

Report to the GwE Joint Committee on the region's performance

November 2018

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1. CONTEXT

COMPARATIVE DATA

The content of this report is different to previous years due to Welsh Government introducing significant changes to how performance measures are reported. Following Welsh Government consultation on future publication of teacher assessments, Welsh Government no longer publish comparative Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 data at school, local authority and consortia level and therefore beyond a comparison with national averages, there is no comparative nor benchmarking information available.

CHANGES TO AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

In October 2014 the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning (AoL) for Language, Literacy and Communication Skills and Mathematical Development were revised to align them with the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) as well as make them more demanding. In line with this the Foundation Phase outcomes were recalibrated to align with the increased expectations of the revised Areas of Learning.

The revised AoL were introduced on a statutory basis from September 2015. This means that the cohort of children that started Reception in September 2015 were the first children to be formally assessed against the revised outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase in the summer of 2018. Comparisons of Foundation Phase outcomes with previous years at school level should, therefore, be avoided as they are not measured on a comparable basis.

2. STANDARDS

PRIMARY – OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE ACROSS THE REGION

FOUNDATION PHASE

GwE's performance in the Foundation Phase Indicator is above the national average. This year's results in the Foundation Phase shows a national decrease when compared to previous years. The main reason for this is the fact that new outcomes from the FP Assessment Framework have been used in language and mathematics. Many teachers are under the impression that there are higher expectations to achieve an Outcome and this is one factor that has led to fewer pupils achieving Outcome 5.

This national decrease in the results is reflected in the region's results. GwE anticipated this and has focused on improving provision in the Nursery and Reception classes, which will provide a robust base for achieving higher outcomes by the time the pupils reach the end of the Key Stage.

Strengths and successes

- Although performance regionally has fallen, the decrease is below the national dip at the expected outcome (O5+) with exception to LLC(W). On the higher than expected outcome (O6+), the regional decrease is considerably below the national dip across all areas .
- Generally, outcome 6+ performance continues to be strong.
- Schools have responded well to the various foundation phase training workshops and network meetings for SMT, teachers and support staff. This is evidenced by how

schools have raised the level of challenge to meet the new requirements of outcome 6.

Areas for Improvement

- Continue to improve the performance of groups of learners.
- Further strengthen cluster working to promote collaboration and share good practice.

KEY STAGE 2

The region's KS2 results are strong. This year's performance at the expected level is in mostly line with last year's results and continues to be above the national average for the CSI. The one exception is that Welsh language performance at the expected level is slightly down. One factor could be that more learners were assessed through Welsh as a first language than ever before. However, the percentage of learners achieving the expected levels in Welsh as a second language increased again for the fifth year.

At the higher levels, performance continues to be strong in all subjects. Second language Welsh results made a notable improvement. The variance between boys and girls performance reduced this year and is now below the national average. FSM learners maintained previous year's results with the exception being Welsh Language where less FSM pupils achieved to gain the expected levels. However, the highest ever number of FSM pupils were assessed through the Welsh language.

Comparing this year's end of Key Stage 2 data with end of Foundation Phase data from 2014, the region's matched pupils on average made above expected progress in Welsh, English and Mathematics.

Strengths and Successes

- Key Stage 2 performance continues to be strong at both the expected and higher levels.
- An increased percentage of learners assessed in Welsh as a second language achieved at both expected and higher levels.
- Schools have responded well to the various Literacy, Numeracy and Teaching and Learning training programmes provided. This is evidenced by consistently strong performance in all core subjects.
- This year's KS2 cohort made above expected progress in Welsh, English and Mathematics during their time in KS2.

Areas for Improvement

- Tackling the impact of deprivation on educational attainment continues to be a priority.
- Further strengthen cluster working to promote collaboration and to share good practice.

SECONDARY - OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE ACROSS THE REGION

KEY STAGE 3

Performance in the main indicator [CSI] in KS3 was again strong and demonstrated further improvement on the 2017 figure. The region continues to perform above the national average [+1.3% 2017 and +1.2% 2018].

The performance of boys and girls improved in the main indicator. Both performances are above the national average for 2017 and 2018 with a broadening of the gap for girls. The regional gender gap, however, increased by +0.5% to 7.0% in 2018 with girls continuing to outperform boys. Nationally, the gender gap closed by 0.4% and the figure for the region in 2018 corresponds to the national average.

