of what more able pupils can achieve in reading, writing and numeracy. In the very few schools where teaching is excellent, nearly all teachers ask probing questions that encourage pupils to think carefully and logically. Lessons proceed at a lively pace and staff have

Figure 3.2: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



high expectations of all pupils. In around one-fifth of schools, teaching is no better than adequate. In many of these schools, lessons lack pace and there is repeated use of worksheets that keep pupils occupied but fail to help them to apply their skills fully or to learn independently.

Around two-fifths of schools have shortcomings in how accurately they assess pupil progress and in the use they make of data from assessment. Standardisation, moderation and tracking procedures are appropriate in many schools. However, in a minority of schools, teachers' marking does not identify the next steps that pupils need to take and too few pupils are involved in assessing their own progress. Too many schools do not use assessment findings to identify targets for improvement consistently across the school or follow their agreed assessment policy. Nearly all schools have appropriate arrangements for reporting to parents and the majority do use the

outcomes of assessments to inform future planning.

Nearly all schools promote pupils' health and wellbeing effectively. Promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a strength in nearly all schools. In a few schools, provision for pupils' personal and social education is well developed across all areas of the curriculum and this helps pupils to acquire social and life skills.

Almost all schools apply their behaviour management policy consistently. Most have generally appropriate arrangements for improving pupil attendance, but in a few schools these strategies have limited impact.

Most schools have good procedures for identifying early on those pupils that need additional support. Many provide appropriate interventions that help these pupils to catch up with their peers. A minority of teachers do not help pupils to

consolidate the skills they have learned in intervention programmes in their whole-class teaching. Nearly all schools make appropriate referrals to specialist services to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Nearly all schools have satisfactory policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils' wellbeing. In the few schools where procedures are underdeveloped, it is because staff have not generally received recent training and are not aware of how to respond to a disclosure.

Nearly all schools establish an inclusive ethos that underpins all areas of the school's work. As a result, they create a culture of mutual respect and honesty, where all pupils are valued and treated fairly, although heads and teachers have yet to take full account of pupils' views about their learning experiences. Most schools have good arrangements to help pupils to learn about diversity.

Most schools make good use of the resources and space available. Schools generally maintain their accommodation to a suitable standard and most create attractive, stimulating learning environments. In just over 5% of schools, the buildings are in a poor state of repair and toilet facilities are inadequate. A very few schools make outstanding use of outdoor areas and their local environment. However, a few schools still provide limited outdoor experiences and access for pupils in the Foundation Phase.

The great outdoors

Tavernspite Community Primary School, working with several strategic partners, has successfully piloted an 'Outdoor School' project to develop children's knowledge, pride, ownership and enjoyment of their local outdoor area.

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

Leadership and management

Leadership is good or better in just under four-fifths of the schools inspected this year. In the very few schools where leadership is excellent, the senior leadership team have established a strong culture of improvement. In these schools, all staff have a common understanding of how to maintain and improve standards and they act in concert to achieve the school's agreed priorities.

Many schools analyse data well and use it appropriately to set whole-school improvement targets. In around two-thirds of schools, there is a clear link between the school's priorities for improvement and the way that leaders manage the performance of staff.

In most schools, senior managers tackle the performance of individual teachers where it is clearly unsatisfactory. They put in place appropriate targets, training and support and they monitor progress regularly. However, in too many schools, headteachers do not address mediocre teaching

performance robustly enough or provide enough support or challenge for those teachers whose work is barely adequate.

Most governing bodies provide appropriate support for the headteacher and help to set the strategic direction for the school. Many know how well the school performs and understand comparisons with other similar schools. However, in three-in-ten schools, governors do not use this information to challenge the school about the standards it achieves. This year, there were more improvement recommendations for governors in Welsh-medium schools than in English-medium schools.

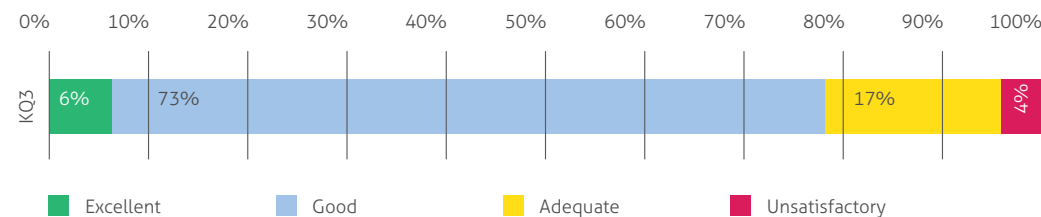
Around two-thirds of schools have good or better procedures to improve quality. These schools have effective and systematic self-evaluation processes that involve all staff, pupils, parents and governors. Senior managers use a wide range of relevant evidence, which includes scrutinising planning and pupils' work and observing lessons. In most

of these schools, the school improvement plan sets a clear direction for improvement and there is a good link with the areas for development identified in the self-evaluation report.

In the third of schools where self-evaluation is no better than adequate, senior managers do not focus enough on pupils' standards. In many of these schools, the self-evaluation report describes what the school does rather than evaluating how well pupils achieve or scrutinising the impact of the school's provision on learning. Many senior managers in these schools do not use the results of monitoring to set clear, measurable improvement targets. In a very few of these schools, recently appointed headteachers are introducing better procedures.

Most schools have good links with other local schools for specific projects. In the very few schools with excellent practice, all teachers work jointly with teachers from other

Figure 3.3: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



schools to improve the quality of provision. In these schools, there is a well-established culture of internal and external collaboration and teachers share innovative practice.

Most schools work well with parents and the local community. In a few schools, partnerships with local businesses and national organisations make an excellent contribution to improving pupils' outcomes. Nearly all schools have well-established transition arrangements that help pupils as they move to the next stage of learning. Most schools are beginning to collaborate more with others in their cluster to standardise and moderate pupils' work and in their end-of-key-stage assessments.

Nearly all schools have appropriate systems to manage their finances and many link their spending well to priorities in the school improvement plan. Most schools use their resources well to improve standards and provision for pupils. However, in around a quarter of schools, senior managers do not monitor the impact of spending decisions on standards well enough.

Senior managers generally deploy staff appropriately to make use of their skills and expertise. Most schools provide good professional development opportunities for staff, particularly in the national priority of improving pupils' literacy skills. However, in around a third of schools, senior managers do not monitor the impact of training regularly. This means that managers do not address inconsistencies in practice between classes in the same school, pupils make uneven progress and, in around a quarter of schools, pupils' standards are no better than adequate.

This year, a quarter of schools were judged to give no better than adequate value for money. In these schools:

- pupils' progress and standards are too variable;
- end-of-key-stage results compare poorly to those in other similar schools; or
- self-evaluation procedures do not focus well enough on the standards pupils achieve.

Welsh second language comes first

Plascrug C.P. School has a clear vision and commitment to bilingualism for both staff and pupils. As part of this strategy, particular emphasis is given to teachers' continuing professional development, with opportunities to attend training to improve their Welsh oracy skills through sabbatical courses, the local university and a school support group.

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

Secondary schools

In January 2012, the number of secondary schools in Wales was 221, a decrease of one school from January 2011. Since 2004, the number of pupils in secondary schools has been decreasing each year. In January 2012 the number was 198,015, a drop of 3,215 from January 2011. This year, we inspected 35 secondary schools.

Performance and prospects

Performance is good or better in 46% of schools, including excellent performance in 14%. The proportion of schools with excellent performance is much the same as it was last year, but the proportion of schools with good current performance is much lower. Last year, performance in nearly half the schools inspected was good, but this year it is good in only around a third of schools. Performance is only adequate in 40% of secondary schools and in 14% of schools it is unsatisfactory. This represents an increase from the previous year.

Prospects for improvement are excellent in 23% of schools. This proportion of excellent prospects is the same as it was last year but there is fall from 61% to 34%, this year, in the percentage of schools with good prospects. Prospects are only adequate in 40% of secondary schools.

The majority of the schools with excellent prospects also have current performance that is excellent. In these schools, leaders set very high expectations for all aspects of their schools' work and have established a culture of accountability. The remaining schools with excellent prospects only have a good judgement for performance because, although their performance is improving and above expectations, this has only been the case in more recent years and these schools are not yet showing sustained excellence.

Only a minority of schools with good prospects also have good current performance. The remaining majority of schools with good prospects only have adequate current performance because they either have a new headteacher, or improvements are recent or not to the level yet that warrants a judgement of good for performance.

Follow-up

This year, we asked eight schools to provide an excellent practice case study. Five out of the eight schools have a judgement of excellent for both their current performance and prospects for improvement, and the rest have a judgement of excellent for their prospects.

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 of the schools that were monitored by the local authority or by Estyn have improved to the extent that they no longer require further monitoring.

This year, 54% of secondary schools need a follow-up visit, which is an increase from last year. Although the number of secondary schools that will be monitored by the local authority has fallen from six to three, there has been a substantial increase from six to sixteen of those schools to be monitored by Estyn.

This year, the number of secondary schools in need of significant improvement has increased from one to five. One school is in special measures.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

Standards are good or better overall in fewer than half of the schools inspected. They are excellent in around one-in-seven schools, but are unsatisfactory in the same proportion.

In schools where standards are excellent, most pupils make significant gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills in lessons and there are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of pupils such as boys and girls, pupils entitled to free school meals and pupils with additional learning needs. In particular in these schools, pupils have well-developed literacy skills that they use extremely effectively. Pupils make confident and thoughtful spoken responses in lessons that help to deepen their understanding.

Their reading is fluent and effective in extracting and analysing information. Many pupils produce coherent and well-organised pieces of extended writing that include mostly accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. In these schools, there is outstanding performance in external examinations when compared with relative performance levels in other similar schools and particularly in the proportions gaining the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics at key stage 4. Performance in these areas has been consistently high over a few years.

This year, there were fewer schools where standards were good overall compared with last year. In the schools with good standards, most pupils progress well in lessons.

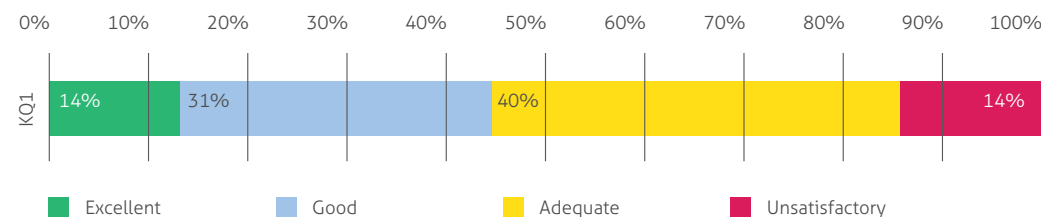
Many have a secure recall of their previous work and use this well to improve their understanding. Most pupils also speak clearly and listen attentively and many read well, using suitable strategies to extract information or respond appropriately to the text. Many write thoughtful pieces that identify key features and select suitable content to support their explanations and arguments. The writing of many is accurate, but a few pupils make too many errors in spelling and occasionally punctuation. A few of the more able pupils in these schools do not make as much progress as they should, particularly in developing higher-order reading and writing skills. Many pupils have suitable numeracy skills, which they apply well in a range of subjects such as science

A holistic approach to improving attendance

Ysgol Gymunedol Cefn Hengoed Community School has used a wide range of strategies and a multi-agency approach, which have significantly improved pupils' attendance.

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

Figure 3.4: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



and geography. In these schools, performance in external examinations at key stage 4 is generally improving, but it has yet to achieve a consistently high pattern over a number of years.

In schools where standards are judged as adequate, the majority of pupils make variable but fair progress in lessons. Although many pupils listen well and speak clearly in class, a significant minority do not read and write well enough. These pupils do not gain a secure understanding of what they have read. Their writing is often short, features a narrow range of styles and purposes, and contains too many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Most pupils with additional learning needs make the progress expected, but in many of the schools with adequate standards pupils entitled to free school meals do not perform well. Also in many of these schools, pupils either have weak numeracy skills or do not apply them well across the curriculum. In a minority of schools with adequate standards, boys under-perform. Although performance in examinations is generally improving in these schools, it is still below what it should be, when compared with performance levels in similar schools.

Standards are unsatisfactory overall in about one-in-seven schools inspected. Their main shortcomings are the slow progress a significant minority of pupils make in lessons and pupils' weak literacy skills. Pupils' oral responses lack confidence and are often short and self-conscious. The reading, writing and numeracy of a minority of pupils are under-developed and these skills are not well used in

lessons across the curriculum. All of these schools perform at a rate that is well below that attained by similar schools in external examinations at key stage 4. There is also poor progress from previous key stages.

Standards in Welsh second language are good in a few schools and improving in a majority of them. They are particularly strong in those schools where standards are excellent overall. However, Welsh second language is an important area for improvement in around a fifth of schools.

Standards achieved on the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification vary a good deal between pupils and between schools. For instance, standards in individual investigations can vary from a pass level to a very high level. Much of the variation in standards reflects the variation in the way in which the provision is designed and delivered in different schools. It also reflects the wide ability-range of pupils who study the Welsh Baccalaureate, at level 3 in particular.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and well supported in school, and most say that incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately. Many pupils are aware of the importance of healthy living and participate in a range of physical activities. Most pupils also develop important life and social skills. These are often gained through undertaking activities in the local community, taking on responsibilities, for example when older pupils act as 'buddies' for younger pupils, and as volunteers. These activities are often undertaken as part of the work that pupils complete in Welsh Baccalaureate components.

Behaviour is good in most schools. Most pupils are courteous, get on well with each other and show positive attitudes to learning, school and each other. In schools where wellbeing is excellent overall, the high standards of behaviour and outstanding willingness to learn are particularly evident. In a minority of schools, even though behaviour overall is good, a few pupils either spend too much time off-task or engage in low-level disruption.

In most schools, pupils contribute to decisions about aspects of the school environment, healthy eating arrangements and the development of anti-bullying policies. Increasingly, pupils are having a stronger say in what and how they learn through regular surveys, focus groups and involvement in lesson observations through schemes such as 'Young Evaluators', although this pupil involvement is a prominent feature in only a minority of schools. In a quarter of schools, pupils have little influence over the development of key school policies and plans. In a very few schools, there are no associate pupil governors.

Attendance is good or very good in the majority of schools we inspected last year, but this is the weakest aspect of pupils' wellbeing. In just under a third of schools, attendance is not good enough. In the few schools that were judged to have only adequate wellbeing overall, poor attendance was the key area for improvement.

Provision

Provision is good or better overall in almost two-thirds of the schools inspected. This year, there were fewer schools where provision was good compared with the year before.

