

# Section 2: Sector report

Annual Report 2010-2011



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# Primary schools

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In January 2011, there were 1,435 primary schools in Wales. This is 27 fewer than in January 2010 when there were 1,462 schools. There were 259,189 pupils in primary schools in January 2011, an increase from 257,445 in the previous year. This is the first increase in primary pupil numbers since 1998.

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected 238 primary schools. Performance is good or better overall in four-fifths of these schools. It is excellent overall in 5% of primary schools. Performance is adequate in 19% and unsatisfactory in 2% of primary schools.

Judgements about current performance are based on the judgements made on the three key questions, outcomes, provision and leadership and management.

Prospects for improvement represent inspectors' confidence in the provider's ability to drive its own improvement in the future. Prospects for improvement are good or better in almost three-quarters of primary schools and excellent in 8%. Prospects are adequate in 22% and unsatisfactory in 3% of primary schools.

Around 23% of primary schools need follow-up visits by Estyn, including 5% that are causing serious concern. Four primary schools require special measures, eight need significant improvement and 43 require an Estyn monitoring visit. A further 21% gained largely 'good' inspection judgements, but have one or more important areas for improvement. We have asked local authorities to report back to us in detail on the progress made by these 51 schools.

In the schools requiring special measures:

- current performance and prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory;
- the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels in end-of-key-stage assessments is well below that of similar schools;
- teachers do not provide enough challenge for pupils in lessons;
- leadership and strategic direction are weak and leaders do not challenge underperformance;
- self-evaluation and improvement planning lack rigour; and
- little progress has been made since the previous inspection.

In schools identified as needing significant improvement or Estyn monitoring, the most common shortcomings are as follows:

- standards, teaching and learning experiences are no better than adequate;
- leadership has significant shortcomings and governors rarely challenge performance; and
- prospects for improvement are either adequate or unsatisfactory due to poor leadership.

Many schools needing local authority monitoring have good standards and prospects for improvement. However, new self-evaluation and school improvement processes have yet to have an impact on outcomes.

## Outcomes

Standards are generally good or better in about four-fifths of the primary schools inspected.

In many schools, there is a trend of steady improvement and most pupils make good progress and achieve well across most areas of the curriculum. Many attain the expected level in National Curriculum assessments at the end of key stage 2. In the majority of these schools, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level at the end of the key stage 2 is consistently high.

In a very few schools, standards are excellent. In these schools, nearly all pupils make very good progress from the level of their attainment on entry and when compared to the progress made by pupils in

similar schools. In these excellent schools, pupils become confident working with little supervision from teachers. Pupils take part in thoughtful and constructive discussions and can read, write and use number skills well in different situations and subjects across the curriculum.

In around four-fifths of schools, most pupils make good progress in developing their speaking, listening, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. However, in around 30% of schools, standards of reading and writing remain a concern.

In many schools, pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in developing their speaking, listening, reading and

mathematical skills. Pupils become increasingly independent and use their thinking skills well. However, in the Foundation Phase, in nearly a quarter of schools inspected, pupils' written work is full of simple spelling and punctuation mistakes and they do not write enough at length. At key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils' writing across the curriculum is also weak. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils do not develop higher-order reading skills such as skimming and scanning well enough and find it difficult to extract relevant information from a range of sources. In too many schools, pupils do not make enough progress in developing their reading and writing skills across the curriculum. In just over 30% of primary school inspection reports this year,

there were recommendations to improve standards in English or Welsh first language.

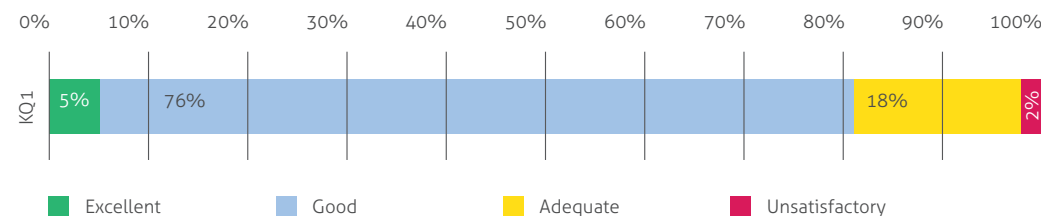
In around four-fifths of schools, pupils acquire good numeracy skills in their mathematics lessons. However, in only around two-fifths of schools can pupils apply these numeracy skills confidently in other areas of the curriculum. In a minority of schools, key stage 2 pupils' ability to think and learn independently is not strong enough.

### Closing the gap

**Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Garw** has used a combination of effective strategies to close the gap between girls' and boys' attainment.

For more information about this, please refer to the *case study*.

Figure 2.1: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



The standards achieved by pupils entitled to free school meals are adequate or better in many schools. Nevertheless, in around 30% of schools, this group of pupils still do not achieve as well as they should. The gap between their performance and that of other pupils remains too wide.

In many schools, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in relation to their abilities.

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*“In the majority of schools, pupils participate well in community activities, for example as school councillors or as members of an eco-committee.”*

Overall, boys continue to achieve less well than girls, particularly in English, although there are some individual schools where this is not the case. In one-in-ten schools, boys are not achieving at the expected level for their age in English. Where boys do better, their schools tend to:

- offer targeted and varied support for literacy skills;
- emphasise competitive team activity in the curriculum;
- use customised information and communication technology curriculum software;
- have out-of-school-hours practical activities that develop oracy;
- use males as role models; and
- involve parents and carers systematically in learning activities such as reading.

In the majority of schools, pupils' Welsh second language standards are good. Their Welsh speaking, listening and reading skills are developing well. In the Foundation Phase, particularly, many pupils make good progress in using Welsh. However, at key stage 2, in a significant minority of schools, pupils do not continue to develop their Welsh skills well enough.

The quality of pupils' wellbeing is good or better in nearly all primary schools. Pupils feel safe and in most schools pupils behave well. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning and are enthusiastic and well motivated.

Nearly all pupils understand what they need to do to be healthy. They know about the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. Many attend a good range of extra-curricular activities to keep themselves fit.

Attendance rates – at 93% – have changed very little over the last six years. As in previous years, attendance is worse in areas of social and economic disadvantage. There is a clear link between high absence rate and low standards in the schools inspected this year.

In nearly all schools, pupils show respect, care and concern for others. In the majority of schools, pupils participate well in community activities, for example as school councillors or as members of an eco-committee. However, in about a third of schools, pupils play too small a role in making decisions, especially decisions about how and what they learn.

#### Improving pupils' wellbeing – get a Voice

The work of the VOICE Team at **Glan Usk Primary School**, Newport has improved pupils' wellbeing and standards in learning across the whole school.

For more information about this, please refer to the *case study*.



## Provision

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

Learning experiences are good or better in about three-quarters of schools. In most of these schools, well-planned lessons build systematically on what pupils know and can do. Most of these schools meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and staff provide pupils with a good range of interesting learning experiences.

In language, mathematics and information and communication technology lessons, the majority of schools plan carefully to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills. In a few schools, there is a strong focus on

applying these skills in all learning experiences, but only a minority of schools plan systematically to develop reading, writing and thinking across all areas of the curriculum.

In around one-in-ten schools, teachers do not adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the most and least able pupils. They do not set tasks that extend the most able and other tasks to support the less able. Generally, teachers are better at supporting the less able than they are at stretching the more able pupils.

In many schools, provision for speaking and reading Welsh second language is good in Welsh lessons. However, in key stage 2, provision for writing in Welsh and the use

of the language in other lessons is limited. Many schools develop pupils' awareness of environmental and global issues well.

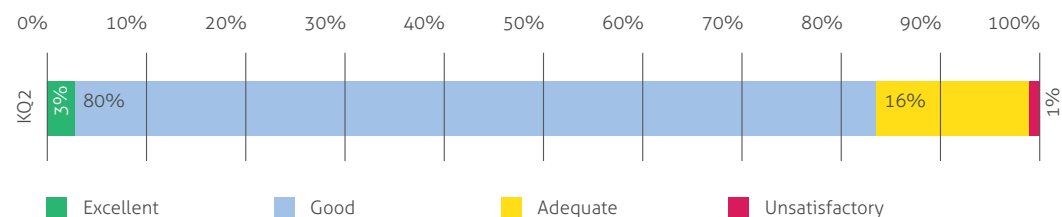
Many schools deliver the Foundation Phase curriculum through a carousel of activities that go on continuously. In the best practice, the activities have a clear purpose. The content and level of support match children's needs. However, where activities are poorly planned, children may look busy but they make little progress. They are repeating activities without extending their knowledge and understanding.

Teaching is consistently good or better overall in many schools. In the very few schools where teaching is consistently excellent, all staff have very high

expectations and use varied and innovative strategies to engage and challenge pupils. However, in around a fifth of schools, teaching is generally no better than adequate. In these schools, the pace of lessons is too slow and there is too much use of worksheets. As a result, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply and develop skills independently. In around a fifth of schools, teachers do not challenge more able learners enough in classroom discussion.

In almost half of the schools inspected, some or many aspects of assessment are weak. Most schools have appropriate assessment policies, but teachers do not always apply them consistently. Teachers generally give pupils comments on the quality of their

Figure 2.2: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



work, but they do not always show pupils how to improve their work. In a few schools, pupils' work is not marked regularly enough. The majority of teachers use what they know from marking pupils' work to plan lessons. They increasingly involve pupils in assessing their own progress. The majority of teachers use tracking systems to record progress.

Many schools have good arrangements to assess pupils' work at the end of key stages. Schools liaise well with other local schools to organise joint arrangements. However, in around a quarter of schools, teachers' end-of-key-stage assessments are not accurate enough.

Care, support and guidance are strengths in nearly all schools. Schools have effective arrangements to support pupils' health and wellbeing. Nearly all schools promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development successfully and most establish a strong culture of mutual respect and honesty.

Most schools have good procedures for helping pupils with additional learning needs and use specialist services well to support these pupils. A minority of schools do not monitor the progress of pupils on intervention programmes closely enough.

Nearly all schools have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. These schools promote equality and recognise and respect diversity. A very few schools have not adapted their local authority's generic safeguarding policies to meet their needs. In these cases, safeguarding policies do not cover all statutory requirements and not all staff are aware of the appropriate procedures for reporting concerns.

Most schools make good or better use of their accommodation and resources to support learning. A few schools make outstanding use of outside areas, such as local allotments, community facilities or woodlands, to enhance pupils' learning opportunities. The use of the outdoor environment has improved significantly

to help children learn in the Foundation Phase. However, around one-in-ten schools do not make enough use of the outdoors for play and independent learning in the Foundation Phase.

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*“Nearly all schools promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development successfully and most establish a strong culture of mutual respect and honesty.”*

## Leadership and management

Leadership is good or better overall in three-quarters of the schools inspected. In around one-in-ten, leadership is excellent. In these schools, leaders have high expectations and focus strongly on improving standards and quality.

Many schools have appropriate performance-management systems. However, in around a quarter of primary schools, senior managers do not address the underperformance of individual teachers well enough.

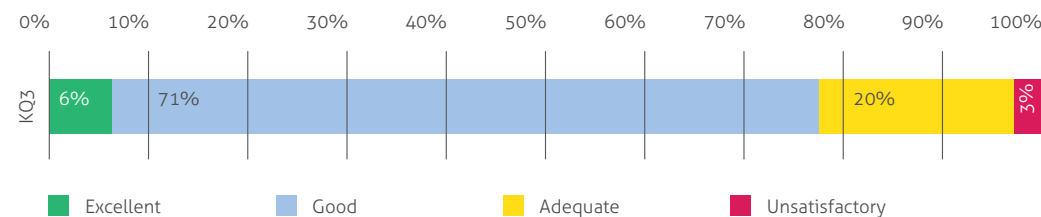
In many cases, school governors provide effective support to the headteacher and are actively involved in setting the direction for their school. They are well informed about improvement priorities and manage budgets appropriately. In more than a quarter of schools, some aspects of governors' work are weak. In these schools, governors generally know too little about the relative performance of their school and they do not challenge senior managers robustly enough.

About two-thirds of schools have good procedures to improve quality but there are shortcomings in nearly a third. Where there are shortcomings, senior managers do not take account of first-hand evidence from lesson observations and focus too much on provision and policies rather than on the standards that pupils actually achieve. Often, weaknesses identified in self-evaluation reports are not addressed in the school's improvement plan. For example, while senior managers may analyse performance data carefully, they do not use the findings to identify exactly what needs to improve. In the majority of these weaker schools, recommendations from previous inspection reports have not been addressed well.

In the very few schools where the focus on improvement is excellent, training and development are all about the impact on pupils. Many schools work in clusters and at local authority level to raise standards. However, in around a third of schools, arrangements to promote good practice are weak. There remains too much variation in standards of delivery within schools, from class to class.

Partnership working is good or better in almost all schools inspected this year. Nearly all schools have strong relationships with parents, carers and the local community, although their involvement with improving the learning of pupils is more variable. Most schools work with a wide range of agencies to support vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs. In a few schools, such partnerships have helped to improve attendance rates.