There was also an increase of +0.4% in the percentage of FSM pupils that achieved the CSI indicator. There is no 2018 national data available at the moment. Whilst the performance of eFSM pupils has steadily improved over the three year rolling period, the gap between eFSM/non-FSM saw a further slight increase of +0.2% in 2018 and currently stands at 18.2%. The corresponding national figure in 2017 was 20.3%

Welsh:

Strengths and Successes

- Regional performance has increased from 0.3% to 94.2% and remains +0.4% higher than the national figure.
- At level 6+ girls have increased +2.5% to 78.2% compared to an increase of +1.6% at the national level.
- At level 7+, performance is higher than the corresponding national figures.

Areas for Development

- Continue to improve boys' performance.
- Continue to improve the performance of FSM learners especially at higher levels.
- Continue to support departments where there is concern about standards.

English:

Strengths and Successes

- Performance at Level 5+ increased by 0.4% to 92% and performance across all LEAs has remained consistently strong.
- Improving standards of Literacy remains a key priority for all schools and improvements have been made in the quality of Literacy provision. This has been supported by the GwE team through the development of high quality resources and training.
- Performance at Level 6+ saw the most significant increase of 2.7% and reflects the regional focus on challenging more able learners at KS3.
- Stronger and more collaborative working relationships are developing between secondary English departments and their feeder primaries and this is reflected in classroom practice.
- The variation between the performance of boys/girls in English remains below the national average. A significant amount of work this year has been undertaken to review KS3 course structures and ensure more dynamic and engaging material/ methodologies are being utilised.

Areas for Development

- Improving the performance of FSM Learners in English remains a priority particularly at Level 5+ where the gap between FSM/ Non FSM learners has slightly widened by 1.5%.
- Implement a pilot 'Literacy Intervention Programme' into a small number of target secondary schools in order to raise the performance of FSM learners in English. Share this practice and cascade regionally.
- Provide training and support to ensure the DCF is embedded effectively at KS3 to raise standards.
- Continue to support schools in improving the performance of boys particularly at Level 6+

- Develop methodology and approaches to the teaching of writing at KS3 in order to ensure students are better prepared for GCSE

Mathematics:

Strengths and successes

- L5+ has increased.
- 30 schools have improved their L5+ [56%] performance, with 4 of them having increased substantially [7%].
- 26 schools have improved their L6+ [48%] performance, 12 of which have substantially increased [22%].

Areas for Improvement

- The percentage for L6+ has fallen slightly.
- 22 schools have seen a decrease in their L5+ [41%] performance, with 2 schools having decreasing significantly [4%] in their performance.
- 27 schools have seen a decrease in their L6+ [50%] performance, with 8 schools decreasing significantly in their performance [15%].
- Improve the provision for mathematics across the region - to align pedagogy with the direction of the curriculum development.
- Improve teaching and learning in departments.
- Create joint plans in clusters of secondary schools for the new curriculum.

Science:

Strengths and successes

- The percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in Science has been maintained from 2017 (2017 = 94.6%, 2018 = 94.5%).
- 29 schools (53.7%) maintained/improved their performance from 2017 at level 5+.
- 10 schools (18.5%) achieved 100% level 5+, which was a 100% increase from 2017.
- There has been a year on year increase in performance at level 6+ across the region.
- 32 schools (60.4%) have increased their performance at level 6+ from 2017, with 6 schools (11.3%) increasing by over 10%.
- 30 schools (56.6%) have increased their performance at level 7+ from 2017, with 11 schools (20.8%) increasing by over 5%.

Areas for Improvement

- The performance of FSM pupils at all levels is below that of nonFSM learners, and the gap has increased slightly in 2018 at level 5 and level 6+.
- The variance of performance of FSM pupils at level 7+ is 20.7%.
- 21 schools (39.6%) decreased their performance at level 6+ from 2017, with 7 schools (13.2%) decreasing by over 10%.
- 23 schools (43.4%) decreased their performance at level 7+, with 5 schools (9.4%) decreasing by over 10% from 2017.
- In many schools the KS3 schemes of work/curriculum does not sufficiently prepare the learners or support learning at KS4.