Learning experiences are good or better in just over two-thirds of schools. At key stage 3, all schools meet statutory requirements and, in many schools, the curriculum builds well on key stage 2 experiences through carefully planned transition arrangements. Most schools offer a broad range of general and vocational courses at key stage 4 and the sixth form. In a quarter of schools, an expanded range of courses has led to improvements in outcomes. However, in a few schools, timetabling constraints restrict pupils' option choices at key stage 4 and schools do not plan carefully enough for progression in subjects from key stage 2.

Four-fifths of schools inspected this year offer the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification in key stage 4 or in the sixth form. A third of schools inspected offer the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification in both key stage 4 and the sixth form. The Welsh Baccalaureate offers many benefits

to students. Through studying the Welsh Baccalaureate core, the majority of pupils improve their essential skills and they achieve an understanding of a range of topics, including enterprise, politics and current affairs, that they would not have studied otherwise. In particular, carrying out the individual investigation helps many pupils to develop some of the research and analytical skills needed for further education, higher education and employment. Pupils also develop their confidence and social skills by engaging in community participation and work experience.

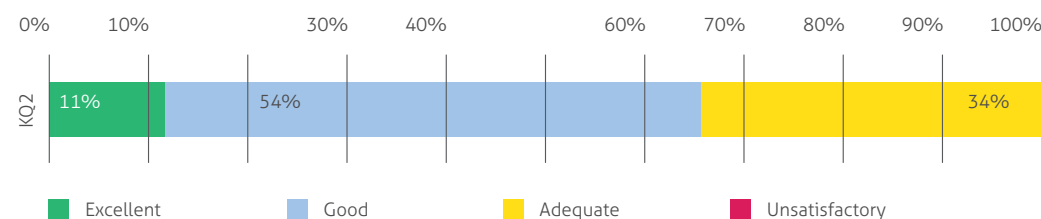
Over half of schools have good arrangements for developing skills. In a few schools, a consistent approach across all subjects in developing writing skills is having an impact in raising literacy standards. In almost a third of schools, there are shortcomings in the co-ordination and monitoring of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In around a quarter of schools, subject departments do not adapt work well enough to support pupils in developing their writing and higher-order reading skills. In a few schools, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their

literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English/Welsh or mathematics.

In one-in-five schools, provision for Welsh language is a strong feature, with increasing numbers of pupils taking full course examinations. However, in a few English-medium schools, pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to use Welsh outside timetabled lessons. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is good in the majority of schools. Around a quarter of schools arrange beneficial international links to develop pupils' understanding of global citizenship.

Teaching is good or better overall in fewer than half of the schools inspected. In the few schools where teaching is excellent, there is consistency in approaches and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers plan exciting and demanding tasks that challenge pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. They develop pupils' literacy and thinking skills well through probing questioning and effective group work. However, in over half the schools

Figure 3.5: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



inspected, a minority of teachers do not have high enough expectations, particularly of more able pupils, or set challenging activities that are matched to pupils' needs and abilities. In a few lessons, teachers do not manage low-level disruptive behaviour effectively.

Many schools have good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. In a fifth of schools, the assessment system is too new to have made an impact on improving standards. In the majority of schools, pupils have frequent opportunities to assess their own and other pupils' work. However, in around half of schools, marking does not give clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Teachers do not make sure that pupils review and respond to their marking, particularly to improve the accuracy of their written work.

Care, support and guidance are good or better in nine-out-of-ten schools. Most schools offer effective provision for pupils' wellbeing and personal development and offer useful information and advice. Many schools have strong partnerships with a wide range of specialist services to

support vulnerable pupils. Most schools have appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding. Many schools support pupils with additional learning needs effectively. However, in a few schools, pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes do not receive the support they need.

Most schools are caring, inclusive communities where most pupils feel valued and where they generally have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. In a minority of schools, these aspects are significant strengths. Many schools make effective use of learning resources that meet pupils' needs and curriculum requirements.

Most buildings and grounds are well maintained, despite shortcomings in the quality of accommodation in over a third of schools. These shortcomings are most commonly in the exterior of the buildings, the poor condition of toilets, and in facilities for physical education. In a fifth of schools, provision for information and communication technology and sporting facilities are very good.

Pride in the Welsh language brings success

At **Treorchy Comprehensive School**, the whole-school approach to Welsh language development, high-quality provision and effective transition from primary to secondary school have helped pupils to develop their Welsh language skills particularly successfully.

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

Leadership and management

Overall, leaders and managers are doing a good or better job in almost three-fifths of the schools inspected. This year, there were fewer schools where leadership was good compared with last year. In a few schools, the overall judgement for the key question about leadership and management is lower than the judgement for the leadership quality indicator. This is often because a new headteacher or leadership team may have started to improve a few important areas such as behaviour and attendance, but standards and value for money are still only adequate and self-evaluation processes are not yet consistent. As a result, the overall judgement for the key question is lower.

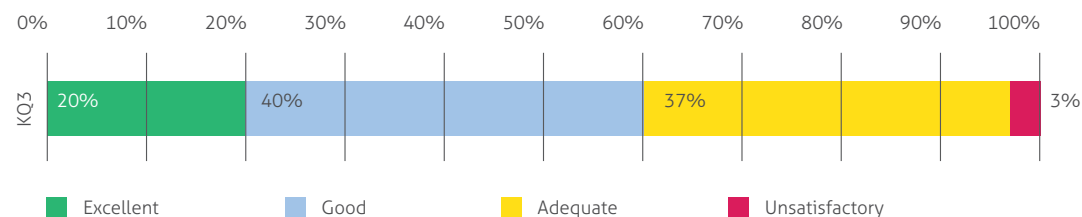
Leadership is good or better in three-quarters of schools. This year, the proportion of schools judged to have excellent leadership has increased and now accounts for just over a quarter of schools. Schools with excellent leadership have a very effective senior leadership team. They undertake their roles as line managers very well, have a clear focus on improving standards and teaching, and communicate effectively as a team and with other members of staff. During meetings with those they manage, they agree clear actions that focus on the most important areas for improvement. They analyse data rigorously to monitor performance and to target underperformance in order to improve

attainment, behaviour and attendance. In these schools, there is also consistency in the quality of middle leaders. Middle leaders are held fully to account for their areas of responsibility and work within a culture of trust and high expectations.

In many schools, leaders set a clear direction with a focus on improving standards and teaching. Roles and responsibilities are generally well defined. In a minority of schools where leadership is only adequate, there is inconsistency in middle leadership. In these schools, line-management arrangements are not robust and performance management targets lack focus and challenge.

In many schools, governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, in a few schools, governors focus too much on discussing things that are already good in the school rather than challenging the headteacher about more difficult matters, especially those issues relating to leadership and performance. In these schools, although governors are familiar with the range of data available, they do not use it well enough to challenge school leaders and secure improvements. This proportion, at 17%, is lower than the 25% of schools last year where governors did not use performance information well to hold the school to account.

Figure 3.6: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Effective professional dialogue

At **Ysgol Bryngwyn School**, teachers from different departments work together in 'triads' (groups of three) to help each other improve the quality of their teaching.

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

In a few schools there are extremely rigorous arrangements for improving quality. There is a high degree of consistency in departmental self-evaluation. Reports are comprehensive, contain a thorough analysis of data, and are based on a wide range of evidence. These arrangements have enabled these schools to make significant progress since their last inspection.

Although, many schools gather first-hand evidence to inform self-evaluation, it is only in a minority of schools that evaluation processes are regular and systematic. In these schools, whole-school and many departmental self-evaluation reports are comprehensive and identify appropriate areas for improvement.

However, in the nearly-three-fifths of schools where improving quality was only adequate, leaders do not collect or make effective use of first-hand evidence and, during lesson observations, there is not a sharp enough focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. As a result, self-evaluation reports and improvement plans do not give enough attention to all of the important areas that require improvement. In these schools, there is also too much inconsistency in the quality of whole-school and departmental improvement planning. The link between

self-evaluation and improvement planning is not clear enough and plans do not identify clear timescales and measurable outcomes.

Most schools provide worthwhile opportunities for staff to undertake professional development activities and, in many schools, these link appropriately to performance management targets. Many schools have made good progress in developing working groups that focus on national priorities, particularly literacy and improving the quality of teaching. However, in the majority of instances, it is too early to see the impact of this work on standards.

Most schools work effectively with partners to improve pupils' standards and wellbeing. In many schools, work with partner schools and colleges to develop 14-19 provision is good or better, offering more choices to pupils and enabling leaders to make more cost-effective use of resources. The majority of schools have effective quality-assurance arrangements to share attendance and tracking information routinely with other providers. This enables them to intervene when pupils are not making enough progress or to review courses when outcomes are poor. In most schools, partnerships with parents and primary schools are generally strong. However, in a few schools where

partnership working is only adequate, transition activities are not co-ordinated well enough with primary schools and links with parents are underdeveloped.

Most schools monitor spending closely and allocate resources appropriately to identified priorities. However, just over a quarter of schools have a deficit budget and around 14% of these have a significant deficit that has accumulated over the last few years. In nearly all schools, staff are deployed effectively, although, in a very few schools, too many teachers teach outside their areas of expertise and this has a negative impact on standards.

Overall, 46% of schools provide good or better value for money. However, in around half of schools, value for money is adequate at best. In these schools, standards do not compare well with those in similar schools, a minority of teachers do not meet the needs of pupils across the ability range well enough and self-evaluation and improvement planning do not focus on the important areas that require improvement.

Maintained special schools

A special school is attended by pupils who have special educational needs due to a range of learning disabilities or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Local authorities fund maintained special schools. In January 2012, there were 43 maintained special schools in Wales. There were 4,254 pupils educated in special schools in January, an increase from 4,181 in January 2011.

Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected six maintained special schools. Performance is good overall in five of the schools and excellent in one. This is similar to last year, where the overall performance was good in five schools, excellent in two and adequate in one school. There were no schools, either last year or this year, where current performance is unsatisfactory. In the schools where current performance is good or better, the factors that contribute towards positive outcomes for pupils are the high expectations of staff, the good quality of care and support and the strong partnerships with other specialist services.

Prospects for improvement are good overall in five of the schools, and excellent in one. This a less positive pattern of judgements than last year, when six out of the eight schools inspected had excellent prospects for improvement. The factors that contribute towards the excellent prospects for improvement in one school are the very well-developed culture of self-evaluation and the highly effective use of detailed data to identify needs and assess pupils' progress.

Follow-up

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

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

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

Standards are good overall in five of the schools inspected. In one school, they are excellent.

Nearly all pupils achieve good standards in relation to their abilities and identified needs. Almost all gain appropriate qualifications at key stage 4 and post-16.

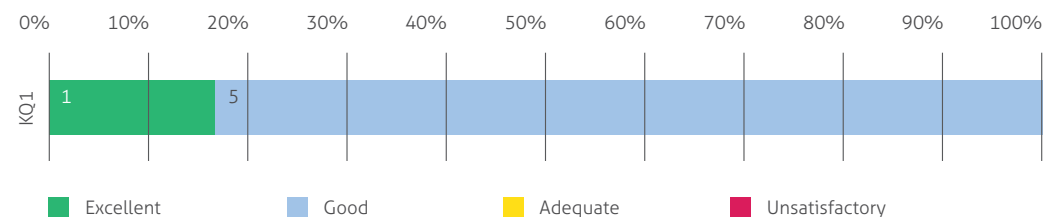
In all of the schools, pupils make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, and in applying these skills to different situations such as shopping and preparing meals. They express their opinions and interact well with their peers and with adults. Pupils with more complex needs use information and communication technology well to support their communication. The more able pupils make good use of information and communication technology to present their work and research the internet. Most pupils develop a good knowledge of basic Welsh vocabulary, in line with their ability and needs, and use it appropriately in the classroom and around the school.

Pupils' wellbeing is good or better in all of the schools inspected. Almost all pupils attend well, unless they have periods of absence due to medical conditions. Most pupils behave well. Those who have behavioural difficulties learn to improve their behaviour over time.

Most pupils feel safe in school, understand how to be healthy and take part in a range of physical activities.

In all of the schools inspected, pupils on the school council contribute to decisions about school life. This includes discussing issues such as hygiene and nutrition in the school café, and the recruitment of staff. In one school, pupils changed the lunchtime routine to avoid queuing, improve behaviour and make it run more smoothly.

Figure 3.7: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

Provision is good overall in five of the schools inspected. In one school, it is excellent.

All of the schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum that offers a range of learning experiences to meet the needs of the pupils. This includes participation in local community events and sensory experiences for those with the most complex needs. At key stage 4 and post 16, pupils follow appropriate learning pathways including ASDAN Awards and Agored Cymru modules, as well as work experience and volunteering opportunities in the community. Overall, schools plan appropriately for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. In a minority of schools, a few staff do not always provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across the curriculum.

Teaching is good in five of the schools inspected and excellent in one school. Almost all teachers make use of a wide range of teaching styles and resources, including information and communication technology. The majority of teachers plan work that is carefully matched to pupils' needs and abilities.

All schools make good use of assessment data to track pupil progress. In the majority of schools, pupils are involved in assessing the progress they have made against their individual targets and understand what they need to do to improve. Learning support assistants work well to support the learning, behaviour and wellbeing of pupils.

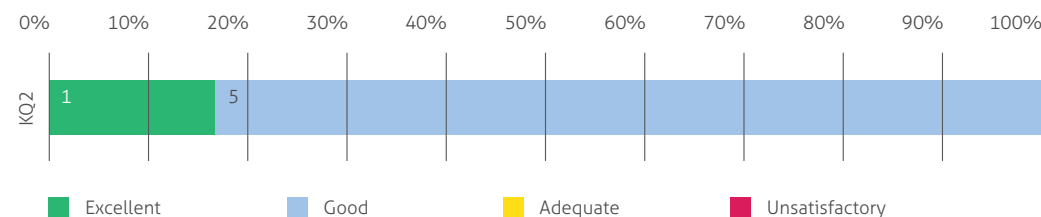
Care, support and guidance are excellent in four of the six schools inspected and good in two schools. Where provision is excellent, a wide range of external agencies and specialist services work closely with the school to give suitable support for all pupils. All of the schools have effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour.

Technology plays a significant role in helping pupils to achieve their potential

Ty Gwyn Special School, Cardiff, has invested in new information and communication technology to help improve pupils' communication skills and break down barriers to learning.

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

Figure 3.8: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good in five of the schools inspected this year. In one school it is excellent. In all schools, the headteacher and other leaders have developed a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all staff. Governing bodies support the schools well but, in the majority of schools, they do not provide an appropriate level of challenge.

Self-evaluation processes are well established. Self-evaluation reports generally identify and prioritise areas for improvement, and are closely linked to detailed improvement plans. However, in half of the schools, self-evaluation reports are not evaluative enough.