Figure 2.3: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?





Most schools use a good range of resources appropriately. Most schools have good professional development arrangements that link well to local and national priorities. However, in around a third of schools, the links between the school's improvement plan, performance-management arrangements and professional development opportunities are weak. In these schools, for example, whole-school training does not focus directly on priorities identified in school improvement plans.

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

- pupils do not make enough progress;
- funding is not directed at what needs to improve; or
- headteachers and governors do not monitor the impact of spending on outcomes carefully.

At the end of 2010-2011<sup>1</sup>, 8% of primary schools had a deficit amounting to three million pounds. A further 18% of primary schools had reserves greater than 10% of their delegated schools expenditure, amounting to 17 million pounds.

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*“However, in around a third of schools, the links between the school's improvement plan, performance-management arrangements and professional development opportunities are weak.”*

<sup>1</sup> SDR 188/2011: Reserves held by schools in Wales at 31 March 2011 Welsh Government, 25 October 2011 <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/localgov2011/111025/?lang=en>

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# Secondary schools

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In January 2011, there were 222 secondary schools in Wales. This is one fewer than in January 2010. There were 201,230 pupils in secondary schools in January 2011, a drop of 2,677 from January 2010.

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected 31 secondary schools. Performance is good or better overall in 65% of these secondary schools. It is excellent overall in 13% of these schools. Performance is adequate in 32% and unsatisfactory in 3% of secondary schools.

Prospects for improvement are good or better in 84% of secondary schools and excellent in 23%. Prospects are adequate in 16% of secondary schools.

Around 23% of secondary schools need follow-up visits by Estyn. One of these schools needs significant improvement and another six require an Estyn monitoring visit. A further 19% gained largely 'good' inspection judgements, but have one or more important areas for improvement. We have asked local authorities to report back to us in detail on the progress made by these six schools.

In the schools in need of significant improvement or requiring an Estyn monitoring visit, standards and teaching are only adequate. In these schools, performance in external examinations in key stage 4 is lower than that in similar schools. In many of these schools:

- attendance is worse than that in similar schools;
- pupils make slower than expected progress in lessons and do not develop their skills enough, especially their literacy and thinking skills;
- there is a larger than expected gap between the performance of boys and girls;
- co-ordination of provision for skills is often poor;
- a minority of teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils; and
- there are marked inconsistencies in assessment.

The schools in need of local authority monitoring have good prospects for improvement, even though standards are not yet as good as they could be. In these schools, there is a rising trend in performance.

## Outcomes

Standards are good or better overall in about three-fifths of the secondary schools inspected. They are excellent in about one-in-eight schools.

In the schools with excellent standards, pupils achieve outstanding results in external examinations when compared with those in similar schools and measured against pupils' attainment on entry to the school. In these schools, the gap between the performance of boys and girls is smaller than in most schools. Also, in these schools, pupils make particularly good progress in lessons and develop and use their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.

In most schools, pupils make generally good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. In schools where standards are adequate or unsatisfactory, performance in external examinations compared with that in similar schools is weak and there are shortcomings in pupils' literacy skills.

Pupils in most schools listen well in lessons and are responsive, although in about one-in-ten schools their responses are too brief and superficial. Many pupils can extract and interpret information well. Many pupils also write well for a wide variety of purposes and audiences and make suitable use of subject-specific vocabulary. However, in about a quarter of schools, standards in writing are not as good as in other aspects of literacy.

In these cases, pupils do not develop their extended writing skills enough and there are too many weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Numeracy skills are weak in about a fifth of schools inspected because pupils do not apply the skills they learn in mathematics to other subjects.

Pupils with additional learning needs generally perform relatively well. In about a sixth of schools, pupils entitled to free school meals do not progress as well as they should. In about a third of schools, the gap in performance between boys and girls is significantly greater than national averages.

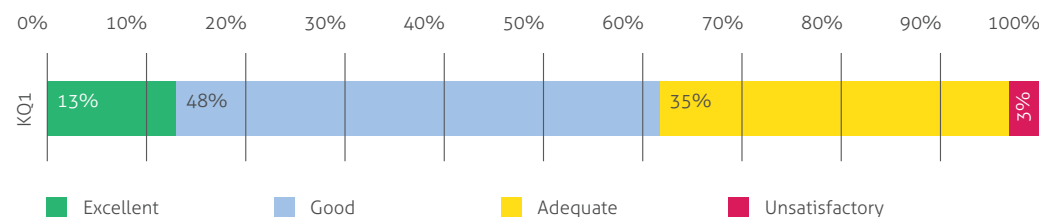
### Improving pupils' literacy skills

#### Sandfields Comprehensive School

adopted a systematic whole-school approach to improve the reading ages of key stage 3 pupils. This work had a significant impact on pupils' literacy skills.

For more information about this, please refer to the *case study*.

Figure 2.4: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



Pupils make good or better progress in developing their Welsh language skills in many Welsh-medium schools, but in only a minority of English-medium schools. They make very good progress in Welsh second language in about one-in-ten schools. In the majority of English-medium schools, standards are no better than adequate and pupils do not use skills they have learned in their Welsh lessons enough elsewhere. In about a quarter of schools inspected, the proportion of pupils entered for a recognised qualification in Welsh second language in key stage 4 is much lower than the Wales average.

Most pupils feel safe in school, understand how to be healthy and take part in a broad range of physical activities. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good or better in many schools and very good in about a third of schools. However, in just under a fifth of schools there is low-level disruption by a few pupils.

Attendance rates for secondary schools for 2010-2011 improved slightly compared with those of the previous year. Boys attend school more regularly than girls. Attendance rates continue to be lower than England. In 2009-2010, the most recent year for which comparative data is available, attendance rates in England were around two percentage points higher than in Wales.

In many schools, pupils develop their life and social skills well. They are appropriately involved in community activities and in making decisions about various aspects of school life, such as improving the environment as part of the school council's work. In a few schools, pupils' involvement in the life and work of the school is especially strong. In these schools, pupils have a significant role in self-evaluation activities and in the process of developing school improvement plans. However, in a few schools, pupils are not involved enough in making such decisions.

In the few schools where wellbeing is excellent, pupils' behaviour and attendance are particularly good and they work very hard. In the very few schools where wellbeing is no better than adequate, attendance is poor and there is too much disruptive behaviour by a small minority of pupils.

## Provision

Provision is good or better overall in 87% of the schools inspected.

Learning experiences are good or better in about four-fifths of schools. At key stage 3, schools meet statutory requirements and most plan carefully for progression and continuity in subjects from key stage 2. Most schools already meet the new curriculum arrangements set out in the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure and provide a wide range of suitable academic and vocational options in key stage 4.

The curriculum at key stage 3 now gives much greater attention to skills and in a few schools there are innovative arrangements to link subjects to develop pupils' thinking and learning skills better. In an eighth of schools, there are sound procedures for developing pupils' skills, which teachers apply consistently across the curriculum. However,

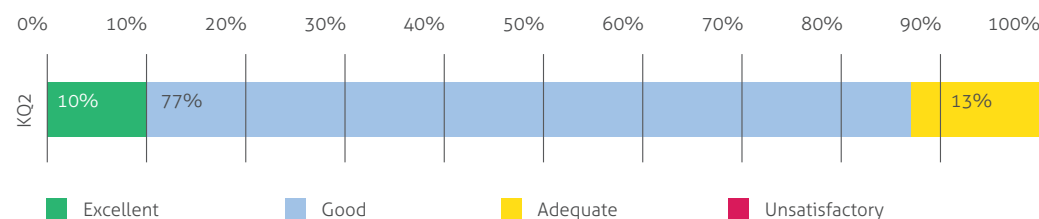
in a minority of schools, the co-ordination and monitoring of pupils' skills development across the curriculum are weak. In these cases, teachers might indicate in broad terms the skills that will feature in their lessons but have no clear strategies to strengthen these skills. In a few cases, the planned development of skills is confined to a minority of subjects.

In the majority of schools, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and reinforce their Welsh-language skills outside Welsh lessons. In about half of schools, education for sustainable development and global citizenship is good, although very few have excellent provision that is embedded across the school.

Teaching is good or better overall in about two-thirds of schools. In the few schools with excellent teaching:

- consistent approaches to teaching are common across the school;
- classroom activities are challenging and motivating;
- teachers all have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve; and
- there is a strong focus on developing pupils' thinking skills through open-ended, probing and challenging questioning.

Figure 2.5: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



In a minority of schools where teaching is no better than adequate, there is too much variation in teaching methods and approaches. Teachers provide too little challenge and do not match work to pupils' needs and abilities.

In most schools, systems for tracking pupils' progress are generally good. In the few schools where marking is very good, there is a consistent practice across departments with teachers providing useful comments that help pupils to improve their work. However, in the majority of schools, the marking of pupils' work is too inconsistent. Where marking is inadequate, it does not help pupils understand how well they are doing or tell them how to improve their work. Nor is there action to follow up on whether pupils have learned from the assessment of their work.

In nearly all schools, care, support and guidance are good or better. In the third of schools that have generally excellent provision, it has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attendance. In all schools, support for pupils with additional learning needs has strengths. Most schools make good use of specialist services such as the police, health,

psychological, counselling and social services to support more vulnerable pupils. In all schools, safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate. The information and advice offered to pupils are generally comprehensive, although in a few schools advice on options for the next stage of their education is not always impartial enough to help pupils to make the best choices.

In nearly all schools, an inclusive ethos and arrangements to promote equal opportunities and to recognise and respect diversity are significant strengths. Learning resources are generally appropriate and meet pupils' needs and curriculum requirements, although in only a sixth of schools do pupils have regular access to a sufficient number of up-to-date computers.

In around half of schools, there are shortcomings in the quality of accommodation. These are most commonly in the fabric of buildings and they are often worse in physical education, science and sixth-form study areas. Nearly all schools use their accommodation well.

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*“In the few schools where marking is very good, there is a consistent practice across departments with teachers providing useful comments that help pupils to improve their work.”*



## Leadership and management

Leadership is good or better overall in over four-fifths of schools. In one-in-six schools, leadership is excellent. These schools have:

- a clear strategic vision with a strong focus on outcomes;
- well-understood priorities based on a realistic analysis of first-hand evidence and performance data;
- a culture of collaboration, trust and accountability; and
- high expectations in all areas of work.

In most schools, staff know what their roles and responsibilities are, and leaders take direct action to improve standards, wellbeing and provision. In the few schools where leadership is only adequate, senior and middle managers do not pay enough attention to standards and teaching. In these schools, not all staff understand their roles well enough and managers do not tackle underperformance rigorously.

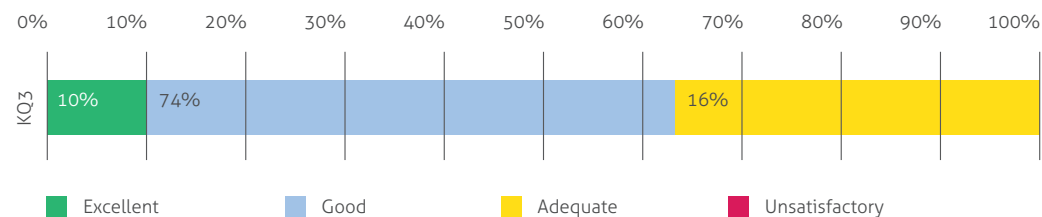
Governors provide suitable strategic direction and support in most schools and in about half they provide effective challenge. However, in a quarter of schools, governors do not use performance information well to hold the school to account.

Many schools take a systematic approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning. The majority of school improvement plans have challenging targets and identify intended outcomes. Most schools are developing in-school professional-development groups and working with clusters of schools to raise standards.

In schools where quality assurance is excellent, there has been a significant improvement in standards and provision. In these schools, departmental self-evaluation and planning for improvement show a high degree of consistency and involve pupils. In nearly a fifth of schools, where planning for improvement is only adequate:

- managers do not observe lessons enough;
- a minority of departments do not analyse data rigorously;
- self-evaluation does not identify areas for development clearly; and
- plans to improve do not address shortcomings or have challenging targets.

Figure 2.6: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



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*“In about a fifth of schools, a budget deficit is being brought under control. However, a very few schools inspected have a larger surplus than they need.”*

One-in-ten schools have a very clear vision of their role in working with partners. Their partnership work results in improving standards and wellbeing, especially for more vulnerable learners, and in improving the numbers that stay on in full-time education and training. Work with primary schools is good or better in nearly all secondary schools. In over a quarter of instances, these partnerships are particularly good and have a strong impact on continuity in learning for pupils when they move from primary to secondary school. Work with partner secondary schools and colleges to provide the expected range of course choices for 14 to 19-year-olds is good or better in nearly all

schools. In just over a third, careful planning enables a pooling of resources, a common curriculum and effective quality assurance. However, in about a sixth of schools that have a sixth form, post-16 provision does not give good value for money because there are too many small classes to make them viable. Overall, partnerships with work-based learning providers are few. In about a quarter of schools where partnership-working is otherwise good, procedures to evaluate the impact of partnership-working are not rigorous or effective enough.