KEY STAGE 4

As a region, we recognise that we are still on a journey of improvement and that we have to improve the academic achievement at KS4 in many of our schools. The Secondary Schools Improvement Strategy (September 2017) sets out the direction for regional developments over the next three years. The programme is being introduced within the context of existing national, regional and local policies and plans.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION FOR 2018 EXAMINATIONS

Following the changes in 2016-17 there remains significant volatility in GCSE outcomes. Significant changes to the pattern and numbers of pupils sitting exams in the Summer 2018 has had an impact on results as demonstrated in the proportion of grades across all subjects in the A+ to C range in Wales decreasing by 1.2pp to 61.6%.

GCSEs are being reformed and 15 updated subjects were sat this summer for the first time.

The new GCSE suite of qualifications in Science was examined for the first time in 2018, and coincides with the changes to the performance indicators at KS4, to include only GCSE results for Science, as two measures in the capped 9 indicator. As a result, comparison with historical data is not applicable. Schools were able to select pathways from a triple Science route, Double award Science, Double award Applied Science and Single award Applied Science. As the capped 9 indicator includes two Science measures, the majority of schools followed the triple and double award pathways.

There has been significant change to grade boundaries since the Summer of 2017 and November 2017 compared to the Summer of 2018, particularly at C grade in English and mathematics. This has made it difficult for schools to ensure accurate projections and target setting. Initial analysis suggests that schools data has been significantly influenced by registration decisions.

KEY STAGE 4

In 2018, there was a decrease of 1.6% to 52.0% in the main indicator [L2+] in comparison with 2017, with a decrease of 1.4% at L1 [-0.8% nationally]. L2 saw a small increase of 0.1% to 65.4% [in comparison to a national decrease of 0.1%] whilst the 5A*/A increased by 0.8% to 15.6% [+1.2 nationally].

Performance of eFSM pupils [760 regional pupils of whom 163 are SEN pupils] also improved to 27.6% [+0.7%] in the main indicator [+0.8% nationally] and the gap with non-FSM closed by a further 2.3% to 30.2% [32.3% nationally]. Of the 597 eFSM pupils who were not SEN, 33.0% were successful in the L2+ indicator [an increase of 1.0% from 2017]. Performance of eFSM pupils also improved in the Capped 9 [+4.7], Mathematics [+1.4%] and Maths Numeracy [+1.9%] indicators, whilst their performance in English dipped by 1.0% to 35.4%.

Of the 620 SEN regional pupils, 17.9% were successful in the L2+ indicator [an increase of 0.1% on the 2017 figure]. Their performance at 5A*/A increased by 1.2% to 3.5%; by 7.2% for Welsh [37.2%]; by 0.8% for Mathematics [23.5%] and by 0.6% for Maths Numeracy [26.0%]. However, their L2 performance in English dipped by 4.5% to 19.8%.

There were 55 LAC pupils in 2018 and 21.8% were successful in the L2+ indicator – an increase of 7.0% on the 2017 figure [61 pupils]. LAC performance also improved across most of the main indicators [C9; 5A*/A; Welsh; Mathematics and Maths Numeracy].

Of the 7 regional schools categorised as 'red' [5 of which are in statutory category], promising improvements were seen across many of the indicators : 6 improved on their 2017 figures for the L2+ and Mathematics and 4 improved their C9, 5A*/A and English L2. 3 of the 7 schools improved across all of the mentioned indicators.

Strengths and successes

- Consolidation in performance of regional 'green' schools.
- Improvements in performance across many of the 'red/high risk' schools with significant increases against some indicators
- Improvements against many indicators in performance of eFSM pupils
- Significant improvements in performance of LAC pupils

Areas for improvement

- Ensure further targeted support :
 - ✓ for schools where performance falls below the modelled outcome. Specific and comprehensive support programme to be agreed with individual schools and shared with Governing Body.
 - ✓ to reduce variation in performance between highest/lowest performing LAs and schools.
- Further improve effectiveness of role of Senior Leadership Teams in quality assurance and accountability processes.
- Further improve the effectiveness of middle leaders in leading the teaching/learning, assessment, tracking and in their ability to robustly evaluate.
- Ensure effective curriculum planning in each school which maximise performance in key indicators including the Capped 9.
- Ensuring all schools receive clear guidance and support re: effective strategies in teaching, learning and tracking to improve the performance of eFSM learners. In addition, further improve monitoring processes to ensure all schools make effective and appropriate use of PDG.