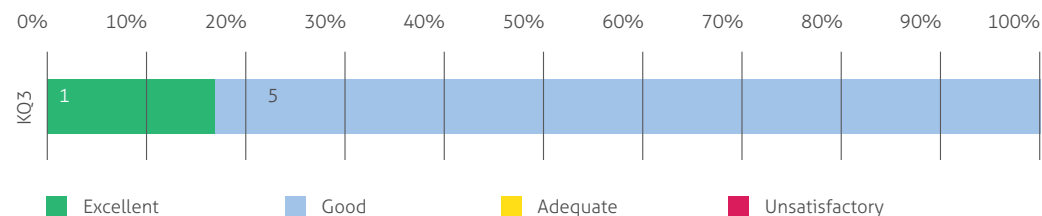
There are systems for managing performance in all of the schools. Teachers receive useful feedback from regular classroom observations, so that they understand what they need to do to improve.

All of the schools make effective use of data to identify the needs of individuals and groups of pupils, and to monitor their progress. This data is used well to inform school improvement and to improve pupil outcomes.

Partnership working is excellent in half of the schools inspected, and good in the other three. Most of the schools have worked closely with other special and mainstream schools to develop a wide range of initiatives. These include support and training for mainstream schools, the sharing of specialist facilities, extending curriculum opportunities for pupils with additional learning needs, and a peer mentoring programme.

Specialist staff are highly skilled and deployed effectively to support the individual learning needs of the pupils. In many of the schools, there is a wide range of resources, which are well matched to the interests and abilities of the pupils. All schools inspected provide good or better value for money. Where value for money was excellent, this was due to the very high quality of resources and the way in which staff use these to achieve excellent standards for pupils.

Figure 3.9: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Independent special schools

In January 2012, there were 32 registered independent special schools in Wales. These schools educate approximately 500 pupils in total. Many of them are very small and have fewer than 15 pupils on roll, mainly from linked children's homes. Estyn carries out annual monitoring inspections of all independent special schools as the pupils in these schools are particularly vulnerable.

During 2011-2012, three small registered independent schools opened and one other closed. In July 2012, seven schools that are linked to children's homes had no pupils as the resident children were educated in other local schools.

Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected four independent special schools. Performance is excellent in one school, where the staff have a very positive impact on the longer-term outcomes for pupils who have highly challenging behaviour. Performance is good in one school and adequate in the other two.

Prospects for improvement are good or better in the three schools where leaders and managers have a clear vision for their school that is shared by all staff. These schools use self-evaluation effectively and act appropriately to make improvements. In one school where prospects for improvement are only adequate, leaders do not focus enough on improving outcomes for pupils.

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.

Follow-up

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 revisit these two schools to make sure that they have made the necessary improvements to maintain their registered status.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

In each of the four independent special schools we inspected this year, pupils gain a suitable range of accredited awards. In one school where standards are good, all Year 11 pupils achieved the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award and a range of GCSE and Essential Skills Wales qualifications. In the schools where we judged standards to be excellent, older and more able pupils gain ASDAN awards for a wide range of achievements in literacy, numeracy, social and life skills, physical skills and outdoor education.

In one of the schools inspected, pupils make excellent progress in relation to their prior attainment. All of these pupils make significant improvements in developing social and communication skills, and become more independent.

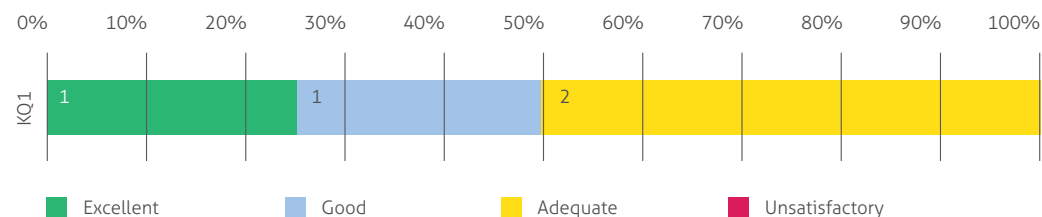
Standards are good in one school, where pupils develop reading, writing, numeracy and social skills well. However, in two schools, standards are only adequate, because pupils do not make enough progress. For example, more able pupils do not use capital letters or full stops appropriately or present their work well, and all pupils' information and communication skills are underdeveloped. In one school, pupils are allowed to misbehave and waste time in lessons and consequently they make little progress.

In two of the schools inspected, pupils have good opportunities to express their views. However, in the two other schools, where wellbeing is only adequate or unsatisfactory, pupils are not consulted enough about their life at school or issues that affect them such as bullying.

In a majority of independent special schools that we visited as part of our programme of annual monitoring, pupils make good progress in line with their abilities. In these schools, pupils' attendance and behaviour improve over time and are generally good.

Pupils' behaviour is poor in fewer schools than last year. This is partly because some schools no longer operate.

Figure 3.10: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

The quality of provision in the four independent special schools inspected this year varies considerably.

In one school, provision is excellent because teaching is outstanding. Planning is carefully linked to the very thorough assessment of individual pupils' learning needs and is exemplary. In this school, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. The school works effectively with a range of specialist services to support pupils' health and wellbeing. In addition, this school provides a wide range of appropriate options for work placements, for example in engineering, hairdressing and catering.

In the school where provision is good, the curriculum is broad, appropriate and well resourced to meet pupils' learning needs. Where provision is only adequate, the curriculum is more limited but still appropriate.

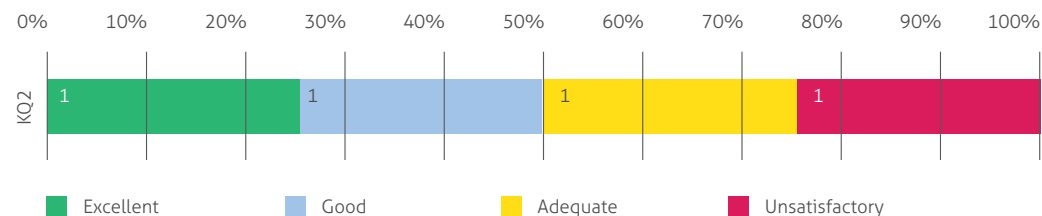
All schools make good use of outdoor learning, including rock-climbing and animal care. In the best cases, these activities make a significant contribution to pupils' confidence and wellbeing.

Provision is unsatisfactory in one school because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers also arrive late and give pupils breaks after completing a small task rather than keeping up the pace and providing another interesting activity. As a result, pupils do not maintain a good working routine.

All four schools have appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding.

The majority of independent special schools visited as part of our programme of annual monitoring, which is separate from the formal inspection programme, provide pupils with a good range of opportunities for learning within a suitable environment. Overall, most pupils behave well and enjoy their education. However, too few schools use assessment well enough to plan a programme that is tailored to meet individual pupils' learning needs and raise the attainment of these vulnerable learners.

Figure 3.11: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

In one of the independent special schools we inspected leadership is excellent, in another it is good, and in the other two it is only adequate.

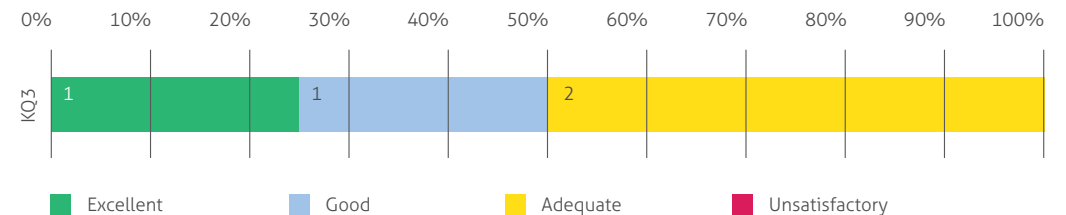
Where leadership is excellent, managers share a clear vision for the school. There is a culture where staff challenge the school, and each other, to raise standards. All staff feel valued, contribute to a rigorous system of self-evaluation and plan effectively to improve the school.

In one school where leadership and management are only adequate, there has been a recent change of proprietor and, although the school has clear plans for improvement, there has not yet been time for these to have an impact. In the other school with an adequate judgement, there is too little focus on improving the quality of teaching to raise standards.

Three schools have developed good partnerships. These include links with local businesses that provide work experience for pupils. These schools also have good links with local schools and colleges to offer more qualifications for pupils. However, one school does not plan well enough for the future of pupils leaving school.

In over half of the schools we visited as part of the programme of annual monitoring, self-evaluation continues to be at an early stage. These schools do not understand the process well enough. They do not identify appropriate areas for school improvement to raise standards. For example, very few of these schools have systems to manage the performance of staff or offer staff enough training to improve their skills.

Figure 3.12: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Independent schools

In January 2012, there were 34 independent mainstream schools in Wales.

This year, we inspected four independent mainstream schools. All of these are all age schools catering for pupils across the primary and secondary phases.

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. All of the schools inspected this year met all of these regulations.

Performance and prospects

Performance is excellent overall in three schools and good in the other. In the three schools where current performance is excellent, pupils are highly engaged and well motivated, and develop skills that equip them effectively for learning. Clear values and high expectations underpin all aspects of school life and contribute significantly to outstanding performance in external examinations at key stage 4 and post-16.

Prospects for improvement are excellent in three schools because of the high-quality strategic leadership, strong sense of purpose, high expectations and commitment to shared values and aims. Rigorous self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements have led to consistently high standards and significant improvements in the quality of provision. Prospects for improvement are only adequate in one school because of shortcomings in leadership and improvement planning.

Follow-up

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.

This year, we carried out follow-up monitoring inspections in three schools that had not met all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) regulations in inspections last year. All of these schools were found to have taken appropriate action and had 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.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

Standards are excellent in three of the schools inspected and good in one school.

In all of the schools, pupils make at least good progress in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Many pupils can apply their knowledge effectively in new contexts to draw links, interpret new material and solve problems.

In three schools, pupils achieve very high standards by the time they leave school and attain outstanding results in external examinations. In many cases, pupils are particularly well prepared for future learning.

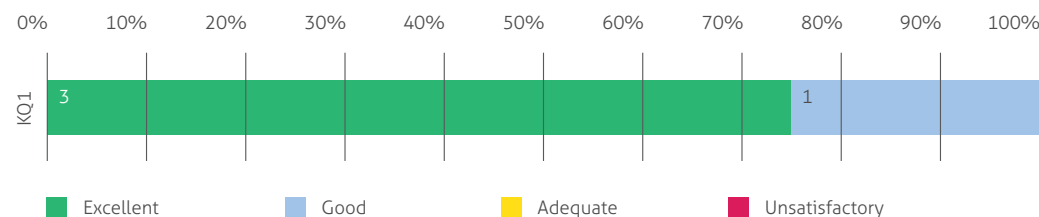
In all schools, many pupils contribute well to discussions in lessons and present their ideas in a confident, mature and often eloquent manner. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read fluently and accurately. In three schools, pupils use these reading skills to particularly good effect to extract and interpret information and draw conclusions.

In all schools, pupils develop their independent writing skills well. They write increasingly effectively for a range of purposes and audiences. Generally, key stage 2 pupils write well, communicating lively ideas and using a range of interesting vocabulary. By the end of key stage 4, most pupils write extensively in a range of styles, using language appropriately and presenting complex ideas effectively. However, at key stage 2 in half of the schools inspected, a minority of pupils do not write at length well enough. In all key stages, a few pupils do not present their work well and make frequent spelling errors.

In three schools, pupils apply their numeracy skills securely, for example to calculate formulae and interpret charts and data. In these schools, pupils' critical thinking and problem-solving skills are highly developed and equip them well for learning as they progress through the school.

In all schools, most pupils attend regularly, support and show respect towards one another and are highly engaged in their learning. In all schools, pupils contribute to decision-making about aspects of school life. In a few cases, pupils have influenced decisions about curriculum arrangements but, more commonly, decisions are limited to things like the accommodation, environment and the range and quality of food served in the dining hall.

Figure 3.13: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

Provision overall is good in three schools inspected and excellent in one.

All schools provide a balanced and broad curriculum that meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. In all schools, the curriculum builds well on what pupils know and understand and ensures that many pupils are challenged by relevant activities that reinforce and extend their learning and are well prepared for the next stage of learning. In three schools, pupils have a very good choice of academic courses at GCSE level and A level. Generally, links between primary and senior sections of the schools inspected ensure continuity in pupils' learning experiences and contribute significantly to the high standards that pupils achieve. In one school, the planning of the curriculum from the infants to the juniors does not always build well enough on pupils' previous learning.

Generally, schools plan well to develop pupils' skills. In particular, schools provide wide-ranging opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, reading and thinking skills. However, in two schools, opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum are not planned well enough.

In three schools, the very wide range of extra-curricular activities broadens and enriches pupils' learning experiences and contributes particularly well to their social and personal development.

Teaching is good or better in three of the schools inspected. In one school, where teaching was judged to be excellent, this is because of teachers' broad subject knowledge, the particularly high expectations of pupils and the rigorous level of challenge.

Where teaching is consistently good, the most common features are that:

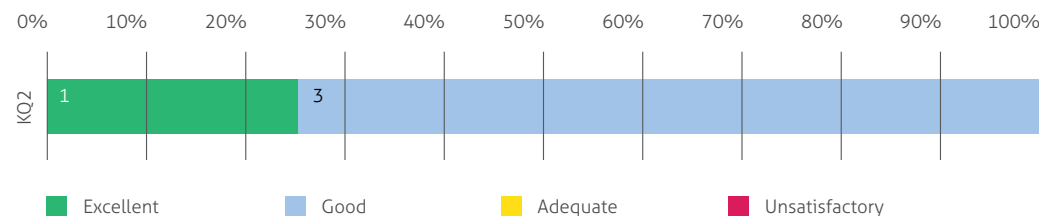
- teachers offer clear explanations and astute questioning that encourage pupils to reflect carefully on their work and extend their understanding;
- stimulating learning activities capture pupils' imagination and interest; and
- constructive feedback helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

Where teaching has shortcomings, this is most commonly because teachers provide too little challenge and do not give pupils enough opportunities to work independently or in small groups, for example to carry out research and solve problems.

In all schools, teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully. In three schools, particularly in secondary sections, teachers analyse a range of assessment data to check that pupils are suitably challenged to improve and teachers provide appropriate intervention strategies where necessary.

All schools have effective care and support arrangements. They promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Figure 3.14: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

Leadership and management overall are excellent in three of the schools inspected and adequate in one school.