Most schools manage financial matters well. Detailed budget planning and monitoring arrangements are now in place. Most schools allocate resources appropriately to identified priorities. In about a fifth of schools, a budget deficit is being brought under control. However, a very few schools inspected have a larger surplus than they need.

At the end of 2010-2011<sup>2</sup>, 25% of secondary schools had a deficit amounting to ten million pounds. A further 5% of secondary schools had reserves greater than 10% of their delegated schools expenditure, amounting to four million pounds.

<sup>2</sup> SDR 188/2011: Reserves held by schools in Wales at 31 March 2011 Welsh Government, 25 October 2011. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/localgov2011/111025/?skip=1&lang=en>

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# Maintained special schools

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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 2011, there were 43 maintained special schools in Wales. There were 4,181 pupils educated in special schools in January 2011, an increase from 4,117 in January 2010.

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected eight maintained special schools in Wales. Performance is good overall in five of the eight schools inspected. It is excellent in two special schools. Performance is adequate in one special school.

Prospects for improvement are excellent in six special schools and good in one. Prospects are adequate in one special school. One of the eight schools inspected this year requires Estyn monitoring because it is only adequate in many aspects of its work.

## Outcomes

Standards are good or better overall in seven of the eight schools inspected. In special schools for pupils who have the most complex learning disabilities, pupils achieve good or better standards and make good progress across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils in these schools achieve the learning targets set out in their individual education plans. Most pupils make progress in communication skills. Nearly all of these pupils also achieve good standards in information and communication technology, Welsh language and numeracy, and achieve qualifications at an appropriate level.

In one school for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, most pupils make adequate progress in developing their skills, often from a very low starting point. However, a significant minority of pupils in this school do not learn to listen well and do not achieve well enough across all the subjects in the curriculum.

Pupils' wellbeing is at least good in all the schools inspected. In half of the schools, it is excellent. Nearly all pupils, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, attend regularly unless they have periods of absence due to medical conditions. Almost all behave well and engage enthusiastically in learning.

Most pupils contribute actively to school life through their involvement in school councils and during day-to-day school activities. This involvement increases pupils' confidence and independence. They make good progress in developing an awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship.

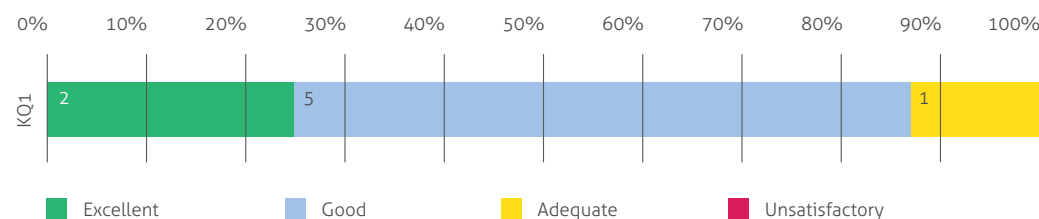
Nearly all pupils appreciate the value of exercise and healthy eating.

### Improving pupils' literacy skills

**Ysgol Ty Coch** successfully adapted the Welsh Government's thinking skills and assessment for learning programme to improve the communication skills of pupils with severe learning and physical difficulties and pupils with autism.

For more information about this, please refer to the case study '[Strong focus on pupils' learning needs](#)'

**Figure 2.7: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?**



## Provision

Provision is good overall in seven of the eight schools inspected.

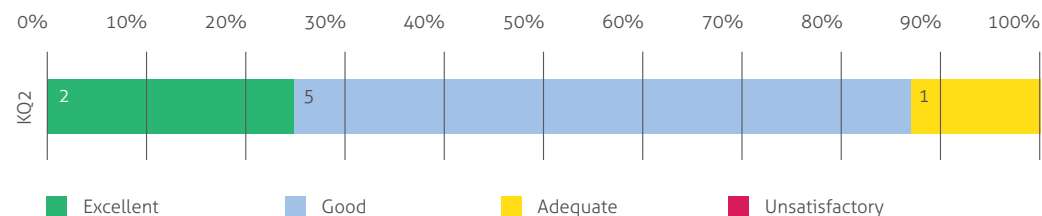
Most schools inspected provide a good range of learning experiences for their pupils within a broad and balanced curriculum. Almost all schools have made good progress in implementing 14-19 Learning Pathways. Pupils aged 14-19 choose from a wide range of options, including a good choice of vocational courses. Most schools collaborate well with other providers to meet the needs of all pupils effectively.

In most schools, teaching is at least good and, in two of the schools inspected, it is excellent. Teachers understand pupils' individual needs and use assessment outcomes carefully to plan work that matches pupils' abilities and interests very well.

However, in one school where teaching has shortcomings, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. In this school, pupils lose interest in tasks and do not achieve as well as they should. Assessment procedures are not used well to inform annual reviews and individual education plans or to lead to clear actions that help pupils make progress.

Provision for pupils' wellbeing is good or better in all of the schools inspected. In the majority of schools, it is excellent. Schools have good strategies to ensure that pupils feel safe and valued within a well-ordered and stimulating environment. Staff provide good care, support and guidance to pupils, which helps them to improve their behaviour and to overcome the difficulties that hold back their learning.

Figure 2.8: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management

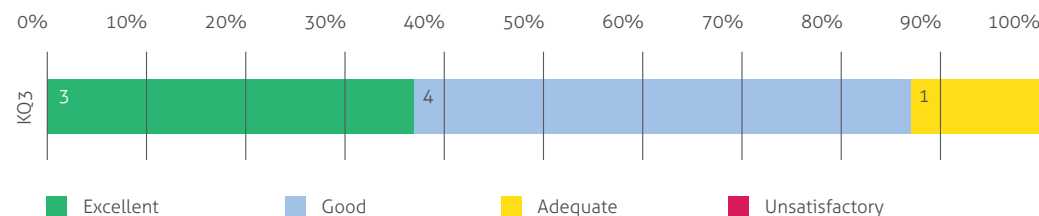
The quality of leadership and management is good or better in seven of the eight schools inspected this year. In three of the schools, leadership is excellent. In these schools, managers and governors use data well to measure pupils' progress. Improvement plans address priorities well. Managers give clear direction and make sure that everyone works effectively together. They check regularly that teaching is of good quality.

In a few schools, where leadership and management have shortcomings, managers and staff do not evaluate the school's work thoroughly. Self-evaluation does not focus on the quality of learning or the standards that pupils achieve. Governors do not challenge the school rigorously enough and leaders do not seek the views of all stakeholders.

Most schools have developed strong partnerships with other providers. They share the skills of their staff with mainstream schools and other special schools. Pupils have valuable opportunities to develop their skills in other settings such as schools, colleges and the local community. This helps them to gain a greater range of learning experiences and to find out about the world of work.

In most schools, leaders manage resources well. Staff are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning needs. Managers make sure that staff receive training in the most up-to-date practices in teaching, assessing and supporting pupils with very complex needs. In a few schools, managers do not deploy resources well enough and they do not know what training staff need.

**Figure 2.9: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**





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# Independent special schools

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In January 2011, there were 32 registered independent special schools in Wales. These schools educate approximately 500 pupils in total. Many of them are very small schools that educate fewer than 15 pupils.

Estyn carries out annual monitoring inspections of all independent special schools as the pupils in these schools are particularly vulnerable.

During 2010-2011, four small registered independent special schools opened and two others closed. All of these schools provide education for pupils in linked children's homes.

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected two independent special schools. Performance is adequate overall in one school we inspected and unsatisfactory in the other.

Prospects for improvement are adequate in one school and unsatisfactory in the other.

In all inspections of independent special schools, the inspection team makes a judgement on the extent to which the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

This year, one independent special school failed to meet a very few regulations relating to the suitability of premises and accommodation. The other school failed to comply with a significant number of regulations, including some that relate to the quality of education.

A further two independent special schools, which we visited as part of annual monitoring arrangements, had not taken enough account of Welsh Government guidance for safeguarding and for identifying risks when planning educational visits.

We shall revisit those schools that did not meet all of these regulations to make sure that they have made the necessary improvements to maintain registration.

## Outcomes

In one of the two schools we inspected this year, standards are unsatisfactory and in the other they are adequate. In these schools, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Their progress is not consistent and they attain few or no qualifications. In one of these schools, less able pupils do not improve their basic skills sufficiently and have poor information and communication technology skills.

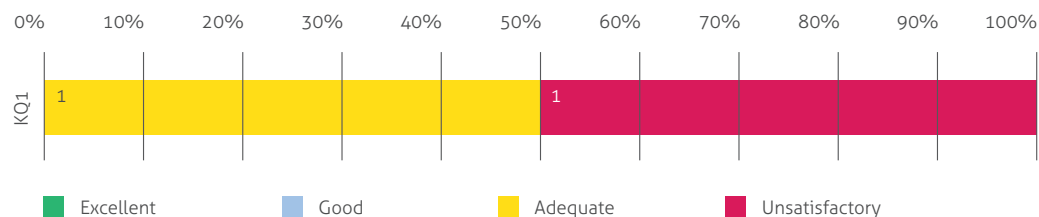
In a minority of the schools that we visited as part of our programme of annual monitoring, pupils are well motivated and attain appropriate qualifications in a range of subjects. In these schools, pupils make good progress in reading and writing. In a few schools, pupils develop valuable skills that prepare them well for independent living.

While pupils in most schools make progress in line with their abilities, the quality of their work is variable, often because they lack motivation to complete the tasks.

In a few independent special schools, attendance is good, and pupils are punctual to lessons and behave well. However, in a few other schools, pupils are not engaged enough and either misbehave in lessons or refuse to attend.

In almost all schools, pupils respond well and gain confidence when given opportunities to make suggestions about improving their school.

Figure 2.10: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision

Provision is adequate in one independent special school inspected this year and unsatisfactory in the other.

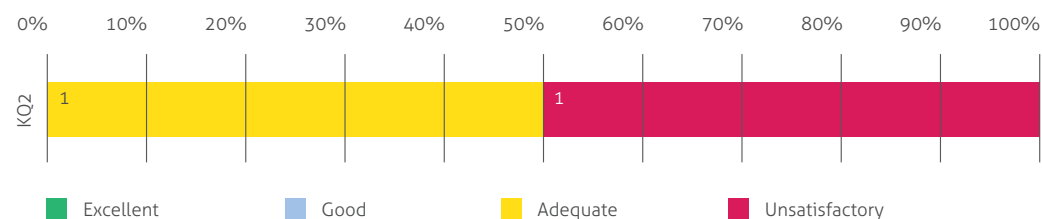
The majority of independent special schools visited as part of our programme of annual monitoring provide a broad curriculum and are steadily improving the opportunities for pupils to gain a range of appropriate qualifications. The two schools inspected this year do not provide their pupils with an appropriate curriculum. In one school, provision is unsatisfactory because pupils only spend about six hours each week with a teacher. This is not enough time for pupils to make good progress and to improve their skills. These schools do not provide pupils with opportunities or support to gain qualifications, for example at GCSE level.

In the schools inspected, teaching is no better than adequate. Assessment is weak and pupils' targets are too general to be useful. Teachers in these schools:

- do not identify pupils' individual learning needs precisely enough;
- do not challenge pupils adequately;
- do not plan carefully to develop pupils' skills in interesting contexts, particularly their skills in numeracy and information and communication technology; and
- do not use a wide enough range of strategies to support pupils to become independent learners.

One school provides a strong, inclusive and caring environment that encourages pupils to behave well. It ensures that pupils have appropriate resources and access to the support they need. In the other school, staff do not use appropriate strategies to challenge pupils' poor behaviour. In this school, resources are unsatisfactory and, in particular, pupils do not have enough access to information and communication technology.

Figure 2.11: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management

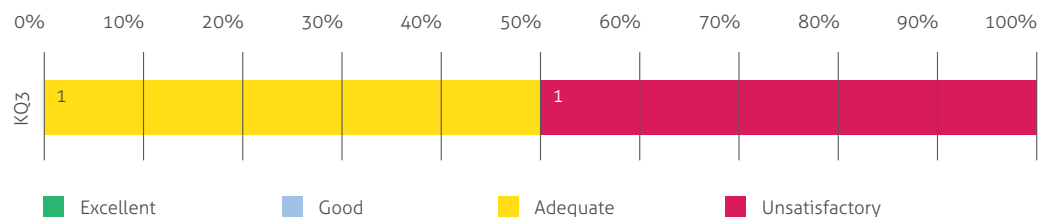
In one of the schools inspected, leadership is adequate and in the other it is unsatisfactory. In both schools, leaders and managers do not monitor teaching and learning well enough and there is not enough focus on improving standards.

In one school, while leaders and managers make some realistic judgements about standards and provision, they do not identify areas for improvement rigorously. Managers of the other school have a weak overview of provision. They have no clear strategy to identify the school's strengths or weaknesses and improvement planning is poor. This school does not provide value for money.

Both schools have links with local colleges and the careers service that benefit some individual pupils, but these links are not generally well developed. Partnership arrangements offer only limited opportunities for pupils to gain work experience.