Welsh:

This is the second year for the new qualification, with 70% of the subject dependent on performance in two external examinations and 30% oral work. This year, there was an increase of 0.5% on the 2017 figure with the 2018 performance at 71.1%. The performance of FSM learners, however, is -4.2% lower than last year's figure. 10 schools [45.4%] have improved on the performance of 2017 and 2 schools [9.1%] made significant improvements this year. At the Level 2 indicator, the majority of schools in the region have crossed the threshold of 70%+. There was a significant reduction in the performance of 3 schools [13.6%].

Strengths and successes

- An increase of +0.5% on the 2017 figure with the 2018 performance at 71.6%.
- The majority of schools in the region have crossed a 70%+ threshold on the Level 2 indicator.
- Most schools who received intensive support from the GwE team have seen an increase in their performance from last year

Areas for improvement

- Continue to improve the performance of eFSM learners.
- Continue to support departments where there are concern about standards and the quality of leadership.

English:

Performance in GCSE English Language decreased this year by 5.5% to 56.2%. Issues with the changes to WJEC grade boundaries and access to early entry opportunities have impacted on performance in English Language across the region and strong representation has been made to Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and WJEC. Performance in the writing sections of both papers remains an issue across Wales. The average score for the writing sections is approximately half marks for both the quality and accuracy of students' writing.

Strengths and successes

- Of the 7 schools in red support category, 5 improved on 2017 performance.
- Most schools who received intensive support from the GwE English team have seen an increase in their performance from last year.
- High quality CPD delivered this year has been praised by Heads of Departments and Head teachers. Heads of Department have received a wealth of high quality training to support them in their role
- Coaching underperforming teachers and modelling excellence, in a small number of schools, has been successful in improving standards of teaching and learning

Areas for Improvement

- Improve standards in GCSE English Language through targeting and supporting underperforming departments.
- Improve standards of attainment in the writing sections of the examination units through regional training and individual school support.
- Improve the performance of A/A* learners in GCSE English Language.
- Improve tracking and monitoring of student performance through the implementation of a regional assessment and tracking system.
- Improve teaching and learning experiences through coaching, modelling and developing classroom practice.

Mathematics:

Overall, the results for the best grade across the counties have remained constant, with the attainment for Numeracy being stronger overall in our schools across the region. Mathematics improved by 0.5%, Maths Numeracy by 0.7% and the Best of Maths grade by 0.8%. There is a positive picture generally, but some schools are of concern - especially where the difference between mathematics and numeracy maths is significant, or where there is a significant difference between their performance and their 2017 results.

Strengths and successes

- 30 schools [55.5%] have improved on their Mathematics performance of 2017, with 7 schools [12.9%] seeing a significant increase in their percentage points.
- 31 schools [57.4%] have improved their Mathematics Numeracy performance of 2017 with 7 schools [12.9%] significantly improving their percentage points.
- 32 [59.2%] schools have improved on their performance for the best grade on 2017 results, with 6 schools [1.1%] having seen a significant increase in their percentage points.
- Departments that work effectively to share best practice across the region.

Areas for Improvement

- 6 schools [11.1%] have seen a significant reduction in their performance for mathematics - there will be a need for robust visits and follow-up actions in these schools.

- 4 schools [7.4%] have seen a significant reduction in their performance for numeracy mathematics - the same schools that have seen a significant reduction in the results for mathematics.
- 4 schools [7.4%] have seen a significant reduction in their performance in the best grade for mathematics.
- Scrutinize the teaching and learning experiences pupils receive in the schools where numeracy is weaker than the mathematics (5 schools with a difference of 4% or more) - and working with the schools to improve the provision for numeracy.
- Ensure that the curriculum provided gives attention to mathematics and numeracy, and work with the schools where the result for mathematics is significantly lower than for numeracy.
- Improve the teaching and learning in the departments where they have underperformed – prioritizing the schools where this is a pattern over time.
- Improve the quality of leadership in departments where there are new Heads of Department / numeracy coordinators, or where leadership is weak.

Science:

As noted above, the new GCSE suite of qualifications in Science was examined for the first time in 2018, and coincides with the changes to the performance indicators at KS4, to include only GCSE results for Science. Therefore, it is impossible to make meaning comparisons with 2017 performance.