In two schools where leadership is excellent, leaders:

- establish a clear strategic vision for the school based on high expectations, a supportive environment and the pursuit of excellence;
- set out clear priorities and provide firm direction to all aspects of the school's work; and
- promote a strong sense of purpose and a collective commitment to shared values and aims.

Where leadership is only adequate, staff roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and performance management arrangements do not have enough impact on improving provision and raising standards.

In all schools, proprietors help to set the strategic direction and provide effective oversight of the school's work. They are well informed about the school's performance and provide appropriate challenge.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning are good or better in three of the schools inspected. In these schools, there are rigorous self-evaluation arrangements, which

include detailed analyses of pupils' performance and the quality of learning. These arrangements lead to the identification of clear development priorities and have contributed to significant improvements in standards and provision.

Where quality improvement is less effective, this is because lesson observations lack rigour and managers do not analyse performance data robustly. As a result, the school does not identify areas for development clearly.

Three of the schools inspected have strong partnerships with local business, community, sporting and cultural organisations. These links contribute significantly to raising pupils' achievements and to their personal and cultural development.

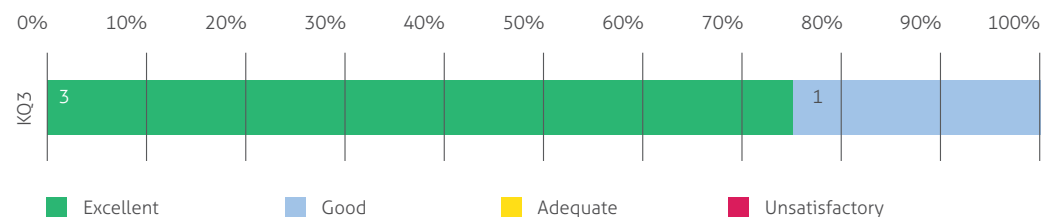
All schools manage financial matters carefully, planning prudently for future development. Three schools inspected make excellent use of resources, ensuring that funding is allocated to clearly identified priorities, and achieving excellent outcomes for pupils.

Ambition is the key to achievement

A mentoring programme for teachers at **The Cathedral School**, Cardiff, has helped to strengthen teaching practices and promote good practice throughout the school. In addition, using data more effectively to challenge pupils to achieve more aspirational grades at GCSE and tracking their progress carefully has raised pupils' ambitions and enabled pupils to understand their potential and to evaluate their progress more robustly.

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

Figure 3.15: Numbers of schools and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Independent specialist colleges

Independent specialist colleges provide education and training for learners aged 18-25 with learning difficulties and disabilities. There were six independent specialist colleges in Wales in January 2012 compared to three in January 2011. Estyn carried out monitoring visits at two of the colleges this year. These monitoring visits provide the information for the report below as there was no full inspection of an independent specialist college in 2011-2012. Three of the six colleges have only recently been established, and have not yet received a monitoring visit or a full inspection.

Outcomes

In one college, outcomes are very good. A few learners move on to colleges of further education. Learners with complex needs develop the independent living skills that they need to move to other residential settings. Over time, learners develop their communication skills and more able learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

In the other college, learners are engaged and motivated. Where appropriate, they achieve qualifications in subjects such as woodwork, gardening, information and communication technology and cookery.

Learners in both colleges improve their behaviour over time. They learn to manage their anxieties, work in groups and stay on task throughout the college day. Through the student council, learners make decisions about college life. For example, in one college they have taken part in developing a respect policy for the college and drawing up plans for a peer mentoring system.

Provision

In one college, learners have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. They take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. A team enterprise scheme gives learners good opportunities to understand retail. In the other college, learners participate in a wide range of suitable activities. They learn useful social and life skills through practical sessions, such as cooking, shopping and working on the farm. In one college, learners have excellent access to information and communication technology. This college also makes good provision for first language Welsh learners, including conducting assessment in Welsh.

The quality of teaching is good in one college. Teachers produce lesson plans and activities that match learners' individual abilities and needs. Teachers, teaching assistants and residential staff work well together to make sure that all learners are engaged throughout the sessions. In the other college, staff plan sessions carefully to meet the individual needs of the learners. However, they do not always challenge more able learners enough and lesson plans are not always linked closely to individual learning plans.

In both colleges, learners receive effective support from a wide range of specialists, including speech and language therapists, and psychologists.

Leadership and management

In both colleges, a strong leadership team provides a clear vision for improvement, which focuses on the standards learners achieve.

In one college, the principal works effectively with organisations in the local and wider community to increase their understanding of learning disabilities. In the other college, trustees provide appropriate challenge and support to the college, to make necessary improvements.

Self-evaluation processes show that managers in both colleges understand what needs to be done to improve their college. The colleges make good use of data to inform improvement planning and this is starting to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. For example, in one college, managers keep careful records of where learners go after leaving the college. These leaders manage resources very well. In the other college, managers have recently introduced a performance management system whose use is helping to identify good practice and address underperformance.

Pupil referral units

Forty-one pupil referral units (PRUs) are currently registered in Wales. This year, we inspected seven PRUs.

Performance and prospects

In five PRUs, current performance is good or excellent and in two it is adequate. In the five PRUs where performance is good or excellent, standards of achievement are good or better, pupils make good progress in learning or wellbeing and teaching is of good quality. In the other two, the shortcomings include limited access to an appropriate curriculum, insufficient progress in developing skills and poor attendance and engagement.

Prospects for improvement are good in two PRUs and excellent in one. In three PRUs, prospects for improvement are only adequate and, in one, they are unsatisfactory. In these four PRUs, there are significant shortcomings in leadership and management. The shortcomings include a failure to address pupils' additional learning needs, a failure to use data to identify what needs to be improved, and a failure to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

Follow-up

One of the seven 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 of pupils is always of good quality, and they do not use data or information from pupils' schools to plan improvements. Pupils do not all access full time education or have a broad 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.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

In four of the PRUs inspected, standards and pupils' wellbeing are good and in one PRU they are excellent. In these PRUs, pupils make good or better progress relative to their previous achievements. In particular, they improve their reading, spelling and social skills and gain a range of suitable qualifications, including GCSEs, the majority at level 2. They take part in successful work placements. This helps many of them move to college or into training or employment. In the PRU with excellent standards, all post-16 pupils move to further education or employment, while also coping with the responsibilities of becoming mothers.

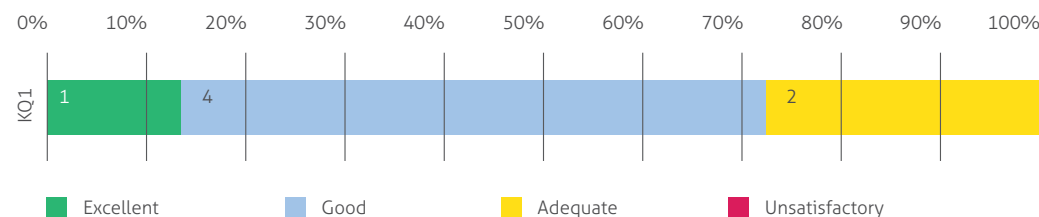
In all of the PRUs, pupils learn to manage their behaviour better. Many pupils, particularly at key stage 3, make a successful return to their school.

However, in two PRUs, standards and wellbeing are no better than adequate. In one of these PRUs, outcomes vary between the two sites. Pupils on one site can only attend part time and do not gain useful qualifications. At the other site, pupils have a full-time programme, access to a varied curriculum and appropriate qualifications. In both PRUs, pupils do not develop their literacy and numeracy skills well enough and do not regularly contribute to decisions about the life and work of the PRUs. A few pupils in one of these PRUs have very poor attendance. This affects the overall average attendance level for last year, which is only 77%. In the other PRU, pupils at the site that offers too few hours of education have poor attendance and do not engage well with the programme. They do not have a good enough understanding of healthy eating and the need for physical exercise.

“

“In all of the PRUs, pupils learn to manage their behaviour better.”

Figure 3.16: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

In four PRUs, provision is good and in one it is excellent. These PRUs offer pupils a curriculum that generally matches their needs. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills. Most teachers manage behaviour effectively and know their subjects well. They plan work carefully to match pupils' abilities and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. A few teachers do not plan well enough for these skills, particularly numeracy. They use too many worksheets, set too slow a pace for lessons, or have low expectations of what pupils can achieve.

In the two PRUs where provision is only adequate, pupils do not receive the recommended 25 hours of full time education. In one PRU, pupils have a narrow curriculum that does not include science, information and communication technology

or the chance to study for GCSEs. This limits pupils' progress. Teachers do not make enough use of information from pupils' schools or individual education plans to prepare their work. They do not focus on improving how pupils relate to others or how well they understand the importance of healthy living.

In six of the seven PRUs, care, support and guidance arrangements are good. Where they are good, the PRU works well with a wide range of agencies to give pupils the support that they need. The PRU identifies and supports pupils with additional learning needs well. All PRUs have appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding.

Two PRUs have unacceptable toilet arrangements, such as staff and pupils or male and female pupils sharing with

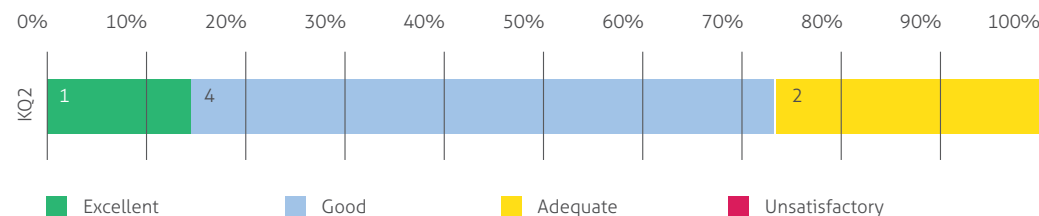
each other. Three PRUs have unsuitable buildings. Most of the PRUs make good use of their accommodation, and where this accommodation is limited they use a variety of off-site facilities to enhance provision.

Effective strategies to prevent and support teenage pregnancy

Cyfle Young Mothers Unit, in Wrexham, is helping to prepare young teenagers for early motherhood while supporting them with their education. It also runs a peer education programme for local secondary schools to help pupils to understand the implications and realities of early, unplanned parenthood.

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

Figure 3.17: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

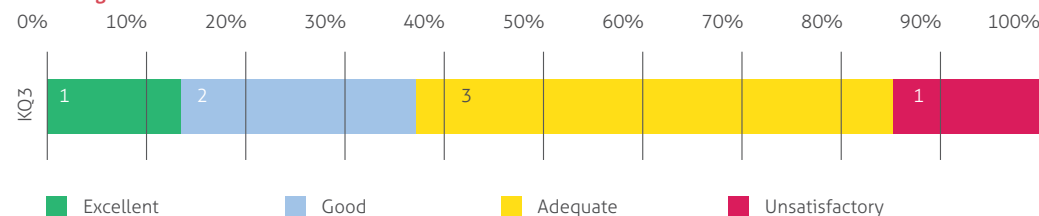
In the three PRUs where leadership and management are good or better, managers provide clear direction for all areas of work. They use data well to identify where they need to improve teaching, learning and attendance. Managers ask parents and carers, staff, pupils and members of the community for their views of the PRU's work. They use the results of these surveys to create detailed development plans that prioritise areas for improvement. They check staff performance carefully and set challenging targets to meet the needs of individual staff and the PRU as a whole. Management committees know these PRUs well and understand their strengths and what needs to improve. They challenge managers and staff and make sure that they all focus on improving outcomes for pupils.

In three PRUs, the quality of leadership and management is adequate and in one PRU it is unsatisfactory. In these PRUs, managers are poor at using data to identify where they need to improve and set challenging targets. Management committees do not have a wide enough range of members from outside the local authority. This makes it difficult to hold the PRU and the local authority to account. They do not focus enough on improving outcomes for pupils.

In three PRUs, managers do not regularly check how well staff are doing. They do not hold formal discussions or set and record targets for improvement. As a result, pupils do not all receive the same quality of provision and support.

All of the PRUs work well with a range of partners, and in particular with parents. As a result, many PRUs meet pupils' needs and widen their experiences. Staff generally benefit from working with staff in local schools to share and develop their expertise. Despite this good work, PRUs do not always work closely enough with their education and training partners, such as local secondary schools, to plan, share resources or make sure that pupils' work is of good quality.

Figure 3.18: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Settings for children under five

There are approximately 700 non-maintained settings providing education for children aged between three and five in Wales. These settings are not maintained by a local authority. The number of non-maintained settings registered with local partnerships to provide education fluctuates according to whether children aged three and over attend the setting and on arrangements to fund the provision locally. The number of settings providing education rose consistently between 2004 and 2009, reaching a peak of 780 settings in 2008-2009. Since 2010, the number of settings has declined by around 40 each year. This year, we inspected 146 non-maintained settings. In small settings where there are fewer than six three-year-olds attending, inspectors report on provision and leadership only. This is to avoid identifying individual children in reports.

Performance and prospects

Performance is good in 86% of non-maintained settings. It is adequate in 14% of settings. Where inspectors identify shortcomings in performance, they most often relate to shortcomings in learning and teaching, particularly curriculum planning and assessment.

Prospects for improvement are good or better in 91% of settings and excellent in 6%. Prospects are adequate in 9% of settings. Over the last two years, a setting's ability to identify its strengths and areas of improvement and to plan for improvement are key factors in determining how good or otherwise are its prospects for improvement.

Follow-up

This year, we invited 19 settings to provide an excellent practice case study.

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.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

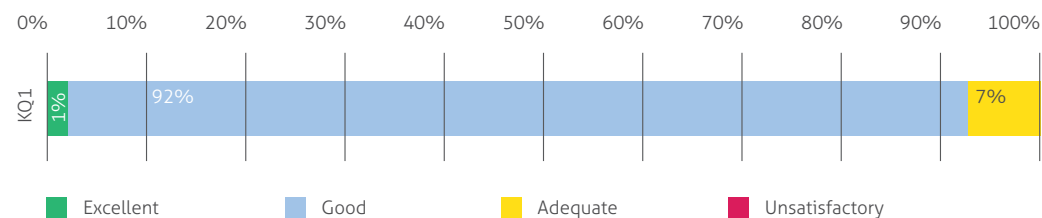
In the settings inspected, most children achieve well and make good progress in their early literacy and numeracy skills. Many children make appropriate and occasionally good progress in their information and communication technology skills.

In most settings, children listen attentively, speak clearly and enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults. Older and more mature children are beginning to understand the importance of writing, such as writing a list to visit the shop or sending an invitation to a party. In a few settings, children recognise their names on their tablemats at snack time or on wall displays. Many children use correct mathematical language during play activities and confidently use cash registers and mobile phones in role-play. Many also show good skills in controlling battery-operated toys or a computer mouse.