Performance-management arrangements are weak in both schools. Neither school knows what staff need to do to improve their work. Professional development opportunities and arrangements to promote best practice are very limited.

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



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# Independent schools

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In January 2011, there were 34 independent mainstream schools in Wales.

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected six independent mainstream schools. These included one secondary, three primary and two all-age schools. Performance is excellent overall in one and good in three independent schools. Performance is adequate overall in two independent schools.

Prospects for improvement are excellent in two independent schools and good in one. Prospects are adequate in three independent schools.

Among the four schools judged good or better overall, there were schools that had shortcomings in one or more quality indicators.

In all inspections of independent schools, the inspection team makes a judgement on the extent to which the school complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

This year, three of the six independent schools inspected met all of these regulations. Where schools failed to meet a very few regulations, this was usually because they did not comply with regulations relating to the suitability of premises and accommodation. We shall revisit those schools that did not meet all of these regulations to make sure that they have made the necessary improvements to maintain registration.

## Outcomes

Standards are good or better in four of the six schools inspected. In all schools, pupils generally make good progress in their studies across the curriculum and in acquiring new skills. In about half of schools, pupils acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics they study and are well prepared for future learning. In one school, pupils apply their skills very well in new contexts and use prior learning effectively to make thoughtful connections to other topics.

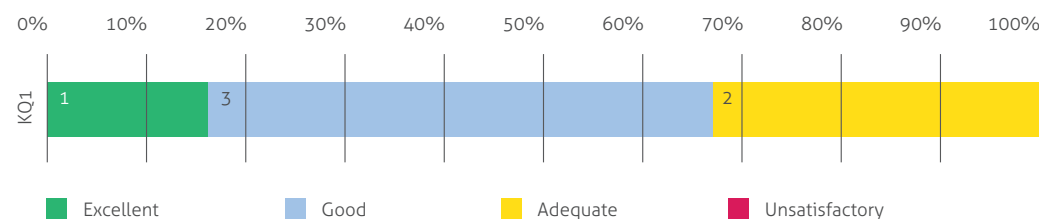
In all schools, pupils express their thoughts and opinions clearly using a good range of vocabulary. Most pupils read accurately, fluently, and with good understanding.

Standards of writing are more variable. In one school where standards are excellent, many pupils write in an increasingly sophisticated manner, for example to describe or analyse, or to argue a particular case. In many schools, pupils use imaginative vocabulary to describe their feelings and reactions. In a few schools, pupils' writing does not always reflect the high quality of their speaking and reading skills. This is because pupils do not develop well enough their ability to write at length, in different forms and for a range of purposes.

In five schools, pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills. In three of these schools, pupils apply these skills well in other contexts.

Pupils' wellbeing is good or better in all schools. Most pupils attend regularly, are well motivated and maintain good levels of concentration. Many pupils are mature and self-assured. Pupils generally make good progress in their personal, social and learning skills. In a minority of schools, pupils do not develop their problem-solving skills or ability to learn independently enough.

Figure 2.13: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?





## Provision

Provision overall is good or better in two schools inspected. In the other four schools, provision is adequate. In these schools, there are shortcomings in pupils' learning experiences or teaching.

Learning experiences are good in two of the six schools. Independent schools generally provide good opportunities for pupils of all abilities to obtain relevant qualifications and progress to the next stage of education or into employment. In three of the schools, extra-curricular activities contribute particularly well to broadening and enriching pupils' experiences. However, in three schools there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning. In two schools, work is not always matched well enough to pupils' learning needs.

Teaching is good in half the schools inspected. In these schools the most common features are:

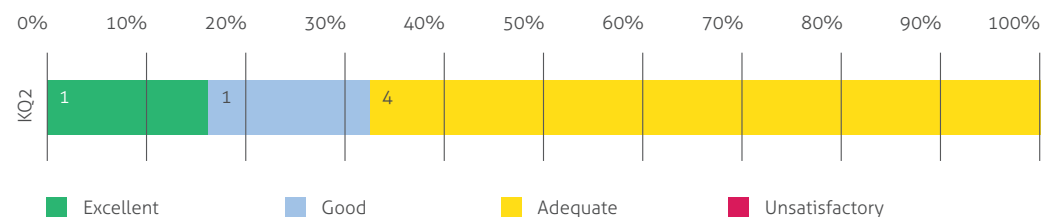
- high levels of mutual respect between teachers and pupils;
- the extensive subject knowledge of many teachers; and
- high expectations that motivate and challenge all pupils.

In schools where teaching has shortcomings, this is most commonly because:

- learning activities do not challenge pupils of all abilities appropriately;
- the slow pace of lessons restricts pupils' progress; and
- opportunities for pupils to develop independent-learning and decision-making skills are limited.

Many schools have effective care and support arrangements. They promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In one school, safeguarding arrangements were unsatisfactory.

Figure 2.14: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management

Leadership and management overall are at least good in three of the schools inspected. In the other three schools, leadership and management are adequate.

Leadership is good or better in half of the schools inspected. In two schools, where leadership is excellent and has led to high and improving standards, leaders:

- promote an ethos and values that influence all areas of school life;
- give firm direction to all aspects of the school's work; and
- communicate high expectations and provide rigorous challenge and extensive support to all staff.

Where there are shortcomings in leadership, this is most commonly because:

- roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined; and
- performance-management is not rigorous enough.

In the majority of cases, proprietors provide effective oversight of the school's work, are well informed about the school's performance and offer clear direction and challenge. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are good in half of the schools inspected. Two schools carry out comprehensive and robust analyses of performance data and rigorous reviews of all aspects of their work.

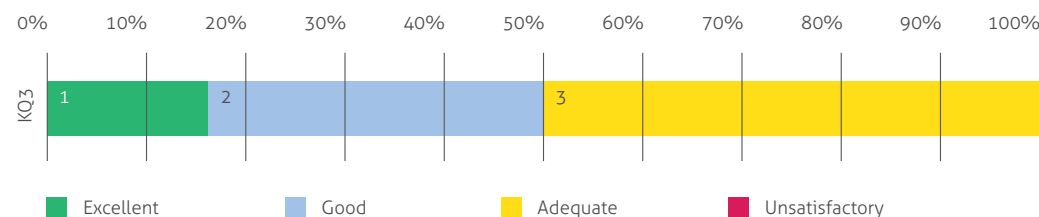
Leaders use the findings of these reviews to identify clear improvement priorities to which they allocate necessary resources.

In three schools, self-evaluation reviews do not identify strengths and areas for development accurately enough, mainly due to a lack of robust evidence about the quality of teaching and learning. Two schools have made only limited progress in improving provision and raising standards since the last inspection.

Many schools have established effective partnerships, for example with local business, sporting and cultural organisations, and these have a positive influence on pupil outcomes and wellbeing.

In many schools, proprietors and headteachers manage finances prudently and make efficient use of resources. Leaders ensure that funding is allocated appropriately to clearly identified priorities to improve provision and raise standards. In the majority of schools, there are good professional development arrangements that reflect whole-school and departmental priorities.

**Figure 2.15: Numbers of schools and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**



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# Independent specialist colleges

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Independent specialist colleges provide education and training for learners aged 18-25 years with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are three independent specialist colleges in Wales. Estyn monitors each college annually. The report below draws on these monitoring visits as there was no formal inspection of any specialist college in 2010-2011.

## Outcomes

Most learners enjoy their life at college. They learn to become more independent and make good progress, gaining a range of useful and appropriate qualifications such as ASDAN and Agored Cymru awards. Learners with complex needs develop their communication skills so that they can express themselves more effectively and have greater influence over their daily lives. More able learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills over time.

Many learners benefit from suitable opportunities to find out about the world of work. Learners regularly take part in decisions about college life. In one college, learners are involved in the recruitment of staff and comment on new policies.

All learners benefit from helpful advice about relationships, including sex education, and on how to keep themselves safe. They gain a better understanding of how they should behave in the community. Learners who do not manage their behaviour well gain more self-control and become calmer, and are involved in fewer incidents of poor behaviour. A few learners arrive late to sessions and occasionally a very few miss them altogether.

## Provision

The curriculum in all three colleges is generally appropriate and provides learners with opportunities to work on vocational courses such as horticulture, farming and carpentry. Learning experiences help learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to develop their independent living skills.

Most teaching in independent specialist colleges is good or better. Teachers plan their sessions carefully and provide interesting activities to engage learners and develop their skills. Most teachers manage behaviour well and challenge learners to do their best and achieve good results.

Teachers use assessment information well to make sure that the work they set is at the right level. They set suitable targets to help learners improve their skills and gain greater independence. Most teachers give learners good support in developing their communication skills. They adapt resources appropriately to make sure that all learners can take part fully in the sessions.

In a few cases, teachers do not set work that is challenging enough and give less able learners too much direction. Occasionally, because teachers do not use a suitable range of 'augmentative' communication such as signs and symbols that do not depend on using the spoken or written word, they do not ensure that all learners take part in their sessions.

Learners have access to a good range of therapies such as those for speech and language. They receive helpful individual support with particular personal issues. In all colleges, safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate.

Learners receive good personal and social education and are encouraged to treat each other with respect. They experience a wide range of suitable work-experience placements. For those who need more support, the colleges provide useful in-house placements that involve helping in the college office or café or looking after the building and grounds.

All college accommodation is good. Classrooms are attractive and welcoming.

“

*“Teachers plan their sessions carefully and provide interesting activities to engage learners and develop their skills.”*

## Leadership and management

Leaders and managers make sure that teachers and care staff work well together and share the same aspirations for learners. They observe lessons regularly to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. However, in two colleges, leaders and managers do not always use the findings from lesson observations as a basis to challenge teachers to improve.

Leaders and managers generally use the findings of self-evaluation carefully to make improvements. They usually seek the views of parents and carers and of staff, but do not always use this information to plan improvements. The targets they set are not always specific enough to allow them to monitor subsequent progress effectively.

Specialist colleges use data adequately to identify strengths and weaknesses so they can plan to raise standards and improve provision. However, they do not keep track carefully enough of learners' destinations or how well they settle into their new settings. They do not follow the progress of these learners to find out if the college has prepared them well enough for life in the community.

Colleges work well with a wide range of partners, including social services and the health and voluntary services, to widen opportunities and support for learners. For example, learners at one college work well with students from the art department of the University of Glamorgan on a joint project that explores the creative talents of learners with autistic spectrum disorder.

The colleges manage resources efficiently.

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*“The targets they set are not always specific enough to allow them to monitor subsequent progress effectively.”*

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# Pupil referral units

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Local authorities have a statutory duty to register pupil referral units with the National Assembly for Wales. There are currently 41 registered pupil referral units in Wales.

## Performance and prospects

This year we inspected two pupil referral units (PRUs). Performance is adequate overall in both PRUs.

Prospects for improvement are adequate in both PRUs.

Both PRUs inspected this year require follow-up activity. One PRU is in need of significant improvement. The other requires Estyn monitoring.

In one provider, teaching is unsatisfactory and in the other teaching is no better than adequate. In both providers, there are shortcomings in leadership and management, particularly in meeting pupils' additional learning needs, the use of data to track pupils' progress, and in the rigour of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

## Outcomes

Outcomes are good overall in one of the PRUs we inspected this year and adequate in the other.

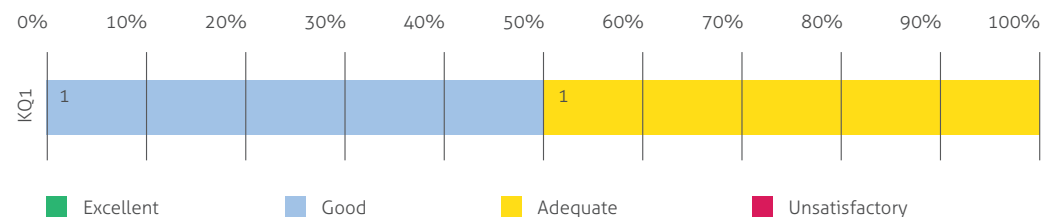
In these two PRUs, the majority of pupils achieve well. They gain a range of appropriate qualifications and improve their basic skills. Over time, they improve their attendance and behaviour and begin to learn to think about how they respond to and work with others.

However, a significant minority of pupils do not make enough progress, often due to poor attendance and persistent lateness in arriving at school and at lessons. A significant minority of pupils do not engage well in lessons, waste their time and distract others.

Generally, those who take up work experience enjoy it and gain useful skills that will help them in the world of work. However, despite having access to a range of useful work-experience placements, pupils in one PRU often do not attend the placements that have been set up for them.

Pupils understand the importance of healthy living and appreciate that exercise is good for them. They communicate well with staff to discuss and tackle important issues that worry them.

Figure 2.16: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision

Provision overall is adequate in both PRUs inspected this year.

Both PRUs provide the recommended 25 hours of full-time education, including outdoor pursuits. Both PRUs offer some good opportunities to learn about the language and culture of Wales. One PRU develops pupils' understanding of education for sustainable development and global citizenship appropriately.