Strengths and successes

- 62.9% of pupils in the region achieved at least one GCSE in Science at L2 and is in line with the national average.
- There has been an 11.8% increase in the performance from the end of year 10 when 51% of pupils were on track to achieve at least one level 2 GCSE in Science.
- All 54 schools made improvements from the end of year 10 results, and 12 schools (22%) increased their results by 20% and above.
- In 9 schools (16.6%), the level 2 exceeded 80%, with one school achieving 90%.
- In 26 schools (48.1%), the level 2 exceeded 70%.

Areas for Improvement

- 8 schools (14.8%) failed to achieve above 50% L2 in Science.
- The percentage of pupils achieving L2 in Science varies significantly in schools across the region from 40.5% to 90%.
- The gap between the performance at KS4 and the internal projections is of concern in many schools. Data tracking systems, quality assurance and standardisation of internal assessments is not sufficiently robust, and some departments are unable to project outcomes with a good level of accuracy.

KEY STAGE 5

The model of delivery for Key Stage 5 varies within authorities and across the region. Provision is delivered by either individual schools, 6th form colleges, further education colleges or schools (and colleges) collaborating within the consortium. There was a fall in the number of entries at A2 in the region in 2018 of 434 on 2017 (4563 in total), reflective of a smaller school population. Unverified data suggest that the regional performance at A Level is below the national average (schools' data only). Initial scrutiny of outcomes (WJEC only) suggests broadly:

- an increase at A2 but not as big an increase as across Wales in general - we are regionally ahead of Wales at A*-E but behind on other measures (A*-C, A*-A). At A2 level, the gap between GwE schools and the rest of Wales is smaller than it was in 2017.
- % of pupils achieving three A*/A grades increased across the region but not by as much as the national increase.
- % of pupils achieving three A*-C grades improved across the region.
- information via the new Post-16 Performance measures, including value-added data for all schools will be released later in the year. Consortium value-added information, derived from unvalidated data presented to ALPs, suggests encouraging progress across the region.
- at AS level outcomes increased at all grade boundaries (A*/A, A*-B, A*-C and A*-E) in comparison to 2017. Although performance is below that of Wales as a whole at all boundaries above A*-C the rate of increase across the region was higher than that across Wales as a whole (A*/A grades rose by 2.6% against a national increase of 1.3%, for example).

Areas for development:

- Ensuring all schools are able to track, monitor progress and plan interventions successfully and that they are all placing sufficient emphasis on this. Much progress made here but some way to go to ensure this is uniformly strong across the region.
- Looking at higher grade performance and how to further increase this. The rate of conversion from higher grades at GCSE to excellent outcomes at A level is not uniformly strong across the region.
- More opportunities for development, support and networking amongst subject teachers at A level and leaders of Sixth Forms. We aim to have eleven subject networks operating across the region this year and there will be three regional forums for heads of Sixth Form. We will also be introducing the post-16 leadership programme later in the year for current and prospective leaders.

3. INSPECTION PROFILE

The inspection profile is good across all sectors in the region. During academic year 2017-2018, Estyn undertook an inspection in 69 schools (59 primary schools, 7 secondary schools and 3 special school).

Primary - In 51 schools (86.4%), it was announced that no follow-up action was needed compared to 77.6% in 2016-17; 13.6% required follow up action compared to 24.2% in 2016-17. 7 (11.9%) were awarded the least intensive follow-up category [Estyn Review] and 1 (1.7%) was placed in the Significant Improvement category. There are currently 12 schools in a follow-up category. Only 3 schools are currently in Statutory Category (one in special measures and 2 in significant improvement), this equates to 0.75% of primary schools. The percentage of schools receiving excellent judgements increased from 2.4% in 2016/17 to 13.2% in 2017/18.

Secondary – In 4 secondary schools, it was announced that no follow-up action was needed; 2 were awarded the least intensive follow-up category [Estyn Review] and one was placed in Special Measures [which had already been identified within our categorisation profile as 'high risk']. In 6 schools [85.7%], judgements for inspection areas 2 [Wellbeing and attitudes to learning] and 4 [Care, Support and Guidance] were judged to be good or better. During 2017-18 3 regional secondary schools were removed from statutory category and a further 4 were removed from Estyn Monitoring. The current regional profile sees 4 schools [7.4%] in statutory category with an expectation that one of those schools will be taken out when revisited next term. In 3 schools, progress is limited and further significant improvements are required. The