Last year, we reported concerns about children's standards in Welsh in English-medium settings. While standards have improved overall, in over a third of English-medium settings, children do not make enough progress in Welsh. Children generally lack confidence in using Welsh outside short, whole-group sessions, such as registration periods or end-of-session singing activities. They do not use Welsh in their play and learning without prompts from adults.

Nearly all children feel safe in their settings and enjoy the time that they spend there. As a result, they are becoming more confident, independent learners.

Figure 3.19: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

Provision is good in around nine-in-ten settings. Many settings provide a broad range of interesting and exciting activities that motivate almost all children to learn.

Curriculum planning is sound in many settings. Practitioners' planning is detailed and flexible enough to adapt as children's interests change. Practitioners identify skills clearly in planning documents and there is good coverage across all areas of learning. However, in nearly a quarter of settings, there are weaknesses in areas such as provision for Welsh language development (in English-medium settings), information and communication technology and the use of the outdoors. There is also a lack of continuity and progression in planning. As a result, practitioners do not always provide

enough challenge for more able children. Practitioners in Welsh-medium settings do not always focus well enough on extending the abilities of children with good Welsh first language skills.

This year, there are improvements in practitioners' understanding of how children learn and develop. Many practitioners also demonstrate a better understanding of how important it is that children learn through first-hand experiences and that they have focused teaching and intervention. In the few settings where there are weaknesses in teaching, practitioners do not use questioning well enough to encourage children to think for themselves and assessments are superficial.

The care, support and guidance provided by nearly all settings are of a good quality. Appropriate induction helps children to settle quickly on transition from home, eat healthily and take regular physical exercise. Practitioners encourage children to recycle their milk cartons and compost fruit.

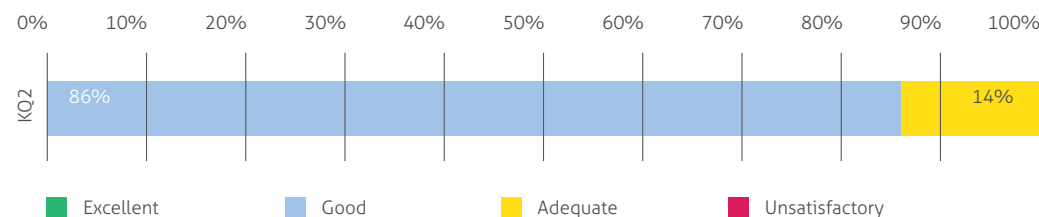
Most settings provide a warm, welcoming environment where children feel happy and secure. Resources are generally of a good quality and suitable for the age and interests of the children. A minority of settings struggle to fund information and communication technology resources and this hampers children's progress in this area.

A holistic approach to wellbeing

Cylch Meithrin Ynysybwl, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, supports children's wellbeing by using several different strategies, including involving parents and the community, and investing time to help children to articulate their emotions.

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

Figure 3.20: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

Leadership is good or better overall in 89% of settings inspected. In the very few settings where leadership is excellent, practitioners have a clear sense of direction and purpose, and teamwork is prioritised and highly effective. Leaders have a strong focus on improving outcomes and a willingness to learn and try new ways of working. In the few settings where leadership is only adequate, the management committee, registered person or proprietor have little understanding of how well the setting is performing and do not focus enough on improving children's standards and wellbeing.

Despite this generally positive picture of leadership, the work of settings in improving quality is a relatively weak area. The picture this year is a slightly worsening one compared to last year. In over three-quarters of settings where practice is good or excellent, practitioners are well aware of the setting's strengths and areas for development and have detailed plans to bring about improvement. In almost a quarter of settings with adequate or unsatisfactory practice, self-evaluation processes are superficial and planning is weak. These settings do not evaluate children's progress robustly and improvement actions are not suitably prioritised or costed.

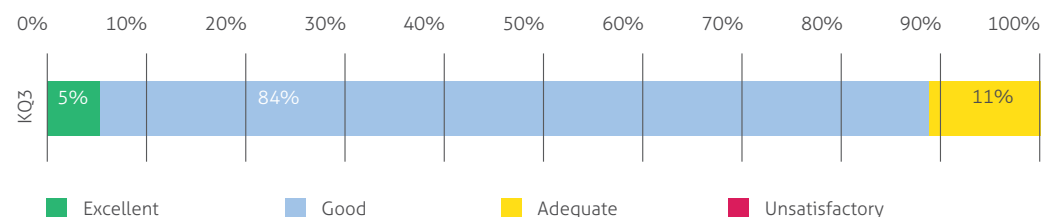
Partnership working is good or better in most settings. Relationships with parents and carers remain a significant strength with settings increasingly involving parents and carers in their children's learning. Settings are gradually developing better links with local primary schools to support continuity in learning and to share resources.

Leaders manage resources well in most settings. They use their staff appropriately to support children's learning and many practitioners are well trained to deliver the curriculum. In a significant minority of English-medium settings, practitioners are not confident in using Welsh with the children and are not well trained in using techniques to support children in learning Welsh.

Last year, we inspected 58 small settings with fewer than six three-year-olds on roll. Small settings are particularly good at creating a strong family ethos and most provide high levels of care. While the level of care is often enhanced by the small size of the setting, it can be a disadvantage. Having fewer practitioners means that there is more work to do and no-one to delegate it to. Difficulties are created in keeping up-to-date with initiatives through training if staff absences cannot be covered because there is a lack of resources to pay for training and cover.

Despite these difficulties, many small settings succeed in providing good learning experiences for children, use a range of effective teaching strategies and know what they need to do to improve. However, too many struggle to cope with the demands and expectations of providing a rounded education. Over a quarter of small settings have issues to address in relation to the learning experiences they provide and almost a third find self-evaluation difficult. One-in-five settings have shortcomings in the quality of teaching. Very few small settings are able to provide excellence in any aspect of their work.

Figure 3.21: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Local authority education services for children and young people

Performance and prospects

This year we inspected local authority education services for children and young people in eight of the 22 local authorities in Wales. Performance and prospects for improvement are good overall in only three of the authorities we inspected. In authorities judged as good, leadership is strong and performance management supports improvement planning. Performance is adequate in another three and unsatisfactory in two. Standards are unsatisfactory in both these authorities with too few schools performing well when compared with similar schools. Prospects are only adequate in four of these authorities and unsatisfactory in one. Authorities where prospects are no better than adequate have not responded well enough to the recommendations made in previous inspections and many learners or groups of learners in the schools maintained by these authorities 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.

Follow-up

This year, we invited two authorities to provide case studies of excellent 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 is in need of significant improvement. Standards are unsatisfactory in both of these authorities.

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

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

Standards are good in three authorities, adequate in three and unsatisfactory in two.

In the authorities with good standards:

- schools perform well when compared with other similar schools across Wales;
- the gap between the performance levels of boys and girls is small;
- progress between primary and secondary schools is good;
- pupils' reading scores improve as they move through school; and
- the number of pupils leaving school without a qualification is getting less.

In those authorities where standards are only adequate or unsatisfactory, too many of their schools are in the bottom 25% in comparison with other similar schools in Wales. In addition, these authorities do not perform well against the Welsh Government's benchmarks for performance using a range of information that takes account of their context, such as entitlement to free school meals.

In most authorities, pupils gain recognition for their achievements as a result of opportunities provided in schools and out-of-school settings. However, often the number of pupils is low.

The arrangements to promote the wellbeing of pupils are good in three authorities, adequate in four and unsatisfactory in one.

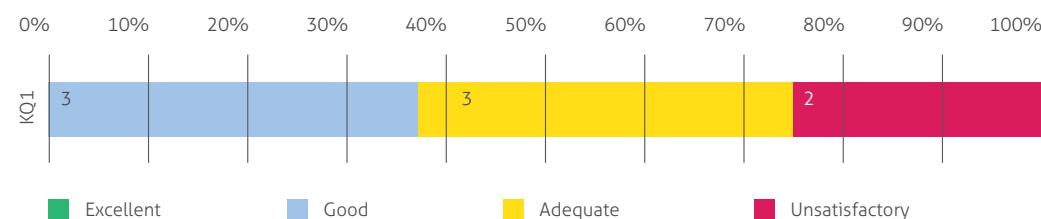
In the authorities where arrangements for wellbeing are good:

- pupils have responded well to professional support, guidance and counselling, which have improved their wellbeing and outcomes;
- pupils' attendance in schools compares well to that in other authorities that have a similar social and economic background; and
- engagement is better and fewer pupils are excluded from school.

In those authorities where wellbeing is only adequate or unsatisfactory, pupils miss too many days from school because attendance and fixed-term exclusion rates are not improving quickly enough.

The percentage of pupils leaving Year 11 who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) is decreasing in most authorities inspected last year. However, in a few authorities the numbers are not decreasing quickly enough.

Figure 3.22: Numbers of local authorities and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision – Support for school improvement

School improvement services offer support, monitoring, challenge and intervention to schools in order to raise standards and improve leadership and management.

Support for school improvement is excellent in one local authority, good in one, adequate in four and unsatisfactory in one.

Authorities that are good or better have a detailed knowledge of their schools and provide rigorous challenge and effective intervention to target improvements in standards, provision and leadership. Where intervention is needed, the early action of the authority prompts swift improvement. Those authorities judged good or better have officers who hold leaders and managers in schools to account and challenge them robustly to fulfil their responsibilities.

Most authorities use a detailed analysis of performance data to identify underperformance. Officers also work to improve the skills and confidence of governors in evaluating mainstream attainment data and challenging school performance. However, officers do not collect or analyse data on young people's attainment of non-formal and informal qualifications well enough to be able to compare outcomes with those of other providers.

Many authorities do not improve the performance of their schools quickly or thoroughly enough. In authorities that are no better than adequate, the school improvement service does not identify all schools at risk of underperformance.

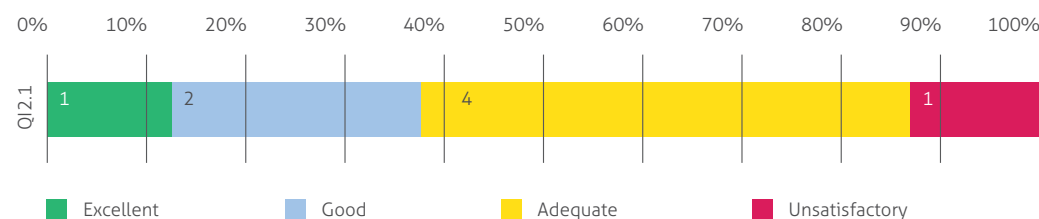
As a result, in a few authorities, officers are unaware of the issues identified during school inspections. Very few authorities have used their full powers to address significant underperformance quickly.

In most authorities, the work of school improvement officers varies in quality. The management of their performance too often lacks rigour. Senior managers and elected members do not hold their officers to account well enough.

In those authorities that are adequate or unsatisfactory, the end-of-key stage teacher assessments across schools are not standardised or moderated accurately enough to reflect pupils' achievements.

This year all authorities have been involved in arrangements to provide school improvement services through four regional consortia.

Figure 3.23: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is support for school improvement (quality indicator 2.1)?



Provision – Support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion

This service area includes meeting statutory obligations for learners with a range of additional learning needs and co-ordinating provision for these learners.

Six authorities have additional learning needs services that are good, and for two authorities those services are only adequate.

Most authorities are preparing well for the statutory reforms of special educational needs by developing alternative ways of providing and managing support. For example, each authority is piloting individual development plans to bring together the multi-agency planning and monitoring of support for each learner. Early indications suggest that this work is effective in supporting the achievements of learners.

Most authorities have criteria for offering and withdrawing additional support, which are clearly understood by schools and parents. In a few authorities, additional support is time-limited when necessary, which allows for support that is flexible and cost effective by prioritising resources to areas of greatest need. However, too many schools request additional support because they still lack the confidence to take responsibility for these pupils.

Many authorities are restructuring to improve joint working between their additional needs services, school improvement service and other partners. In the six authorities judged good, this developing joint work is helping services to make better use of their expertise to plan and monitor learners' outcomes and target resources at those learners with the greatest need. However, the two authorities that are

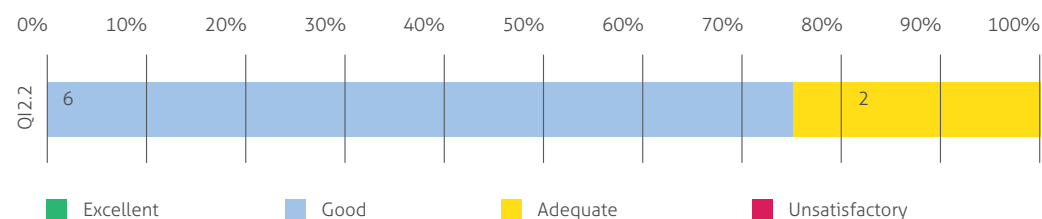
no better than adequate do not have a good strategic overview of the effectiveness and impact of their support services. They do not know how well all learners are progressing or whether the provision offers the best value for money.

In the few authorities in which training and support are effective, they successfully develop the capacity of schools to provide for pupils' needs without asking for further resources. A few specialist services, such as those for autism, dyslexia and speech and language, carefully monitor the effectiveness of their training and provision and clearly demonstrate how they improve outcomes for pupils. However, generally, systems for monitoring the impact of training are not well developed.

In the authorities judged good for additional learning needs support, the needs of

learners are identified at an early stage, thus allowing staff to plan how to help them to make a successful transfer between the different phases in their education.

Figure 3.24: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion (quality indicator 2.2)?



Provision – Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing

Promoting social inclusion and wellbeing includes services that promote good attendance, prevent pupils from being excluded from school, support vulnerable groups of learners and provide all young people with access to appropriate guidance and advice. This provision also includes arrangements to keep all learners safe.

Of the eight authorities inspected, three are good and five are adequate in relation to the quality of their social inclusion and wellbeing service.

Overall, authorities have appropriate strategies and projects to promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups. However, the majority of authorities do not evaluate these initiatives effectively enough to bring about further improvements to benefit learners. Specifically, in half the authorities inspected, strategies to improve attendance have not yet had enough impact.