Teachers manage behaviour well in most lessons. In the small proportion of classes where teaching is good, teachers set clear objectives, plan well, use a range of resources including information and communication technology, and match work to pupils' abilities.

Pupils receive useful advice and support to help them improve their wellbeing. Staff help pupils to recognise and value diversity. One PRU offers good sex education and access to therapies such as anger management. In both PRUs, safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate.

However, in both PRUs there are shortcomings in provision that limit pupils' progress. Too much teaching is no better than adequate. Learning activities do not focus enough on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Staff:

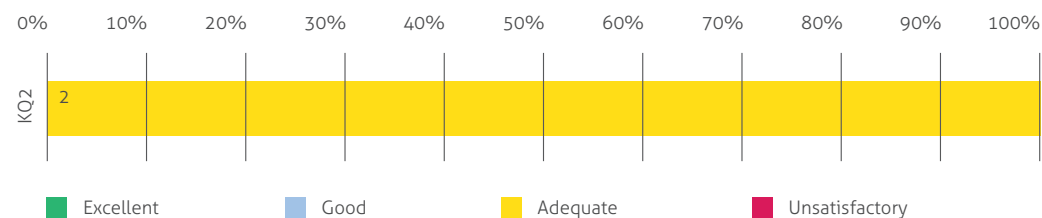
- do not consistently challenge poor behaviour or make enough use of sanctions;

- do not always set work that helps more able pupils develop their skills fully; and
- do not work well enough to meet pupils' additional learning needs.

Too many individual education plans do not include specific and measurable targets and teachers do not use the plans to set tailored work that would help pupils to make better progress.

In general, pupils do not have enough opportunities to take on responsibilities or make decisions about their work or about what and how they learn. One PRU has recently set up a school council but it is too early to judge the impact of its work.

Figure 2.17: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?





## Leadership and management

Leadership and management overall are adequate in both PRUs inspected this year.

Both PRUs work well with a wide range of partners to try to support pupils' needs and improve the quality of provision. PRUs' management committees work closely with the 14-19 networks to offer a range of courses options for pupils.

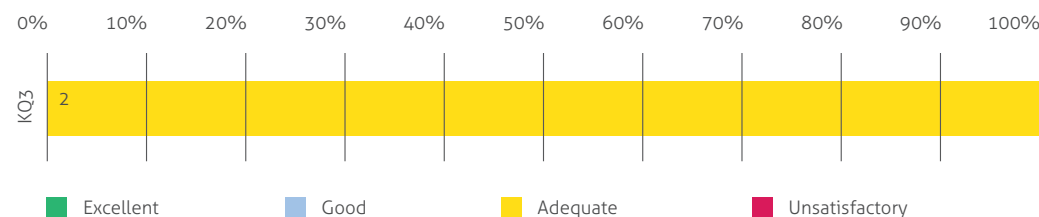
Both PRUs are beginning to use self-evaluation more appropriately to find what they need to do to improve provision and pupils' outcomes.

However, management committees:

- do not use data rigorously to track pupils' progress in the PRU or when they return to school;
- do not ensure that learning experiences address weaknesses in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills; and
- do not focus on supporting pupils' additional learning needs.

One local authority does not work closely with its PRUs and schools to help pupils go back to school and stay there. The management committee of the other PRU does not have wide representation from the community and has little influence on the local authority's decisions about the PRU. Staff are generally well qualified. Although managers regularly review how well staff are doing and provide useful training, this has not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching.

**Figure 2.18: Numbers of pupil referral units and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**



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# Settings<sup>3</sup> for children under five

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There are approximately 737<sup>4</sup> non-maintained settings providing education for children aged between three and five.

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected 115 non-maintained settings<sup>5</sup>. Performance is good or better overall in 90% of these settings. It is excellent in 3% of settings. Performance is adequate in 10% of settings.

Prospects for improvement are good or better in 93% of non-maintained settings and excellent in 8%. Prospects are adequate in 6% and unsatisfactory in 1% of settings.

Around 8% of non-maintained settings need follow-up visits by Estyn. One setting requires focused improvement<sup>6</sup>, and another eight need an Estyn monitoring visit. A further 9% gained largely 'good' inspection judgements, but have one or more important areas for improvement. We ask local authorities to report back to us in detail on the progress made by these ten settings.

In nearly all settings requiring focused improvement or Estyn monitoring, standards, learning experiences and teaching are no better than adequate. Provision for developing skills, particularly early reading and writing skills, is not good enough to ensure that all children progress as well as they could. Planning and teaching do not provide enough challenge for many older and more able children. In almost all cases, leadership and quality improvement have shortcomings. In many cases, self-evaluation processes are too informal and do not focus enough on improving standards.

In many settings needing local authority monitoring, there are shortcomings in teaching and the curriculum. However, these settings generally have good prospects for improvement. This is the result of work with local authority advisory teachers to develop the skills of staff in improving provision and outcomes for children.

<sup>3</sup> This term refers to providers of education for three-year-olds that are not maintained by a local authority.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> In small settings where there are fewer than six children attending, inspectors report on provision and leadership only. This is to avoid identifying individual children in reports.

<sup>6</sup> Settings placed in this level of follow-up activity are failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and leaders do not demonstrate the capacity to secure the necessary improvements.

## Outcomes

In the settings inspected, most children achieve at least good standards across almost all areas of learning and make suitable progress in their learning from the time that they enter the setting.

In most settings, children listen well and respond enthusiastically to stories, rhymes and songs. Children talk eagerly about what they have done. Many show an interest in books, experiment enthusiastically with a range of tools to make marks and use appropriate counting skills. Generally, children's skills in information and communication technology are not as well developed as their other skills.

In a very few settings, children's standards are excellent. In these settings, nearly all children show high levels of independence and self-confidence, and persevere in their learning.

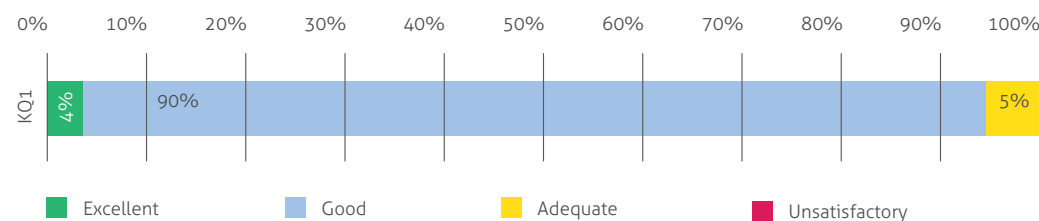
In about half of English-medium settings, children do not make enough progress in Welsh. Although many children respond appropriately to the use of Welsh during whole-group sessions they generally lack confidence in using Welsh spontaneously in their play.

Children's wellbeing is a strength in almost all settings. Nearly all children apply themselves well to learning activities, play co-operatively with other children and show a good understanding of rules and routines. Most children know the importance of eating healthily and can describe changes to their bodies when they are physically active.



*“Generally, children’s skills in information and communication technology are not as well developed as their other skills.”*

Figure 2.19: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



## Provision

Provision overall is good or better in around nine-in-ten settings inspected.

Many settings provide children with interesting learning experiences across almost all areas of learning. Planning covers all areas of learning at least adequately. Outdoor learning generally has a positive impact on children's physical development.

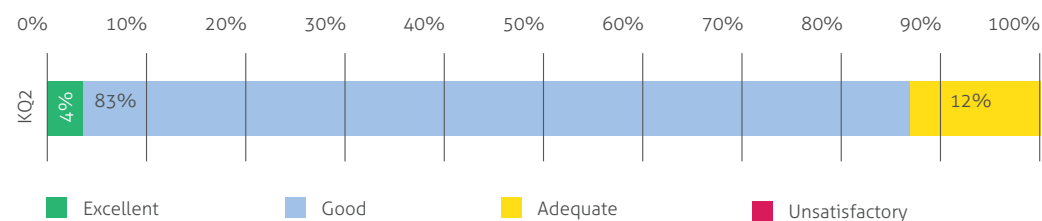
Many settings plan the development of children's communication, numeracy and information and communication technology skills well. However, in a quarter of settings, there are weaknesses in how practitioners develop children's early reading and writing, Welsh language and information and communication technology skills. In a minority of settings, planned activities fail to capture children's interest.

Many practitioners use a variety of teaching approaches and resources to encourage children's independence and problem-solving skills. However, a few practitioners do not provide children with enough opportunities to 'have a go' and learn from their mistakes. A few practitioners are also less secure about how young children learn and do not identify what children need to do to improve. Assessment is a weak feature of their provision.

Almost all settings provide good care, support and guidance, which contribute well to children's progress and wellbeing. Nearly all settings have appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding and promote a caring and inclusive ethos.

Most settings provide an appropriate learning environment for children with exciting contexts for play-based learning. However, in one-in-five settings, the outdoor-learning environment is not used well enough or is badly resourced. In a very few settings, there is a lack of appropriate resources to promote awareness and respect for cultural diversity.

Figure 2.20: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management

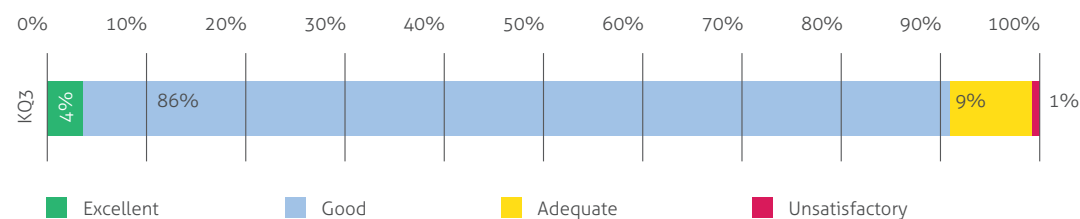
Leadership is good or better in most settings inspected. In the very few settings where leadership is excellent, leaders encourage staff to reflect on their own practice and to find better ways of doing things. In these settings, leaders regularly monitor practitioners' work and set relevant priorities for staff development and training when planning for the future. Where leadership is adequate, leaders do not give enough attention to improving children's standards and wellbeing, or to enhancing the quality of teaching. In a few settings, the management committee or proprietor does not monitor closely enough what happens in the setting day-to-day.

Many settings have appropriate procedures to check on and improve quality. Practitioners in these settings know how to use self-evaluation to inform planning. In a few settings, where practice is excellent, staff work together well to discuss and deliver improvements. However, in a few settings, self-evaluation arrangements are weak and do not inform improvement planning well enough.

Partnership working is good or better in most settings. Nearly all settings have strong relationships with parents and carers and make good use of community resources to broaden children's learning experiences. Most settings also work well with local authority support staff to improve their self-evaluation, curriculum planning and assessment arrangements.

Most settings inspected provide good value for money. They use their staff and resources well to help children to learn.

Figure 2.21: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



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# Local authority education services for children and young people

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## Performance and prospects

This year we inspected education services for children and young people in seven of the 22 local authorities in Wales. Performance is good overall in two of the authorities we inspected. Performance is adequate in three and unsatisfactory in two authorities.

Prospects for improvement are good in two authorities. Prospects are adequate in three authorities and unsatisfactory in two. In total, five of the seven authorities inspected require follow-up activity. One authority requires special measures and one requires significant improvement. In both of these authorities, current performance and prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory. Estyn will carry out monitoring visits to three authorities where many aspects of their work are no better than adequate.

## Outcomes

Standards are good in five of the seven authorities we inspected this year, adequate in one authority and unsatisfactory in another. There are no excellent standards.

In those authorities with good standards, schools perform well when compared with similar schools using a range of information that takes account of their context. These authorities have met or exceeded most of the Welsh Government benchmarks for performance based on entitlement to free school meals. In general, the gap in performance between boys and girls is smaller than the average across Wales and particular groups of pupils, including vulnerable learners and those with additional learning needs, attain better standards.

In those authorities where standards are adequate or unsatisfactory, too many of their schools are in the bottom 25% of schools in Wales when compared to similar schools elsewhere.

Learners make good progress to the next stage of their education, training or employment in only a minority of the authorities inspected. In the remainder, the percentage of learners who continue in full-time education at 16 is too low and too many are not in education, employment or training.

In a few authorities, there are good examples of learners who gain appropriate qualifications in local authority youth service settings or other informal settings. However, too many authorities do not collect or analyse data on these qualifications well enough to be able to compare outcomes with other providers.

In four of the seven authorities, where wellbeing is good:

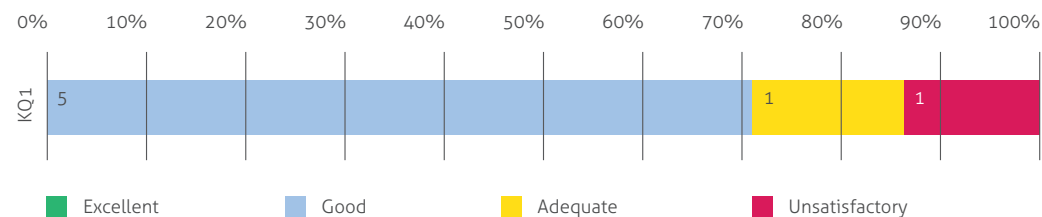
- learners' attendance in schools is improving and compares well to that in other authorities that have a similar social and economic background; and
- those children and young people who participate contribute well to the decisions that affect them, for example through conferences and youth councils.