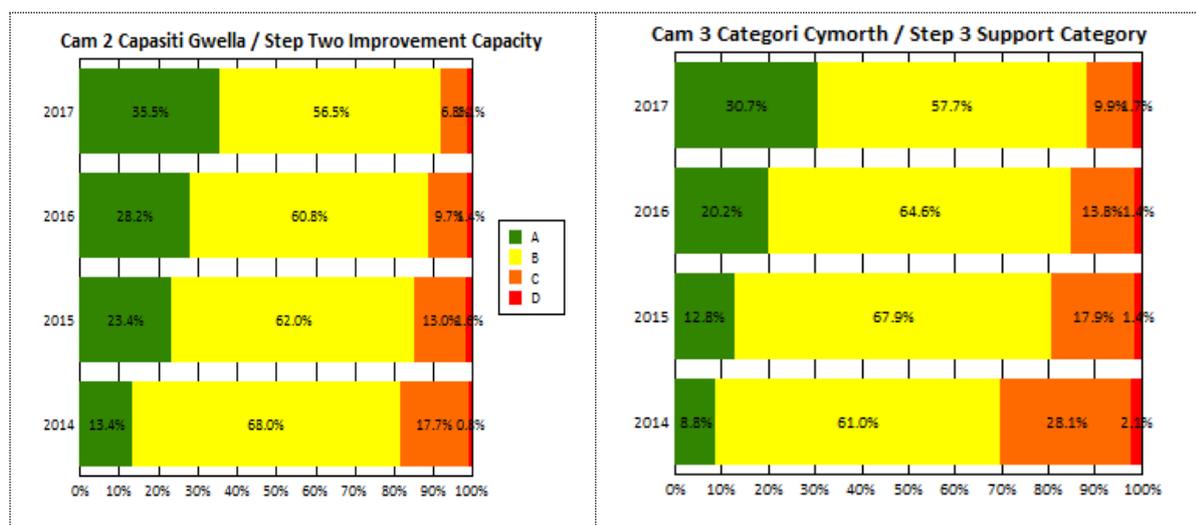
respective local authority officers are fully aware of our concerns and detailed support plans have been agreed with key stakeholders.

Special – Strong profile across the inspection areas with one school receiving excellent judgments in all inspection areas. Another school was judged good in all inspection areas with another receiving 3 good and 2 adequate judgments and placed in Estyn review.

4. NATIONAL CATEGORISATION

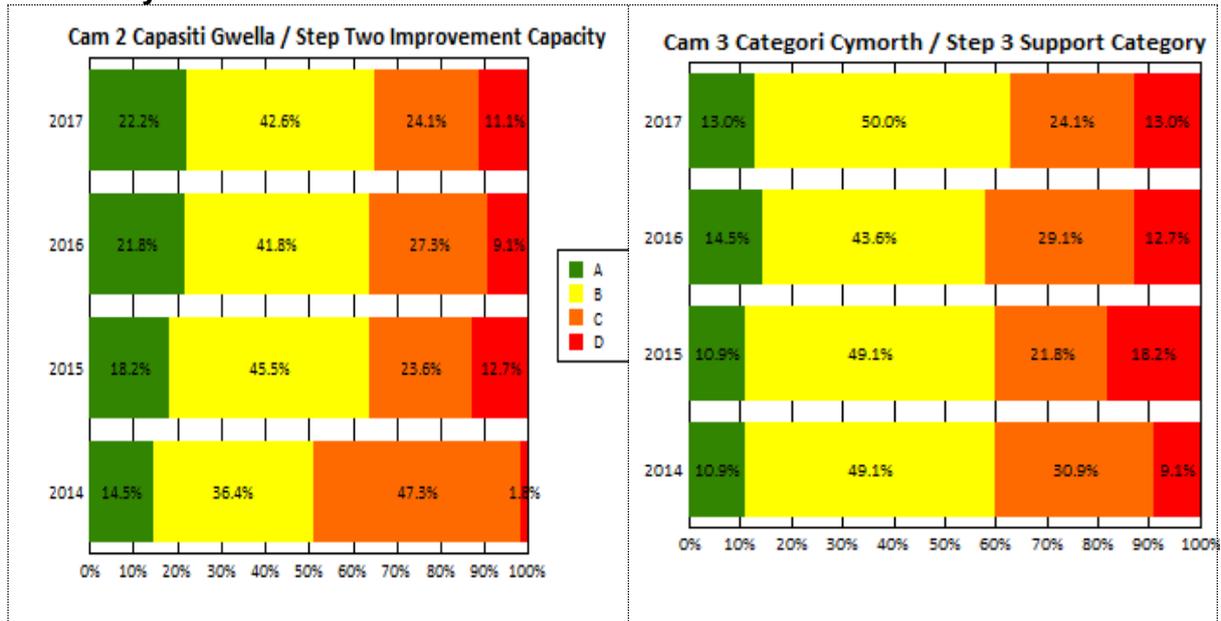
As noted in the Estyn report, the consortium knows its schools increasingly well. Pre-inspection reports for schools by the local authority, based on advice from the consortium, are broadly consistent with inspection outcomes. Inspectors have fewer concerns about these reports than in other regions in Wales. Inspection outcomes show that schools have, overall, been placed in appropriate categories.