Attendance support is best when officers work closely with schools and a range of partners to share responsibility for

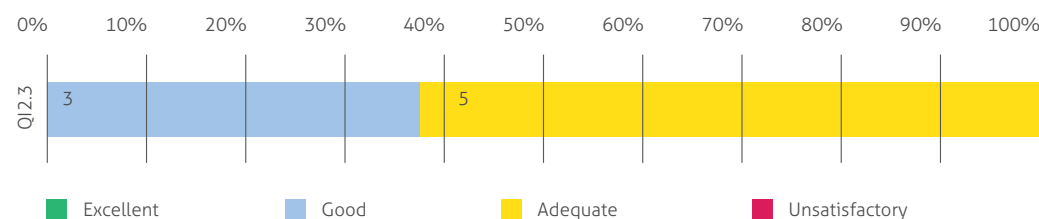
improving performance. In authorities judged to be good, effective co-operation between statutory and voluntary partners has led to the establishment of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary teams to focus on the needs of learners and their families. In a few cases, this has led to co-ordinated support and intervention designed to meet identified social and educational needs. This strategy has improved both attendance rates and standards for the pupils concerned in secondary schools but has yet to have a positive effect in primary schools.

Many authorities are strengthening the way they deliver behaviour management and support strategies. In the three authorities judged to be good, these arrangements help schools and staff from different agencies to work together to help families improve children's and young people's capacity to learn. These authorities focus their support for particular individuals' needs by helping families to set consistent boundaries and bedtimes or to understand why good attendance at school is important. Many authorities are

also improving the way they use data to plan services. In a minority of authorities there is more consistent reporting of exclusions, better preventative work with those at risk and reductions in requests for support when interventions have been ineffective.

Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate in most authorities inspected this year. There are suitable arrangements for carrying out criminal records bureau checks on new and existing staff and for providing training to staff. However, not all local authorities have gone far enough to ensure that partners delivering either shared or commissioned work have undertaken the proper checks on their staff. In a minority of local authorities, officers are slow to put appropriate procedures in place to safeguard learners or to follow up on allegations and identified issues. A few authorities have not completed CRB and reference checks. In these instances, procedures are unclear and key members of staff, governors and school leaders may not have received advanced training.

Figure 3.25: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is the promotion of social inclusion and wellbeing (quality indicator 2.3)?



Provision – Access and school places

This service area includes admissions to schools, planning school places and access to early years education and youth support services. Of the eight authorities inspected, three are good, four are adequate and one is unsatisfactory.

About half of authorities inspected are making good progress in reducing surplus school places. In the other authorities, surplus capacity remains high, there is limited agreement on action and progress is too slow. Strategies to modernise schools are delayed and hindered because of the lack of support from elected members. Even when planning has been undertaken to remove surplus places, there is rarely a full analysis of the benefits of the reduction.

Authorities judged to be good have the resources and finance in place to deliver agreed plans to make their schools fit for

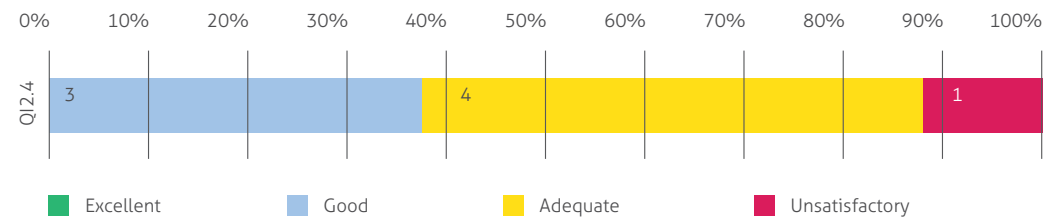
purpose. Other authorities' plans depend on whether substantial external funding is possible and some have no financial plans so the prospects of timely delivery are therefore uncertain.

Nearly all authorities provide sufficient early years and play provision that meets identified demand. A few authorities make good use of surplus places in primary schools to provide places for three to five-year-olds.

Most authorities inspected have an appropriate range of youth support services. However, the effective co-ordination of youth support services remains a challenge for most local authorities. Generally, partners meet to agree plans but fail to co-ordinate this work in practice. There are gaps and duplication in provision that mean poor value for money. In addition, most

authorities do not have a clear overview of the quality of the service that young people receive or the outcomes from them. As a result, it is not clear to what extent outcomes for children and young people are being improved as a result of the work of the youth service or youth support services. In a few local authorities, the local authority's youth service supports wider youth support services and quality assures their work well.

Figure 3.26: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is provision for access and school places (quality indicator 2.4)?



Leadership and management

Of the eight authorities inspected, leadership is good in three authorities, adequate in a further four and unsatisfactory in one authority.

Where leadership is good, the authorities work closely with strategic partners to deliver their vision for improved outcomes for learners. In these authorities, there are clear links between identified needs and strategic and operational planning, and a strong focus on outcomes. Officers are prepared to take difficult strategic decisions and build transparent and successful relationships with important partners and schools.

A minority of authorities graded good or excellent have taken appropriate steps towards rationalising planning as well as linking common strategic objectives with those of key partners. However, steps towards bringing all the authorities' priorities into a single coherent plan are slow in at least half the authorities. In about half the authorities, despite effective corporate and directorate planning, there is limited focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and a lack of clarity about what needs to be done to bring about the necessary improvements.

In the three authorities where improving quality is judged to be good, self-evaluation processes are comprehensive and well established, and accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement. Their performance management procedures are effective and used well to inform improvement planning. They have a culture of accountability and show good progress in implementing recommendations from previous inspections.

In the five authorities that are no better than adequate, self-evaluation is not used consistently across all services. The self-evaluation reports do not identify unsatisfactory progress and are not always supported by the rigorous analysis of data. Reports are often too descriptive and do not focus enough on the impact of services. It is because officers do not highlight these matters in their reports that elected members are not made fully aware of underperformance. As a result, elected members cannot provide appropriate challenge or hold officers to account in relation to school and service performance.

In the three authorities where partnership working is successful, strategic partners identify common needs and work towards common outcomes. The partners in these authorities agree priorities, plan effectively and hold each other to account well.

In the majority of authorities, officers do not evaluate the impact of partnerships on outcomes for children and young people. These authorities do not make best use of their resources and shared specialist knowledge/expertise to engage learners because they do not measure the impact of collaboration and its cost.

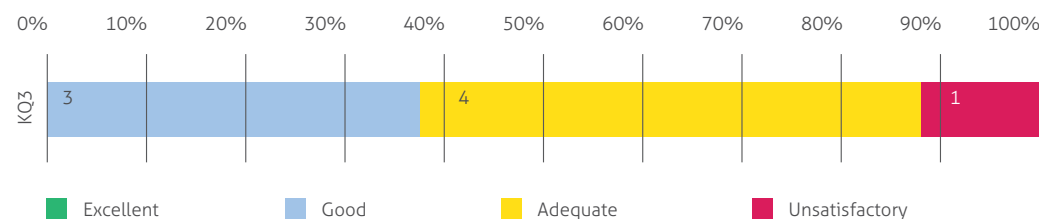
In the three authorities where leadership is good, resources are linked clearly with the council's priorities. Also, in these authorities, overall performance management is effective and financial management is strong. These authorities focus on improving

value for money and they have strategies in place to improve the cost effectiveness of their services to schools and those commissioned externally.

In the majority of local authorities, finance officers provide effective support for schools to make sure that deficits and surpluses are well managed. However, about a third of authorities have a long-term or rising incidence of significant deficits or surpluses in schools, which are not being addressed quickly enough.

About half of the authorities find it difficult to keep their spending on additional learning needs under control. None of the authorities inspected this year can report on the value for money provided by their strategic partnerships or whether or not collaboration is cost effective.

Figure 3.27: Numbers of local authorities and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Further education institutions

In April 2012, there were 20 institutions providing further education and training in Wales. This is two fewer than last year due to the mergers between Barry College and Coleg Glan Hafren and between Coleg Menai and Coleg Llandrillo.

In 2011-2012², there were 45,745 full-time learners at further education institutions, a slight decrease on the previous year. There were 117,655 part-time learners, a decrease of 5.2% on the previous year. A quarter of all learners at further education institutions were aged 19 and under, while 43% were under 25 years old, similar to the proportions in the previous year. There were similar numbers of males and females enrolling on full-time courses in 2010-2011. However, 55% of part-time enrolments in 2010-2011 were female.

As in previous years, the majority of learners enrol on courses at levels 1 or 2. These account for 60% of all enrolments. Around 10% of enrolments were at pre-entry or entry levels. As in previous years, the highest numbers of enrolments were in health, public services and care and in information and communication technology.

Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected three further education institutions. One institution, which was formed by the amalgamation of six smaller colleges, is among the largest colleges in Wales, and another is a recently merged college. The third college is currently in merger discussions with a neighbouring college.

Overall, performance and prospects for improvement are good in two of the institutions we inspected. Standards have shown an upward trend over the past three years at these two institutions, the quality of teaching is good and they provide good guidance and support for learners. Current performance and prospects for improvement are adequate in the other institution. This institution has not invested enough in raising standards achieved by learners or in improving the quality of teaching despite investing well in accommodation and resources.

Follow-up

This year, we asked two institutions to prepare excellent practice case studies. One institution 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.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

2 SDR203/2012 - Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning, 2011/12 (provisional), Welsh Government <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2012/121127/?lang=en>

Outcomes

Standards achieved by learners are good in two institutions and adequate in the other. Where standards are good, learners' success rates at completing and attaining their qualifications are above those of other colleges in Wales and have shown a steady upward trend over the last three years. Learners at these two institutions attain at or near to their expected levels compared to predictions based on their previous GCSE attainment in schools. In the third institution, success rates have increased steadily over the past three years. However, although completion rates for courses are generally adequate, they are unsatisfactory in a few areas, including science and mathematics, and history, philosophy and theology. Attainment rates for the Welsh Bacalaureate Qualification are good overall at the three institutions.

Learners from deprived socio-economic backgrounds attain well at all three institutions, in particular those in receipt of the Educational Maintenance Allowance.

In all three institutions, learners make good or adequate progress in their classes. They participate well in class activities and display good oral skills. Most learners are aware of their weaknesses and demonstrate good progress in punctuation and spelling. Most learners use a good range of reading skills to extract information from texts and can summarise the main points and draw conclusions from their research.

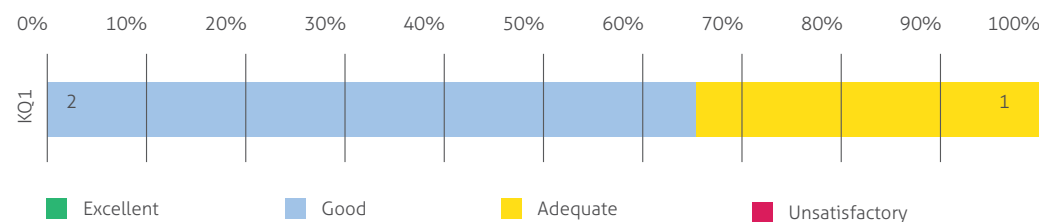
A small number of learners at each institution use Welsh well in their programmes, such as on the Welsh Bacalaureate and on care and customer care programmes.

Standards of wellbeing are good at all three institutions. Learners say that they feel safe and comfortable at college and are positive about the progress they are making. They participate well in a range of additional activities at college, including student councils, charity events and sport. In one institution, behaviour in class and around the college is very good. However, in one institution, the behaviour of a minority of learners in class sometimes prevents them and other learners from making progress with their studies.

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“Where standards are good, learners’ success rates at completing and attaining their qualifications are above those of other colleges in Wales and have shown a steady upward trend over the last three years.”

Figure 3.28: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

Provision is good in two of the institutions inspected and adequate in the third. All three institutions provide a broad range of vocational and academic courses that meet the needs of learners, employers and the community well. All three institutions plan their curriculum carefully and have good progression routes for learners. All three deliver the Welsh Baccaalaureate Qualification and a wide range of A level subjects, mostly to students aged between 16 and 19 years.

Learners have an initial assessment to identify their levels of literacy and numeracy at all three institutions. Learners at lower ability levels have an additional diagnostic assessment to identify additional learning support needs. Teachers at one institution make good use of this information and develop strategies to help learners to improve their literacy skills. However, this is not applied consistently across the other two institutions. At two institutions, teachers integrate essential skills well into learners' programmes. One institution does not offer learners enough opportunities to take higher-level qualifications and this restricts their development of higher-level literacy skills. Although all three institutions promote the use of the Welsh language, provision is limited to Welsh in the workplace and a small number of units on care and customer care courses.

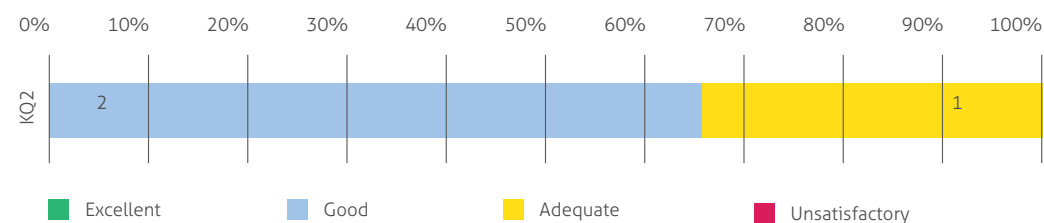
Learners at all three institutions have good opportunities to learn about sustainable development and global citizenship. At one institution, global diversity and citizenship are included in all tutorial programmes.

The quality of teaching is mostly good in two institutions and mostly adequate in the other. Where teaching is good, teachers plan their sessions effectively, use a wide range of teaching strategies to engage and maintain learners' interest and adapt activities well to match learners' abilities. Teachers deliver lessons at a good pace with appropriately timed activities and they challenge learners to achieve well. Where teaching is only adequate, teachers do not use a wide enough range of questioning techniques to check learners' understanding. Also, they do not manage learners' behaviour effectively enough.

All three institutions have good arrangements to care for, support and guide learners. Learners know what services are available to them and how to access them. These institutions promote the health and wellbeing of learners well.

All three institutions have appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding. They provide attractive, pleasant and modern learning and social areas that are accessible to all learners. However, all three institutions have a small number of teaching areas that are in a poor condition and do not match the high standards of most of the rest of the accommodation. Most classrooms are well resourced and have appropriate information and communication technology equipment.

Figure 3.29: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good in two of the institutions inspected. Principals and senior managers work well together to set and deliver clear strategic priorities. Communication between all managers and staff is good or very good at these two institutions. They work together to achieve the best possible outcomes in terms of standards and behaviour. In one institution, leaders and managers have not done enough to improve the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by learners. They do not make good use of national comparator data to benchmark their performance against that of other colleges in Wales.

Governors at one institution carry out their work efficiently and economically. They have rigorous arrangements for assessing their own effectiveness. At another college, governors have provided managers with

strong support and challenge during the merger process. At the third institution, governors provide managers with good support, but do not challenge performance enough.

Arrangements for improving quality are good at two institutions. In these institutions, annual self-assessment is an integral part of strategic planning. All staff contribute well to self-assessment through course and faculty reviews. These institutions use internal programme area reviews well to identify areas for improvement. Where arrangements are adequate, managers do not make enough use of data to compare their performance with that of other colleges in Wales.