In most authorities, learners have a good understanding of the importance of eating and living healthily. They take advantage of a wide range of physical activities in education, leisure and community settings, as shown for example by the numbers of pupils taking part in extra-curricular activities in secondary schools. Learners also benefit from good access to a range

of professional support, guidance and counselling.

In those authorities where there are areas for improvement in learners' wellbeing, these are usually because attendance and exclusion rates are not improving quickly enough. As a result, learners miss too many days from school and this reduces the likelihood of their gaining appropriate qualifications.

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



## Provision

### Support for school improvement

School improvement services cover the authority's support, monitoring, challenge and intervention in its schools as well as raising standards in priority areas and improving leadership and management.

Support for school improvement is good in four local authorities, adequate in two and unsatisfactory in one.

Most authorities have clear criteria for supporting and challenging their schools and they share these criteria with their schools. As a result, many authorities have improved the rigour of their approach to schools, although in a few the degree of challenge varies too much between the primary and secondary sectors. Secondary schools sometimes receive less challenge. In many authorities, a few schools have been allowed to underperform over a long period of time, mainly because authorities

do not use the full range of their powers to improve schools quickly enough. As a result, learners' standards remain too low for too long.

Officers increasingly analyse performance data well and use it to improve their challenge to schools. They produce reviews of schools, based on data analysis and first-hand evidence from classroom visits. However, too often, officers do not target these reviews on underperforming schools. Neither do they evaluate rigorously the quality of leadership and management in the school or take enough account of the strengths of leadership and management when they identify the school's category of risk.

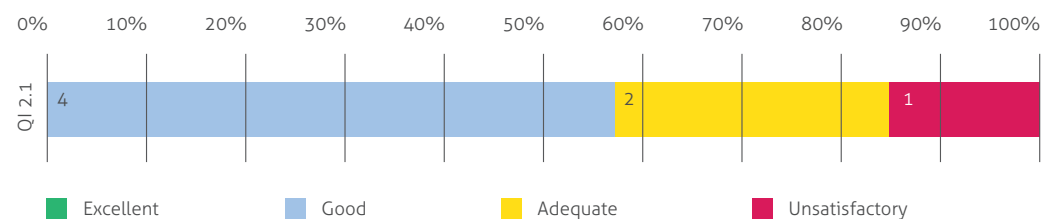
As part of our school inspection arrangements, before each school inspection, we ask local authorities to provide a written report to the inspection team on the school's work. Too often these reviews do not provide a robust enough analysis of the school's work and do not identify clearly shortcomings as well as strengths. This suggests that local authorities do not always have an accurate enough understanding of the performance of their schools.

Most of the authorities inspected have well-established initiatives to improve literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology as well as providing support for the Foundation Phase and 14-19 Learning Pathways. However,

it is difficult to judge the impact of these initiatives on improving standards of attainment because officers do not track the progress that learners make well enough.

Senior managers in local authorities do not generally monitor the work of school improvement officers rigorously enough to make sure they challenge all schools in a consistent way.

**Figure 2.23: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is support for school improvement (quality indicator 2.1)?**





## 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 provision for these learners, including that which is provided by other agencies.

One of the seven additional learning needs (ALN) services we inspected is excellent and two are good. The remaining four services have important areas for improvement.

Nearly all the authorities inspected fail to collate and evaluate systematically data on the performance of pupils with additional learning needs. Too many authorities do not know whether learners are appropriately placed or whether they are receiving the additional support they need. Generally, the planning of out-of-county placements has

improved but authorities do not monitor the learning outcomes of pupils who are placed in out-of-county independent schools well.

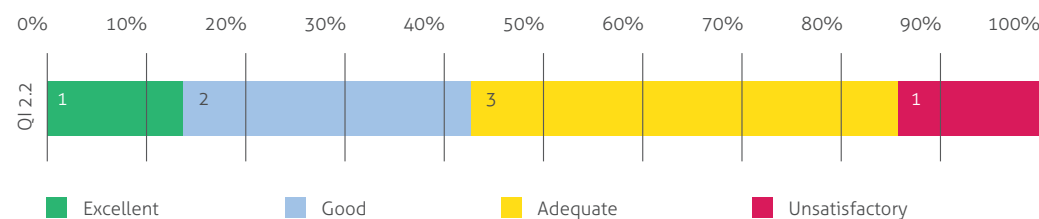
ALN and other school improvement services do not work coherently together to plan strategically, nor to deliver and monitor the impact of their services to ensure that they actually improve pupils' outcomes. Many authorities do not have clear enough procedures to know when and for how long they need to provide additional support to learners.

Most local authorities are working well to build the capacity of schools to meet all pupils' learning needs and this is beginning to reduce referrals for additional support. Nearly all local authorities have effective

partnerships involving a number of agencies to identify and support pupils with complex needs.

Nearly all authorities have made some progress in delegating additional learning needs funds to schools, but progress is too slow.

**Figure 2.24: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is support for additional learning needs and educational inclusion (quality indicator 2.2)?**



## 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. It also includes arrangements to keep all learners safe.

Of the seven authorities inspected, one is excellent, one is good, four are adequate and one is unsatisfactory in relation to the quality of their social inclusion and wellbeing service.

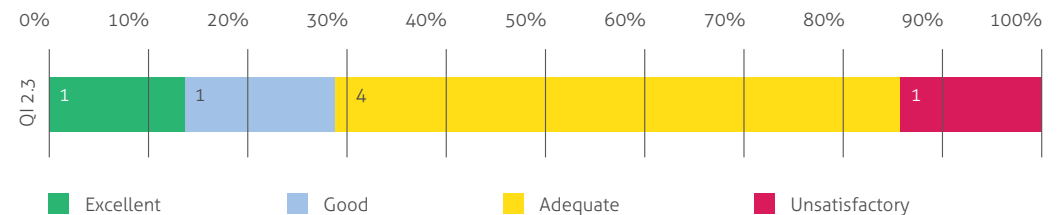
Generally, local authorities plan their inclusion services appropriately. They provide a range of support for vulnerable groups of young people and for those at risk of exclusion or poor attendance, or of

dropping out of education, employment and training. However, too often these arrangements have not had enough impact on improving learners' attendance and behaviour or on reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training. Officers do not always use data to target initiatives effectively enough where they can have the most impact.

All local authorities work well with a range of partners and relevant agencies to meet the needs of children and young people who need support. Youth support services in many authorities have improved young people's access to professional support, guidance and counselling. However, most local authorities do not evaluate the impact of their provision consistently enough to know where it is most effective.

Most of the local authorities we inspected this year have clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Generally local authorities have effective systems to ensure that staff who have contact with children have had criminal record bureau checks. However, the way that local authorities monitor their safeguarding arrangements frequently lacks rigour and they do not make sure that all staff have received the appropriate level of training.

**Figure 2.25: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is the promotion of social inclusion and wellbeing (quality indicator 2.3)?**



## Access and school places

This service area includes admissions to schools, planning school places and access to early years education and youth support services.

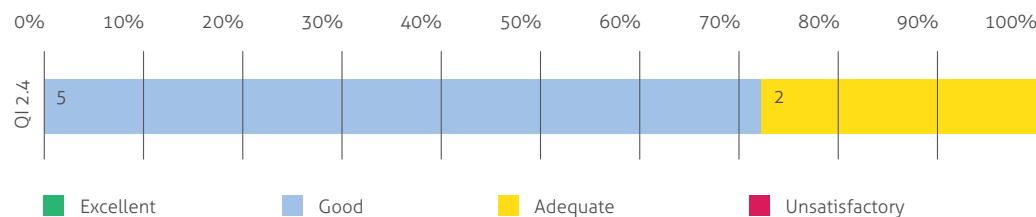
Of the seven authorities inspected, five are good and two adequate in relation to the quality of their access and school places service.

Many authorities have appropriate agreed strategies and associated plans to modernise their schools and reduce surplus places. They have made good progress in reorganising primary schools. However, around half of the authorities inspected have not made as much progress in reducing surplus capacity in their secondary schools.

Most of the local authorities we inspected have accurate and up-to-date information on the condition, capacity and suitability of their school buildings. Many use this data effectively to prioritise resources. However, a few authorities do not consult schools well enough before spending programmes are agreed.

All authorities provide an appropriate and sufficient range of early years provision. They monitor and evaluate its quality well and, in general, use the outcomes effectively to plan and deliver relevant training. All authorities provide young people with access to an appropriate range of youth support services. In half the authorities inspected this range of services is good.

**Figure 2.26: Numbers of judgements awarded in Key Question 2: How good is provision for access and school places (quality indicator 2.4)?**



## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good in just two of the local authorities inspected this year. In the remaining five there are important areas for improvement. In two authorities, leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Where leadership is good, elected members and senior officers share a consistent and coherent vision for education services and are willing to take difficult decisions for the benefit of learners. There is good communication and engagement with all stakeholders. In these authorities, the scrutiny process is well organised and effectively supports improvement.

In other authorities, elected members do not put enough emphasis on improving learners' standards when they make their strategic decisions. Strategic plans do not always include all education services, particularly the wider youth support services.

In a few authorities, officers do not routinely share information with elected members. This means that elected members have difficulty in challenging the performance of services and in judging the extent to which they fulfil their safeguarding duties. In addition they do not hold local authority officers and school leaders to account well enough for poor or mediocre performance.

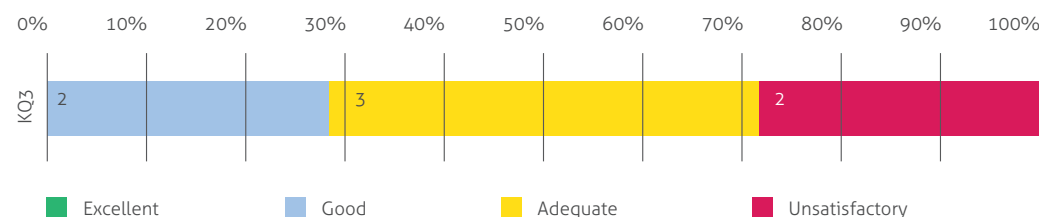
In a minority of local authorities, officers regularly evaluate their work. Officers and members have a realistic and detailed understanding of performance across the authority. However, in other authorities self-evaluation processes are not rigorous or consistent enough and are not embedded in the annual improvement cycle for all services. Officers do not evaluate the impact of support or initiatives on learners' outcomes consistently.

Most of the self-evaluation reports that local authorities gave us before inspection are detailed and draw on a wide range of evidence. The majority identify strengths

and areas for improvement. However, generally, these reports are not evaluative enough and present evidence without any accompanying analysis. A very few do not include the work of all services or of the Children and Young People's Partnership. As a result we cannot be sure that these authorities know themselves well enough to plan comprehensively how to improve.

Overall, we found that partnerships are effective in bringing people together across departments and sectors. In most authorities, partnerships such as the 14-19 Network and Children and Young People's Partnership help providers to extend the range of

**Figure 2.27: Numbers of local authorities and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**



opportunities available to young people. However, partnership working has not yet had enough impact on improving outcomes for learners.

Although all local authorities engage with their regional and local education consortia, only a very few can report clearly on the impact of this joint work on improving services or outcomes.

In most local authorities, elected members give education a high priority in the allocation of financial resources. Generally, local authorities have good systems for financial planning. However, in the majority of inspections this year we found that local authorities do not review thoroughly their use of resources to meet the needs of all learners and to achieve value for money well enough. In a few cases, they do not manage resources effectively in their work with the Children and Young People's Partnership.

Generally, local authorities do not work well enough to challenge schools with high reserves or deficit budgets. As a result, pupils in these schools do not gain the full benefit of the resources that are being provided for their education.

## Schools requiring follow up activity

Figure 2.28: Schools requiring follow-up activity 2010-2011

Local authority	Total no. of inspections (a)	Excellent practice	Local authority monitoring	Estyn monitoring	Significant improvement	Special measures
Blaenau Gwent	4	0	1	2	0	0
Bridgend	16	1	3	0	1	0
Caerphilly	10	0	3	0	0	0
Cardiff	20	1	4	6	0	0
Carmarthenshire	17	0	8	3	0	0
Ceredigion	8	0	0	1	0	0
Conwy	11	0	2	1	1	0
Denbighshire	8	2	1	1	0	0
Flintshire	17	4	2	3	1	1
Gwynedd	23	1	7	6	0	0
Isle of Anglesey	8	0	2	1	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	4	2	0	1	0	0
Monmouthshire	6	0	1	1	1	0
Neath Port Talbot	12	1	5	2	0	0
Newport	13	5	1	2	0	0
Pembrokeshire	8	2	0	2	0	0
Powys	19	1	2	3	2	2
Rhondda Cynon Taff	26	3	3	9	1	0
Swansea	20	6	4	3	0	0
Torfaen	8	1	4	1	2	0
Vale of Glamorgan	11	0	2	1	0	1
Wrexham	10	1	2	2	1	0
<b>Wales</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

(a) Number of all maintained primary, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units inspected in 2010-2011

During all core inspections of maintained schools, the inspection team considers whether the school needs any follow-up activity.