Partnership working is variable in the three institutions. They develop some effective partnerships with local authorities, schools, employers and their communities. However, the rate of progress in transforming post-16 provision is still slow. This reflects on the slow progress being made in some partnerships.

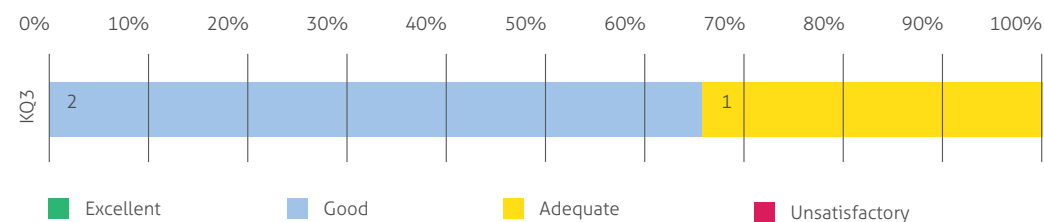
Resource management is good in two institutions and adequate in the third. They all manage their financial resources well to improve the learning environment and resources available for learners. However, one college has not put a high enough priority on using its resources to improve teaching and to raise standards.

College develops Welsh-African partnership

The developing partnership between **Gower College Swansea** and Madungu Primary School in Kenya has enhanced the educational, social and intellectual development of students at both institutions.

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

Figure 3.30: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Work-based learning

In 2011-2012, there were 53,355 learners undertaking work-based learning programmes. Of these learners, 15,570 were undertaking apprenticeships, 18,855 foundation apprenticeships, 2,835 skill build, 11,475 traineeships and steps to employment, and 4,440 other programmes.

Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected five work-based learning providers. Performance is good in three providers, adequate in one and unsatisfactory in one provider. Prospects for improvement are excellent in one provider, good in three and adequate in one provider.

In the providers judged to be good, learners complete their training at rates above national comparators. Senior managers set and monitor clear strategic targets for learners' standards and improvement. These providers have established a culture and history of continual improvement. However, in the provider where performance is unsatisfactory, learners complete their training at rates significantly below national comparators. Senior managers have not developed clear strategies and plans for improvement.

Follow-up

Two work-based learning providers require follow-up activity. One provider will be re-inspected and the second provider will have their progress reviewed by Estyn approximately 18 months after the date of their inspection.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

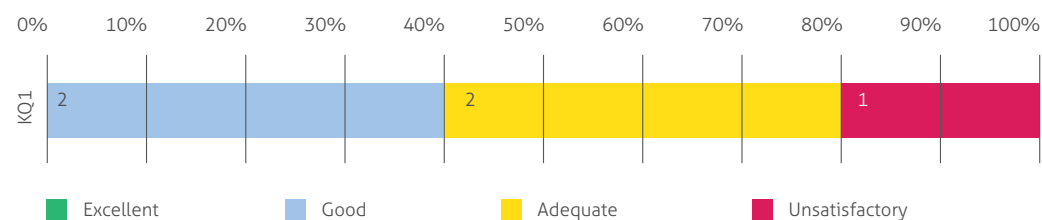
Inspectors judged standards to be good in two providers, adequate in two providers and unsatisfactory in one provider.

In the two providers where standards are good, learners complete their training within the given timescale and make good progress. They demonstrate clear practical competence and sound basic theoretical knowledge. The rates at which learners achieve their frameworks are above the average for the sector. Where standards are only adequate or unsatisfactory, learners make slow progress and the rates at which they achieve their frameworks are below the average for the sector. Too few learners develop higher-level practical skills and good theoretical knowledge.

Most learners do not develop or show improvement in their literacy or numeracy skills well enough during their training, or develop their writing skills effectively. Too few learners develop a clear understanding of the importance of sustainable development and global citizenship or of the language and culture of Wales.

Most learners improve their self-confidence and self-esteem during their training. Many learners enjoy their training and are valued members of their employers' staff. Overall, in most providers, attendance both on and off-the-job is good.

Figure 3.31: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

Three training providers deliver an appropriate range of learning areas and levels in programmes and offer learners good progression opportunities to the next level of training. However, programmes rarely meet learners' needs fully as they do not develop their literacy and numeracy skills well enough. Overall, providers do not do enough to develop learners' literacy skills. Trainers and assessors do not make good enough use of individual learning plans to help learners to understand how well they are progressing or to recognise what they need to do to improve their literacy skills. Too few learners benefit from constructive written feedback that will enable them to improve their future performance.

Assessors and trainers do not do enough to develop learners' numeracy skills. Numeracy tasks are not effectively integrated into training and assessment tasks or related to work or life skills. Assessors do not give learners clear verbal or written feedback on their performance and progress.

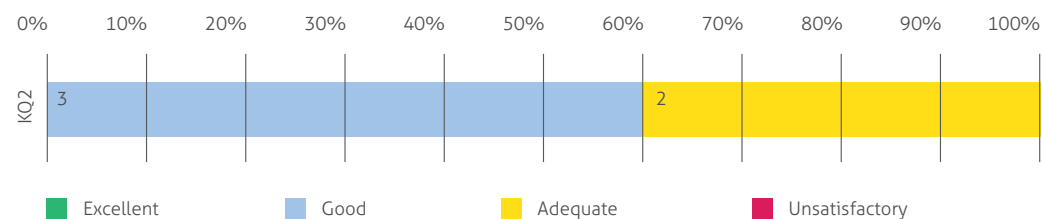
Overall, the quality of training, teaching and assessment is generally good in the main learning area in three of the providers inspected and it is only adequate in two. In the good sessions, activities are well structured to meet the needs of the learner. On-the-job assessments are well planned. Assessors keep detailed records of the progress made by their learners and set challenging targets for the completion of practical and written work. However, assessors and trainers do not consistently plan on and off-the-job assessment well enough. Assessors and trainers do not challenge all learners effectively to develop high standards in both practical skills and theory.

Most providers do not do enough to encourage Welsh-speaking learners to undertake training and assessment in Welsh. The majority of providers have not done enough to integrate the culture of Wales into training programmes.

Overall, providers have good care, guidance and support arrangements. All providers promote equality and respect for diversity well. All providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures.

The learning environment is excellent in one provider, good in two providers and adequate in one provider. However, in one provider the accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory and this limits learners' progress. Many learners work in congenial workplaces and have access to a wide range of resources both on and off-the-job.

Figure 3.32: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

Leadership and management vary widely in quality. In the providers judged to be good or better, senior managers set clear strategic priorities and targets for learners' standards and improvement. However, in the two providers where leadership was deemed to be adequate at best, leaders and managers do not promote robust self-assessment procedures that clearly identify shortcomings and actions for improvement.

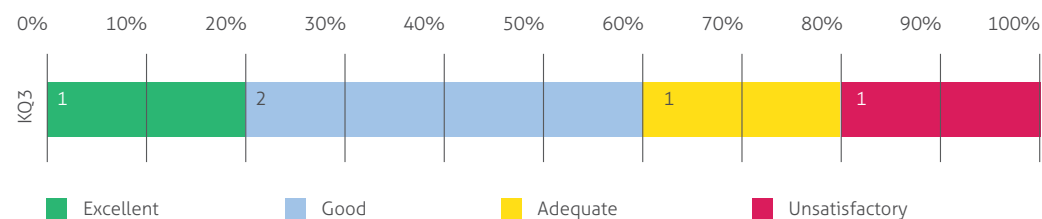
Overall, the quality of partnership working with sub-contractors and key partners is a cause for concern. The majority of lead providers and their sub-contractors do not always work well enough together to improve standards and the quality of training and assessment. They tend not to put the needs of the learner first.

The providers judged either good or excellent use a comprehensive range of quality assurance procedures and management information systems to monitor all aspects of their own and their sub-contractors' performance. However, the majority of lead providers do not have robust systems for evaluating and monitoring all aspects of their sub-contractors' performance. Where judgements are no better than adequate, senior managers have not developed clear strategies and procedures to make sure all learners get access to the best training. In these providers, good practice is not identified and shared across all sub-contractors. Communication between lead providers and sub-contractors is too variable. The good or better providers hold regular formal and informal meetings with sub-contractors. Clear records of meetings and action points are kept.

However, in one provider where partnership working is weak, not all sub-contractors are involved in regular meetings or communication. Outcomes across sub-contractors are inconsistent.

Resource management is excellent in one provider and good in two providers. It is adequate in one provider and unsatisfactory in another provider. In the two providers where resource management is good or better, managers make sure learners have access to the best resources on and off-the-job. The majority of providers support staff well with comprehensive professional development programmes. However, the two providers where value for money is no better than adequate do not use resources well enough to bring about improvements in learners' outcomes.

Figure 3.33: Numbers of providers and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are Leadership and management?



Adult community learning

There are 16 adult and community learning partnerships in Wales. These partnerships involve a range of providers within local authority areas that include further education colleges, the local authority, Welsh language centres, the Workers' Educational Association, the County Voluntary Council and local voluntary organisations.

Three further education institutions also provide adult community learning training. These are the Workers' Educational Association South Wales, Coleg Harlech Workers' Educational Association North Wales and the YMCA Community College Cymru.

Performance and prospects

This year we inspected three adult and community learning partnerships. Performance is good in one partnership because there is a good level of strategic planning and good arrangements in place for quality assurance and planning for improvement. As a result, learners achieve good standards. Performance is unsatisfactory in the other two partnerships. Partners have not planned well enough to provide guidance or direction to the management of adult learning and make sure that the provision meets the needs of the community.

Prospects for improvement are excellent in one partnership as partners work very well together to improve the standards achieved by learners and the quality of teaching and assessment. Prospects for improvement are adequate in the other two partnerships. The pace of improvement has

been slow in one and strategic plans have not been fully implemented in the other.

The range of courses available to adults differs between partnerships but always includes adult basic education, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and information and communication technology.

Follow-up

Two adult and community learning partnerships require follow-up activity since current performance is unsatisfactory.

Last year, two adult and community learning partnerships required follow-up activity. Learners achieve only adequate or unsatisfactory standards in three of the four partnerships that need follow-up. Three of these partnerships have only adequate or unsatisfactory leadership and all four have only adequate or unsatisfactory arrangements for improving quality.

To read more about follow-up activities, please click on the title 'Follow-up'.

Outcomes

This year, standards are good in one partnership, adequate in one and unsatisfactory in the third partnership inspected.

In one partnership, learners from different backgrounds and levels of ability achieve good standards in their work. Many learners with weak basic skills successfully improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Many learners achieve good standards in their classes and gain outcomes above or near to the national average.

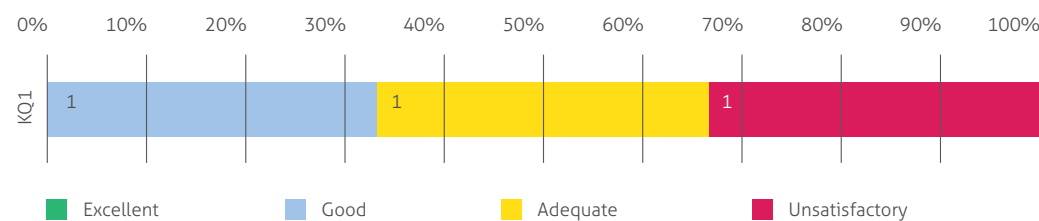
In the two partnerships where standards were only adequate or unsatisfactory, learners make slow progress, particularly in adult basic education and English for speakers of other languages classes. These learners often work at levels below their ability and are not challenged by their tutors, to make sure they progress quickly to higher levels of learning. These learners also do not use individual learning plans well enough to set specific targets to measure their progress. The rate at which learners achieve a successful outcome from their course is near to or below national averages. Too few learners progress from entry level to level 2 courses.

Most learners improve their wellbeing as a result of taking part in adult learning. They improve their self-confidence and feeling of self-worth and their ability to learn. Many learners make good use of their skills and knowledge subsequently in work, or voluntary and community organisations. The majority of learners develop positive attitudes to looking after their physical and mental health. Older learners make good use of the classes they attend to maintain social contact and increase their intellectual abilities.

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“Most learners improve their wellbeing as a result of taking part in adult learning. They improve their self-confidence and feeling of self-worth and their ability to learn.”

Figure 3.34: Numbers of partnerships and judgements for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Provision

In general, the partnerships inspected this year are providing classes and courses that meet priorities for improving basic and employability skills satisfactorily. However, two of the partnerships do not research the needs of their communities well enough to plan the delivery of the provision. As a result, they do not know how well provision meets the needs of communities or learners. Overall, there is too little Welsh medium provision available for learners.

One partnership works well to combine basic skills with a wide range of courses, including information and communication technology and digital photography. However, this was not the case in the other two partnerships. In general adult learning classes, providers do not help learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills well enough.

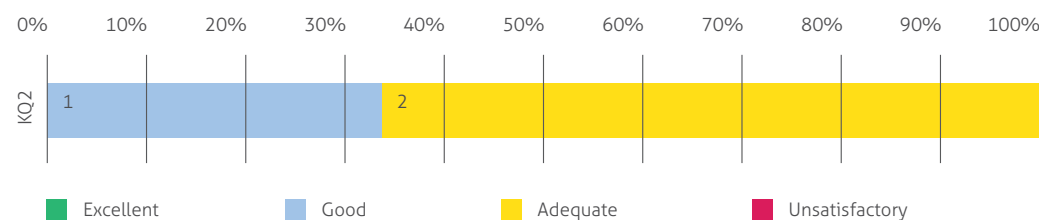
Overall, none of the partnerships does enough to help learners to set up independent classes or clubs. As a result, too many learners continue in the same class, often with the same tutor, year-on-year. This hinders partnerships in setting up new classes and recruiting learners in line with national policy requirements.

The quality of teaching is good or better in the majority of classes inspected. However, many tutors do not plan assessment well enough. They do not make good enough use of learning plans to help learners to understand how well they are progressing and to recognise what they need to do to improve.

Generally, partnerships do not work well enough together to address the national priorities for adult learning, for example to integrate literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across all subject areas. They also do not put effective plans in place to deliver adult learning. In one partnership, most learners who have help with their additional learning needs achieve well in their class. However, in the other two partnerships, providers do not identify learners with additional learning needs early enough to put suitable support in place at the start of their course. This hinders the progress they make.

All partnerships work well to promote equality and diversity. Most tutors pay good attention to equality and the atmosphere in all sessions is welcoming and respectful. Nevertheless, partnerships do not do enough to integrate the Welsh dimension into course material and content.