**There are five types of follow-up activity:**

- 1 Excellent practice case study
- 2 Local authority monitoring
- 3 Estyn monitoring visit
- 4 Significant improvement
- 5 Special measures

The first follow-up activity involves action by the school to produce an excellent practice case study for dissemination by Estyn. The second involves a report to Estyn from the relevant local authority. The last three involve visits from Estyn inspectors. Apart from the excellent practice case study, follow-up activity involves increasing levels of intervention in proportion to need.

The last two follow-up activities are formal categories that apply to schools causing concern as defined by the Education Act 2005 and any associated circulars.

In September 2010, there were 13 schools on the list of schools causing concern. During the year, we removed nine schools from that list. These schools included three primary and three secondary schools needing significant improvement, and three primary schools that were in special measures.

In 2010-2011, inspectors identified ten schools in need of significant improvement and four that required special measures. This is around 5% of the total number of schools inspected.

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*“Apart from the excellent practice case study, follow-up activity involves increasing levels of intervention in proportion to need.”*

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# Further education institutions (FEIs)

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In January 2011, there were 22 institutions providing further education courses in Wales. Three of these were higher education institutions offering a small number of further education programmes. In 2009-2010<sup>7</sup>, there were 196,925 enrolments on further education programmes. Of these enrolments, 44,135 were full-time and 152,785 part-time. Overall, full-time enrolments increased by around 2.7% and part-time enrolments decreased by around 7.3% from enrolments in 2008-2009. The highest enrolment figures in 2009-2010 were for foundation for work, information and communication technology and health, public services and care learning areas. There was a significant increase in the number of learners enrolling in foundation for work but a drop in those enrolling for engineering and manufacturing technologies. The majority of learners are enrolled on courses at level 1 or 2. The number of learners aged 19 and under increased by 1.1% and those aged 20 and over fell by 6.4% compared to numbers in the previous year. Around 4.2% of learning activities were undertaken bilingually and around 0.5% through the medium of Welsh.

<sup>7</sup>SDR 68/2011 Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales 2009/10, Welsh Government, 27 April 2011. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2011/110427/?lang=en>

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected four further education institutions. One is a faith-based sixth-form college, two are general further education colleges and one is a higher education institution delivering further education courses.

Performance is excellent overall in one institution and good in another. Performance is adequate in one institution and unsatisfactory in another.

Prospects for improvement are good or better overall in three of the four institutions inspected. In one institution, prospects are unsatisfactory.

One institution requires follow-up activity since current performance and prospects for improvement are unsatisfactory. Estyn will carry out a re-inspection of this institution.

## Outcomes

Standards ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory in the four institutions inspected this year. In one college where standards are excellent, learners' success rates in completing and attaining qualifications are above or well above those in other colleges in Wales. In another college, standards are unsatisfactory because the rates at which learners complete and attain their qualifications are below those in other colleges in Wales and have declined over the last three years. In the other two institutions, where standards are good or adequate, learners' success rates have improved over the last three years.

In the colleges inspected, learners' success rates on the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification are good or excellent. In two colleges, learners in receipt of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

have an overall success rate above that achieved by those who do not receive the allowance at the college.

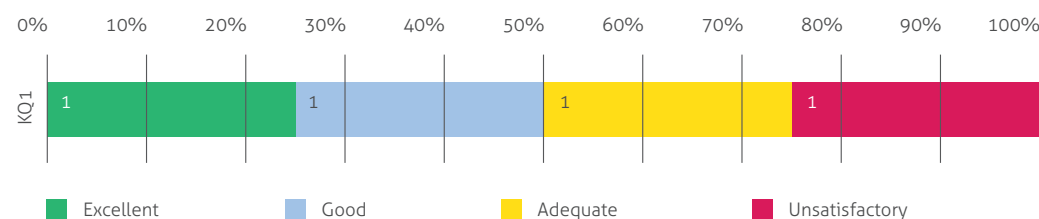
Generally, in all four institutions, learners make good progress in developing their oral and written work. Most learners speak clearly and confidently and use these skills well in whole class and group sessions. Most learners' written work is appropriate for their level of study. In one institution, learners do not always develop their oral skills well enough in all lessons.

In three institutions, learners' attainment of essential skills qualifications varies from adequate to excellent. In these institutions, many learners attain all six key skills as a result of their successful participation in the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. In one institution, learners do not have a formal essential skills programme.

All learners on vocational and academic programmes make good or adequate progress in developing the skills and knowledge that are relevant to their courses of study. The majority of learners show good oral and written skills and practical skills in their vocational work. Many learners develop good research skills and use online resources effectively to support and extend their learning.

Learners feel safe and nearly all enjoy their programmes. Nearly all learners participate actively in sessions and talk with enthusiasm about their learning experiences. They show a high level of care, respect and concern for each other. Attendance rates are good at three of the institutions and adequate at the fourth.

Figure 2.29: Numbers of FEIs and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?





## Provision

Overall, provision for learners is good in three of the institutions inspected and adequate in the fourth. In one institution, learning experiences are excellent, with a broad and varied curriculum that meets learners' needs particularly well. In the two general further education colleges, there are good progression routes from entry level through to level 3. All institutions give learners good opportunities to develop and improve their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication skills. More able and talented learners in one institution receive a high level of challenge as they learn about and discuss a range of complex issues. In one institution, opportunities for learners to develop their oral skills in all lessons are not planned well enough. Three institutions have developed effective 14-19 partnerships that offer good learning opportunities to learners in their areas.

The quality of teaching is good in two institutions and adequate in the others. Where teaching is good, teachers have clear aims and objectives, and use a wide range of activities and good resources to engage learners. There is a good balance between teacher input and learner activity. Also, teachers prepare materials and sessions well to meet the needs of learners with a range of abilities. When teaching is adequate, the pace of sessions is too slow and teachers:

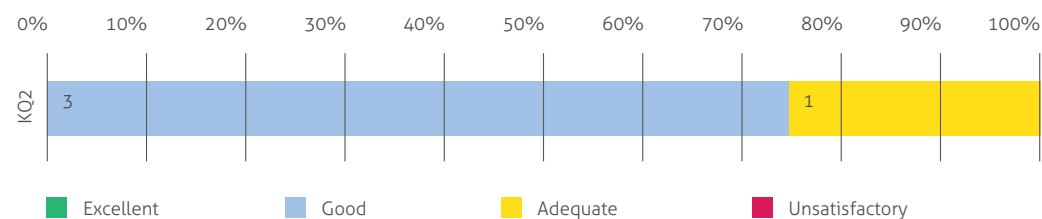
- do not cater well enough for the range of abilities in the class; and
- often miss opportunities to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills alongside their vocational or academic knowledge.

Almost all teachers have good subject knowledge and assess learners' work carefully and often. Most give learners good oral feedback on their work. However, written feedback does not always contain enough detail to enable learners to know what they need to do to improve their work.

Three institutions have good or very good arrangements to care for, support and guide learners. Generally, learners are well informed about the support services available to them. Those with additional learning needs receive good or very good individual support.

All institutions have appropriate policies and procedures for safeguarding learners. They all have an inclusive environment and promote equality and diversity well. All institutions have attractive and pleasant communal areas. They have good or excellent teaching and training facilities that meet the needs of industry and the community. One college has worked very closely with the local energy industry to develop excellent engineering facilities.

Figure 2.30: Numbers of FEIs and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good or excellent in three of the institutions inspected. In these providers, senior management teams set clear strategic targets and communicate these well to all staff and partners. They have clear and effective procedures for improving the performance of staff. In these institutions, governors are well informed about their roles and responsibilities and give senior managers good support in setting strategic objectives and challenging them on progress towards their completion. These institutions meet national and local priorities well. In one institution, managers have not provided a strong enough focus on improving quality and standards.

Arrangements for monitoring and improving quality vary from excellent to unsatisfactory across the four institutions inspected. In

three colleges, staff and managers have effective self-evaluation and review processes. They know their strengths and areas for development well and have clear plans and targets for improving quality and standards. These colleges have effective classroom observation arrangements and use data well to monitor and improve learner outcomes. Where arrangements are unsatisfactory, managers have not brought about improvements in learner success rates and procedures for monitoring and tracking learners' progress are not robust enough.

Partnership working in three institutions is good or excellent. These institutions contribute effectively to their local 14-19 partnerships. They have good or excellent partnerships with local employers and Colegau Cymru. Two institutions have effective partnership arrangements with

other further education colleges to provide work-based learning in their areas.

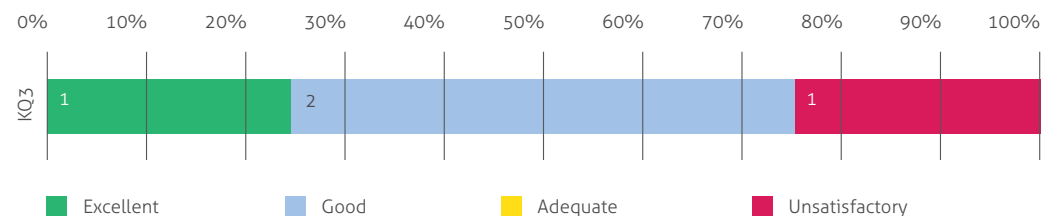
Resource management is good or excellent in three of the institutions we inspected this year. These institutions manage their finances very well and give good value for money. They use their finances well to provide good or excellent learning resources and to improve learner outcomes year-on-year. They have effective staff-development programmes and concentrate appropriately on improving standards and teaching, and delivering on national priorities such as improving learners' literacy and numeracy. In one institution, resource management is unsatisfactory. This institution does not use its resources well enough to improve learners' outcomes.

### Working in partnership to improve facilities and resources

**Pembrokeshire College** is working with the energy and engineering sectors to deliver the highest quality education and training locally.

For more information about this, please refer to the case study '[Working in partnership with sectors to design and build new facilities.](#)'

Figure 2.31: Numbers of FEIs and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?



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# Work-based learning

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At the start of this inspection cycle there were 66 work-based learning providers. In 2009-2010<sup>8</sup>, there were 55,845 learners undertaking work-based learning programmes. Of these learners, 16,305 were undertaking modern apprenticeships, 20,075 foundation modern apprenticeships and 19,465 other training. Many learners are undertaking training at level 2 or 3.

## Performance and prospects

This year, we inspected eight work-based learning providers. Performance is good overall in six providers and adequate in two.

Prospects for improvement are good in seven providers and adequate in one.

Some providers judged good overall have shortcomings in one or more quality indicators. In total, two work-based learning providers require follow-up activity as current performance is only adequate. Estyn will monitor the progress that these providers make in addressing inspection recommendations.

<sup>8</sup>SDR 68/2011 Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales 2009/10, Welsh Government, 27 April 2011. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2011/110427?lang=en>

## Outcomes

Outcomes are good in six and adequate in two of the eight providers inspected this year.

Overall, learners' success rates in the eight providers inspected vary from good to adequate. In six providers, where outcomes are good, most learners are competent in practical aspects of their training and show secure theoretical knowledge. They successfully complete their training frameworks. Most learners make good progress in attaining National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Nationally, the highest framework success rates for all apprenticeships<sup>9</sup> are in business, administration and law, and education and training. Outcomes are weakest in hair and beauty, construction, planning and the built environment, and agriculture, horticulture and animal care.

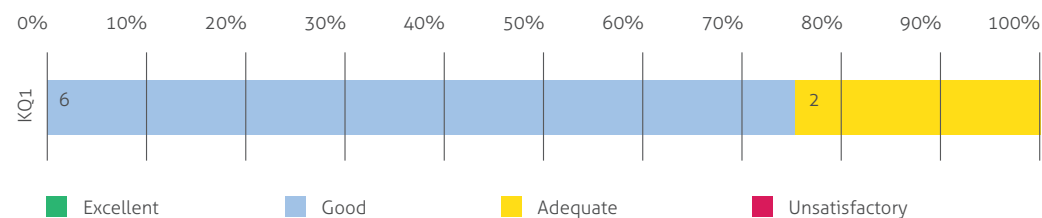
In two providers, where standards are adequate, learners make slower progress towards completing their training frameworks. The majority of learners demonstrate satisfactory practical competence and theoretical knowledge. A minority of learners do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to complete their training frameworks.

Overall, learners' progress in gaining appropriate essential skills qualifications varies from adequate to good. Where standards are good, a significant minority of learners attain these skills at a level higher than required in their qualification framework. The majority of learners attain the wider essential skills qualifications. Where standards are no better than adequate, the majority of learners only attain these skills at the level that is required in their training framework.

The majority of learners communicate well with training staff, employers and peers.

Most learners enjoy their training experiences. They show respect for their trainers, employers and peers. Overall, learners' attendance both on and off-the-job is good.

Figure 2.32: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?



<sup>9</sup>SDR 75/2011 National Comparators for Further Education and Work-Based Learning 2009/2010, Welsh Government, 12 May 2011. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/post16education2011/1105121?lang=en>

## Provision

Overall, provision is good in seven of the providers inspected and adequate in one.

All providers deliver a relevant training programme and offer a suitable range and level of qualifications that meet the needs of learners and employers well. Overall, recruitment trends across occupational areas are similar to those of last year. However, the numbers of contracted and available training places are not always well matched to potential employment opportunities. This means that many providers often try to secure training opportunities with the same employer. Many providers give learners good opportunities to progress to the next level of training and to develop their skills. However, a minority of providers do not give a high enough priority to developing learners' literacy skills.

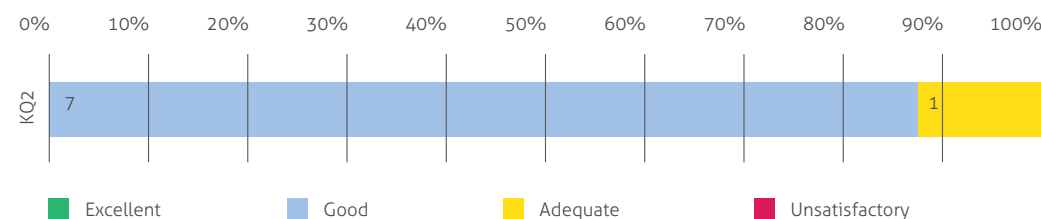
The quality of training and assessment is good in five of the providers inspected. In these providers, staff organise on and off-the-job training and assessment well. They have clear assessment strategies and track learners' progress systematically. During off-the-job activities, trainers use a good range of resources to engage learners. In three providers, where assessment is no better than adequate, assessors do not plan well or set learners suitably challenging targets for the completion of assessments or the collection of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) portfolio evidence. Staff often fail to organise suitable assessment activities that would provide useful evidence of learners' progress in developing practical skills.

All providers inspected have good care, guidance and support arrangements. All providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures.

The learning environment is good in six providers and adequate in two. All providers promote equality and respect for diversity well. Many learners work in workplaces that offer access to a wide range of resources. During off-the-job training, most learners also have access to a good range of resources. However, in two providers the accommodation and resources are not good enough, which limits the progress made by learners.

A minority of providers offer training through the medium of Welsh. Most providers do not do enough to encourage Welsh-speaking learners to undertake training and assessment in Welsh.

Figure 2.33: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good in five providers inspected this year and adequate in three. Where leadership is good, senior managers set clear strategic priorities and targets, which they monitor carefully to gauge how well these are achieved. Communication with staff and key partners is good. These providers have comprehensive and effective procedures for reviewing and improving the performance of staff. In three providers, managers do not take enough account of the rates at which learners complete their qualifications when assessing staff performance.

Arrangements for improving quality are good in five of the providers inspected. These providers have comprehensive and effective

self-evaluation systems. Managers and staff monitor outcomes and provision carefully to identify strengths and shortcomings and plan well to improve quality. They use data to set targets and improve learner outcomes.

Where quality improvement arrangements are no better than adequate, managers do not identify and implement ways of improving how well learners achieve their training frameworks.

Partnership working is excellent in one provider. It is good in the other seven providers inspected. Most providers have effective partnerships with a wide range of partners including local employers, further education colleges and other training providers. However, in the majority

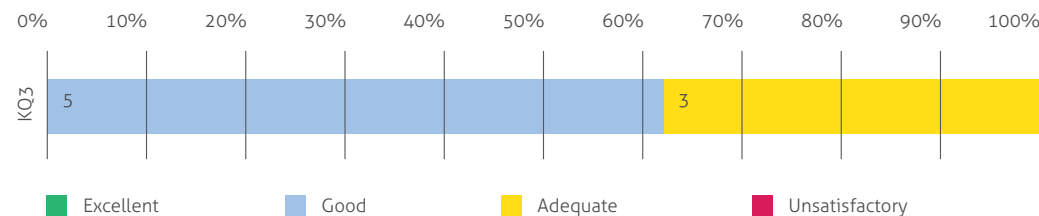
of cases, partnerships with schools are underdeveloped. This means that pupils in schools do not receive enough information about the range of vocational training available to them. Where partnership work is excellent, the provider works with partners to develop joint strategies and working practices, including joint projects that have a strong impact on learners' progress.

Resource management is good in six providers inspected. These providers make sure that learners have well-resourced workplaces. The majority of providers support staff well with appropriate professional development programmes that improve the quality of teaching, training and assessment. Two providers

do not use resources well enough to improve the suitability of the premises and quality of accommodation to bring about improvements in learners' outcomes.

Most providers manage their finances well and provide good value for money.

**Figure 2.34: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**



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# Adult community learning

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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.

This year we inspected Carmarthenshire and Rhondda Cynon Taff adult and community learning (ACL) partnerships and YMCA Community College Cymru. The range of courses available to adults differs between providers but includes courses in information and communication technology, art and design, adult basic education, Welsh for adults and personal development courses.

## South West Wales Welsh for Adults Regional Centre

This year, we also inspected the **South West Wales Welsh for Adults Regional Centre**. This was established in Swansea University in May 2006 as one of six regional centres set up by the Welsh Government to lead the field. Performance and prospects for improvement in this centre are adequate.

For more information about this centre, please refer to the *full report*.

## Performance and prospects

This year we inspected three providers. Performance is excellent in one provider and good in another. Performance is adequate in one provider.

Prospects for improvement are good or better in two providers. Prospects are adequate in another.

Both ACL partnerships require follow-up activity since either current performance or prospects for improvement are adequate. In both partnerships, quality improvement procedures are no better than adequate. Estyn will monitor the progress these partnerships make in addressing inspection recommendations.

## Outcomes

Outcomes are good or better in two of the providers inspected. They are adequate in the other provider.

Overall, the standards that learners achieve vary too much among the three providers inspected.

Many learners taking youth work courses develop their basic and their communication skills well. However, in one ACL partnership, only around half of learners in adult basic education (ABE) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) develop their basic skills satisfactorily.

Overall, learners make good use of their individual learning plans to improve their

learning and skills. Nevertheless, a few learners do not understand how these plans can help them to set appropriate goals to improve their learning and review their progress.

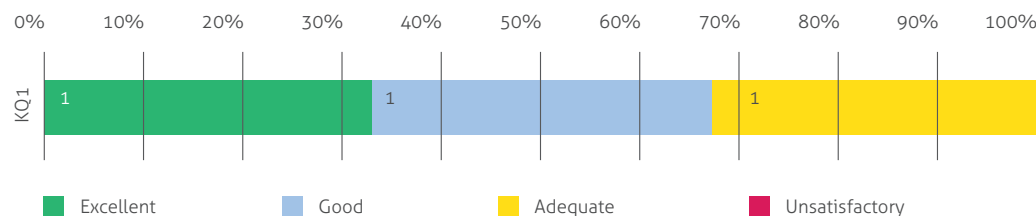
Nearly all learners are well motivated. They attend regularly and take part enthusiastically. Many develop a good understanding about healthy lifestyles through learning about issues such as healthy eating, drug misuse and mental health.

Many learners use their experiences usefully to get involved in work in their communities as volunteers. Older learners acquire new skills and benefit from working with their

peers. However, learners do not make enough use of independent careers guidance to help them to make decisions about their future plans.

Learners from a range of disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds achieve well. These learners, including offenders or learners undergoing drugs treatment programmes, often begin from a low starting point. However, they learn to improve their skills and move on to more demanding courses, or into employment.

Figure 2.35: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?





## Provision

Provision is good or better in two of the providers we inspected this year. It is adequate in the other provider.

All providers deliver a wide range of programmes that meet the needs of many learners and communities well. In particular, providers work well in partnership to address a range of learning needs. However, the quality of provision varies too much between providers. In one ACL partnership, there is no clear strategy to improve basic skills in the community and not enough Welsh-medium or bilingual provision.

The quality of teaching is good or better in two of the providers we inspected this year. In these providers, tutors use their expertise well to plan a broad range of interesting and challenging activities. Generally, in all providers, tutors work well to respond to learners' interests and abilities. However, too many tutors do not use individual learning plans well enough to direct learning, or help learners to review their progress.

Generally, tutors care for and support learners well. However, not enough staff offer helpful guidance to learners about how they can use their skills and qualifications in their lives or careers.

Overall, providers have appropriate policies in place to protect vulnerable adults. However, too many tutors do not have a clear enough understanding about the circumstances that make adults vulnerable and are not clear enough about the procedures to follow in the event of any critical incidents.

The learning environment is good or better in all providers.

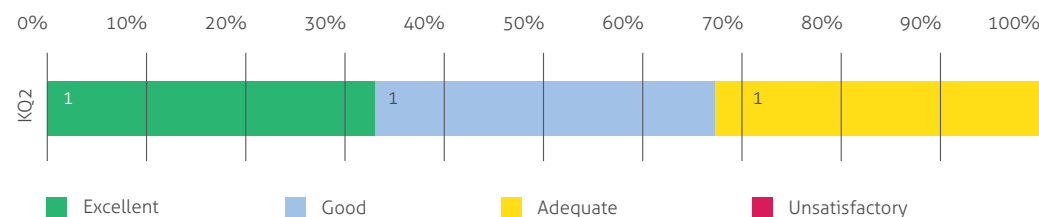
### Effective partnership working to support vulnerable learners

#### YMCA Wales Community College

has been very successful in planning and delivering a range of high-quality skill-based, accredited courses for offender learners across Wales.

For more information about this, please refer to the case study '[Clear purpose and direction = success.](#)'

Figure 2.36: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are excellent in one provider. They are adequate in the other two providers.

Overall, the quality of leadership and management varies too much. Only one ACL partnership carries out its strategic role well. In the other partnership, senior managers have not understood fully the value of a formal partnership. There is no partnership plan that sets out the priorities for adult learning. Generally, local service boards do not consider plans for adult-learning programmes well enough.

The college provider inspected has excellent systems for improving quality. It is self-critical and makes very good use of data to improve outcomes and provision. However, in the two partnerships inspected, arrangements for improving quality are no better than adequate. These partnerships do not do enough to improve outcomes and provision. They do not compare standards and provision with other partnerships or share good practice well enough.

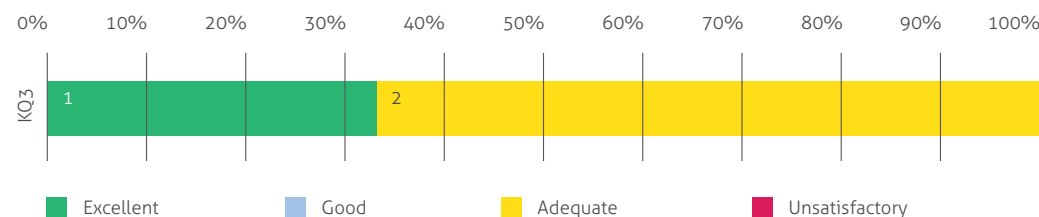
This year we found that many providers work well with their partners to plan and deliver an appropriate range of courses across the partnership. Local authorities and further education institutions give good support to other partners such as voluntary

sector organisations. The college works successfully with its partners to tackle national priorities for the training of youth workers and for offender learning.

The extent to which partnerships manage the resources available to them varies too much. The majority of staff have appropriate qualifications and experience for the courses they teach. All providers offer an appropriate range of training opportunities to their staff. However, in one ACL partnership, staff training does not have enough impact on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. The teaching of too many tutors is only adequate and the standards achieved by learners have not improved enough.

Providers share resources well across their partnerships and make full use of the funding available for adult community learning. The college inspected makes good use of financial information to compare its costs with those of other providers.

**Figure 2.37: Numbers of providers and judgements awarded for Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**



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# Learning in the justice system

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This year we worked with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons on a short inspection of the only unit for remanded and sentenced young people in Wales. We also took part in a full inspection of the largest prison for adults in Wales.

In addition, we carried out a joint review of the Youth Offending Services with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW).

## Outcomes

Outcomes are good in the young people's unit. Almost all young people achieve a relevant qualification and progress to a higher level course.

In the adult prison, the success rate is very good in occupational classes and in general educational classes.

## Provision

The young people's unit offers an increasingly interesting and relevant range of courses. Young people spend more time than before out of their cells in purposeful activity.

In the adult prison, the range of education activities is good but there are too few activity places to enable all prisoners to get employment and education opportunities.

There is a very wide range in the number of hours of education that are received by children and young people in contact with youth offending teams who attend alternative educational provision rather than mainstream schools. A few receive only two hours per day and a few receive no education at all.

## Leadership and management

In the young people's unit, managers liaise well with schools to enable young people to continue their studies while they are in custody.

In the adult prison, leadership and management of educational provision are satisfactory.

Overall, management boards have improved their leadership and management of youth offending services, but local authorities still do not monitor well enough the standards and wellbeing of these children and young people.