Figure 3.35: Numbers of partnerships and judgements for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Leadership and management

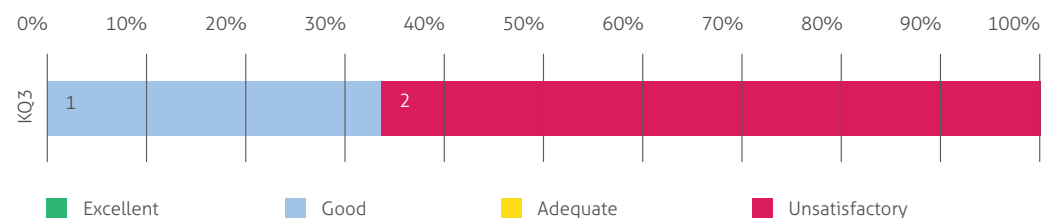
Generally, partnerships do not work well enough together to address the national priorities for adult learning, for example to integrate literacy and numeracy skills across all subject areas, and put effective plans in place for delivery. Only one partnership has good plans that set out clear aims and objectives. This partnership checks progress against these objectives well. The other two partnerships inspected do not have clear objectives and targets to help them to manage their work, or to measure and evaluate the quality and impact of their provision on learners.

One partnership has effective procedures for improving quality. Staff understand how well they are performing and where they need to improve. As a result, outcomes for learners have improved because of better teaching and assessment. Partners work very well

together to improve the standards achieved by learners. They have a shared plan and work well together towards common objectives. The other two partnerships inspected do not monitor and assess the quality of provision well enough.

Overall, adult learning tutors are appropriately qualified to teach their subjects. One partnership works well to co-ordinate staff development across all of its partners. The other two partnerships do not co-ordinate staff development well enough or measure the impact of staff training on learning. In general, adult learning partnerships do not help tutors to improve the professional aspects of their role well enough. This hinders the capacity of tutors to improve the quality of assessment and help learners to plan their learning, make good progress and improve their outcomes.

Figure 3.36: Numbers of partnerships and judgements for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



Initial teacher education and training

There are three centres of initial teacher training in Wales. Each centre comprises initial teacher training provision in two partner universities. This year, we inspected one initial teacher training provider, the South West Wales Centre of Teacher Education. This centre of teacher education was launched formally in 2011. The South West Wales Centre of Teacher Education and Training comprises teacher education provision at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Swansea Metropolitan University working in partnership at a sub-regional level. This is the first of the re-configured teacher training partnerships to be inspected.

The inspection report can be downloaded [here](#).

The other centres are the North and Mid Wales Centre of Teacher Education, at Bangor University and Aberystwyth University, and the South East Wales Centre of Initial Teacher Education and Training, based in Cardiff Metropolitan University and University of Wales Newport.

Estyn carries out monitoring visits to each of the centres. These visits, and the inspection of the South West Wales Centre of Teacher Education and Training, provide the information for the report below.

Outcomes

Nearly all trainees make good progress towards meeting the standards for qualified teacher status. Most understand the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study and the Foundation Phase framework, and have sound subject knowledge.

Trainees generally use a range of teaching strategies and sequence activities suitably to engage and motivate pupils. Many trainees plan their lessons in great detail, but a minority do not plan tasks to meet the needs of all pupils. Most trainees organise the classroom and manage pupils well, and they work effectively with teaching assistants.

Many trainees use a good range of assessment for learning techniques to help pupils and track their progress. However, in a minority of cases, trainees are not clear about the intended learning, do not assess pupils' progress, and do not reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching.

A majority of trainees have good personal literacy and communication skills, and plan to develop pupils' literacy skills through the subject they teach. A few trainees provide very good language models. However, the literacy skills of a minority of trainees are not secure enough. They make punctuation and spelling mistakes in their written work and in the classroom, and a very few do not speak correctly.

Most trainees have good information and communication technology skills, but a minority of trainees do not encourage their pupils to develop these skills in lessons.

Most trainees teaching in Welsh communicate effectively and develop pupils' language skills well. However, a few do not offer a good language model. They make grammatical mistakes or errors in mutation in written work. Many trainees have a sound understanding of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, but only a few plan for it in their school experiences.

Overall, trainees develop good professional characteristics and build positive working relationships with pupils and with school and university staff. In their university studies, most show high levels of motivation and interest. They have a good understanding of the standards for qualified teacher status. Many monitor their own progress against these standards and around half identify their strengths and weaknesses accurately.

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“Trainees generally use a range of teaching strategies and sequence activities suitably to engage and motivate pupils.”

Provision

Overall, training programmes provide trainees with a broad range of opportunities to demonstrate the standards for qualified teacher status. There is a focus on current issues and national priorities, such as developing pupils' literacy and numeracy, although training in these areas is generally better on primary programmes.

Universities regularly audit trainees' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. This is particularly strong on primary programmes, but not as effective on secondary programmes.

Many tutors provide good role models for trainees and exemplify good classroom practice. However, in a few instances where training is weak, it is undemanding and does not match trainees' needs, and activities lack variety and pace. In a few cases, tutors do not have up-to-date knowledge of current school practice.

In the school-based part of the training, there are generally detailed systems to assess trainees' progress against the standards for qualified teacher status. However, in a minority of cases, mentors do not have a shared understanding of the standards and their assessments are too generous. Too many mentors do not monitor trainees' files carefully enough and in a few cases they do not identify trainees' errors in skills or subject knowledge.

Assessment of trainees' written work also varies too much between university tutors and in a few cases tutors do not identify trainees' errors. Too many assignments are marked too generously and the grades given do not reflect marking criteria.

Trainees have good access to support systems, which provide effective guidance, support and counselling.

Leadership and management

Senior university leaders have collaborated to reduce duplication in initial teacher training programmes and to deliver courses in Welsh. However, the pairs of partners in each centre arrangement are relatively new and most have not aligned their programme requirements or quality assurance procedures.

The centres have sound processes for gathering the views of trainees, school mentors and university tutors to inform self-evaluation. They have quality assurance systems in place, but there is limited analysis of university-based training. Many middle leaders do not improve quality by sharing and monitoring best practice effectively enough among colleagues. This means that trainees receive a variable training experience.

Generally, there are good opportunities for mentors to receive training to ensure they have effective skills and current knowledge of initial teacher training programmes. However, a few mentors do not attend mentor training and do not have opportunities to moderate their judgements with a member of the university staff. This leads to inconsistency in the assessment of trainees' performance.

Overall, tutors are well qualified and are deployed appropriately. However, a few tutors do not have sufficient knowledge of current school practice to prepare trainees in some aspects of the programme effectively.

Welsh for adults

There are six Welsh for adults regional centres in Wales. This year, we inspected the North Wales Centre, which covers an area from Ynys Môn in the west to Wrexham in the east. The centre works in partnership with eight providers across the whole of north Wales. All providers offer a wide range of Welsh courses, from beginners' course to advanced courses. The centre also offers a good range of Welsh in the workplace courses.

The inspection report can be downloaded [here](#).

The report below draws from inspection information and visits made during the year to other regional centres.

Outcomes

In the North Wales region, nearly all learners are making good progress in their lessons. They show high levels of motivation, work together well, persevere and have good independent learning skills. They watch Welsh television programmes and use the internet. Many keep in touch with one another in Welsh using electronic communication on the internet. They continue with their studies outside the classroom by attending day-schools, summer schools and two-day courses. Wherever possible, they use Welsh in their everyday lives and in their work.

However, learning is often overly driven by examination requirements that put too much emphasis on grammatical correctness and gaining a qualification rather than producing confident communicators. In the few good cases, learners develop the ability to communicate effectively by practising their skills in everyday situations. The North Wales centre works very effectively with a range of partners to arrange a good variety of extra-curricular experiences, and this has increased greatly over the last three years. As a result, an excellent range of learning opportunities is available.

The extra-curricular courses include Paned a Sgwrs (Cuppa and a Chat), Mynd am dro bach (Going for a little walk), Gweithdy Coginio (Cookery Workshop), and social evenings.

In the North Wales region, learners who are almost fluent improve their skills by attending chat and story classes, or through studying Welsh history and Welsh literature.

More generally however, learners in other regions do not develop an understanding of Welsh culture or the history of the Welsh language and there is a shortage of resources to support these aspects of learning the language.

Provision

Regional centres and their partners often work well together to plan a broad curriculum that often includes a good variety of formal and informal learning. The centres try to ensure that there is a suitable range of courses available within easy travelling distance for learners, such as beginners' level courses and courses on higher levels of proficiency, in most areas.

The tutors at the North Wales centre plan their work well. They use a wide range of effective learning activities, for example drilling new language, watching and listening, oral work in pairs, reading dialogues, comprehension and writing. They use a good range of teaching resources in their lessons, including flash cards, clothes, props and appropriate work sheets. All tutors make very good use of the Welsh language for teaching and communicating with learners at an appropriate level. They

introduce new vocabulary effectively and intervene well to help learners understand new language patterns. Most tutors present their lessons with enthusiasm and energy. However, this good practice is not as evident in the work of other centres, particularly at entry level, and there is little excellent teaching.

In general, most tutors make good use of homework tasks to improve learners' skills. Tutors offer detailed feedback to learners about their homework. They correct mistakes, orally and in writing. However, only a few tutors give advice on how to improve work further. In a few cases, tutors have a good understanding of the standards achieved by individual learners in formal assessments. However, in general, tutors do not use these assessments well enough to offer feedback to learners on their progress and help them to recognise their

achievements, or propose the next steps to improve their performance.

Many Welsh for adults centres have developed a range of innovative Welsh e-learning courses. These courses help learners to develop and practise their Welsh skills outside Welsh lessons. The South-West Wales centre has recently introduced a 'combi' course, where learners are given e-learning materials to study for three hours prior to attending a three hour weekly course at the centre. However, few tutors use DVDs or clips from Welsh television programmes in lessons to enhance learners' understanding and awareness of Wales. Only a few of the best tutors use audio and visual clips effectively to develop learners' viewing and listening skills and there is limited use of such technology as interactive white boards.

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“Many Welsh for adults centres have developed a range of innovative Welsh e-learning courses. These courses help learners to develop and practise their Welsh skills outside Welsh lessons.”

Leadership and management

Leadership and management at all levels are excellent in the North Wales centre. There are clear and robust structures to ensure continuous improvement. The centre is self-critical and makes very good use of data to improve results. The quality of leadership and management systems in other centres is more variable.

In general, Welsh for adults regional centres use a range of evidence well to analyse the differences between the performances of different groups of learners. For example, the North Wales centre analysed a range of performance data effectively. It found that men's performance had improved over the last three years and is now at the same level as the performance of women. Its analysis also found that there was no difference between the performance of learners over the age of 60 and that of other age groups across a range of courses. The centre also

studied how deprivation affects learners' progress and found that learners across all levels of deprivation succeed well. However, the progression routes taken by learners are not monitored well by most centres.

The North Wales centre has excellent systems for improving quality. It has a high quality self-evaluation system that listens to a wide range of stakeholders' opinions. It also has very good systems for monitoring and sharing best practice in learning and teaching. The majority of staff have appropriate qualifications and experience for the courses that they teach. All providers offer a good range of training opportunities to their staff. However, not all centres have such robust systems and monitoring of sessions often results in evaluation that is too generous.

The North Wales centre has established a strong relationship with its stakeholders and takes good advantage of the expertise of third party providers. The centre holds extensive consultation and includes partners' views when determining its strategic direction. It also works together with the Mid Wales centre on strategic planning, quality control, training and planning provision. However, not all centres have such effective partnership working.

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“In general, Welsh for adults regional centres use a range of evidence well to analyse the differences between the performances of different groups of learners.”

Learning in the justice sector

This year we inspected learning across the whole of the Wales Probation Trust. We inspected skills provision on probation premises and the learning that is available during community punishments like Community Payback (unpaid work). We also judged how well learning needs are met in accredited offending behaviour programmes.

Outcomes

Attainment rates are high across the Trust. Nearly all learners in skills classes attain literacy and numeracy certificates, because most take qualifications that are too easy for them. This affects their motivation and limits the progress they make with their learning.

Most learners on Community Payback complete useful qualifications, such as grass strimming, first aid and building site safety. However, as these qualifications are all at level 1, the majority of learners do not all take qualifications at the right level to suit their needs. In the majority of Community Payback placements, learners gain work-related experience in settings where there are clear rules. Learners improve their punctuality, team working and communication skills.

A few learners find and keep employment or a place within further education. A few move into paid employment after taking part in temporary job experience projects or carry on as volunteers in the charities where they serve their probation orders. However, overall, too few learners continue into paid employment or relevant education and training.

Provision

The Trust provides only an adequate range of learning and training activities. The focus of these activities is too narrow. They place too much emphasis on gaining accredited units through the completion of workbooks rather than offering a range of relevant learning activities.

The Trust successfully makes accredited units and qualifications available for the practical skills that learners develop on Community Payback, although the majority of these are only offered at level 1. There are good opportunities for learners to develop skills that may lead to employment, such as those gained on placements in charity shops, and in environmental projects. However, across the Trust these placements are not wide ranging enough, and opportunities for learners to gain employment are limited. The Trust does not use labour market information well enough when planning Community Payback placements.

Overall, probation officers do not always do enough to engage learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. They miss too many opportunities to develop these skills during other probation programmes.

In accredited offending behaviour programmes, staff adapt sessions well to meet the learning needs of participants. However, a minority of programmes have a high dropout rate. The Trust does not evaluate whether all participants understand the programmes well enough.

Leadership and management

Many probation staff understand the important role of learning and skills in reducing re-offending. However, the Trust's strategic plans do not say clearly enough what they will do to carry learning and skills forward.

Systems to monitor the quality and outcomes of learning and skills are poor. The Trust does not produce a self-assessment report or monitor the quality of the provision that it commissions.

The Trust has made good use of additional funding to develop learning and skills. However, the future funding of a number of programmes is uncertain. The Trust has not reviewed the impact of this. As a result, there are shortcomings in the planning of future provision.

There are good examples of staff receiving training to help them identify and address learning needs more effectively.

For example, many Community Payback staff complete basic teaching qualifications. Other staff attend training on supporting learners with specific learning needs. However, there has been no overall analysis of what training would help staff improve learning and skills outcomes for probation clients.

The Trust has developed good relationships with a number of partners. However, the Trust has not developed good strategic links with local employers or businesses that could improve employment outcomes for learners.

This year we also joined HMI Probation on inspections. These joint inspection reports can be downloaded here:

A report on offender management in Wales:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmiprobation/adult-inspection-reports/omi2/wales-omi2.pdf>

Transitions: An inspection of the transitions arrangements from youth to adult services in the criminal justice system:

http://www.hmcpsi.gov.uk/cjji/inspections/inspection_no/576/