Primary Schools



The primary support category profile continues to improve year on year. The percentage of schools being awarded the highest judgements increased [A or B] in stage 2 of the process - an increase from 89.0% in 2016 to 92% in 2017. As a result, an increase was seen in the percentage of primary schools in the Green and Yellow categories - an increase from 84.8% in 2016 to 88.4% in 2017. A good increase was seen in the percentage of schools denoted green

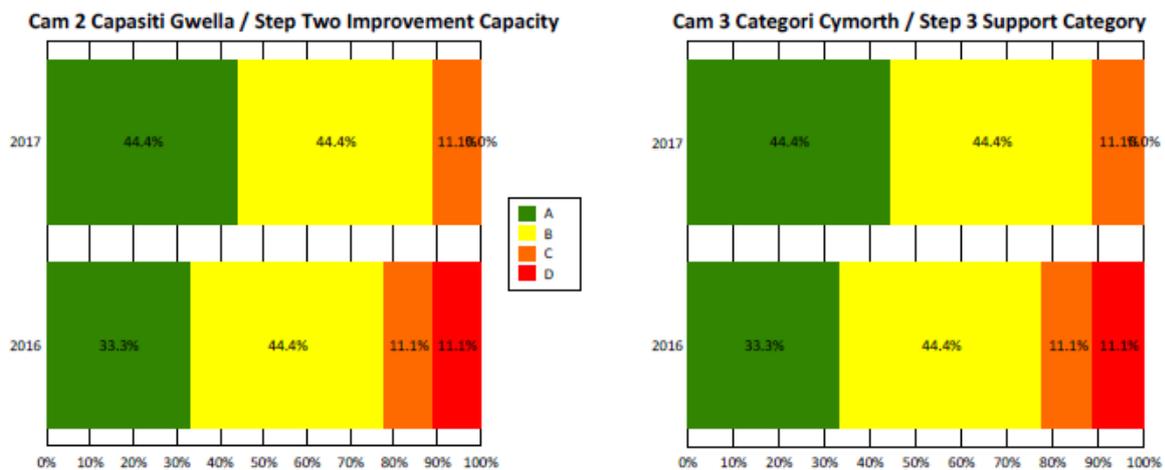
Secondary Schools



The same positive trend of improvement cannot be seen in the secondary sector. The percentage of schools in a green support category has fallen slightly from 14.5% to 13%. However, the percentage of schools in a Green/Yellow support category has increased from 58.2% in 2016, to 63.0% in 2017. The percentage being awarded the highest judgements [A or B] in stage 2 of the process, remained relatively stable.

The national categorisation process will continue in its current form in 2018-19. The regional moderation will take place in early December 2018 with the national moderation in January 2019. The final school categorisation will be published on 'My local school' at the end of January 2019 (Step 2 – improvement capacity, Step 3 – support category). The categorisation profile for the region is expected to further improve in 2018-19 and the process is currently ongoing.

Special Schools



The percentage of schools categorised as Grade C and D for Step 2 has decreased from 22.2% (2 schools) in 2016-17 to 11.1% (1 school) in 2017-18. No special school was

categorised as a D in 2017-18. The percentage categorised as Grade A has increased from 33.3% (3 schools) in 2016-17 to 44.4% (4 schools) in 2017-18.

The percentage of schools categorised as red and amber for Step 3 has decreased from 22.2% (2 schools) in 2016-17 to 11.1% (1 school) in 2017-18. No special school was categorised red in 2017-18. The percentage categorised as green has increased from 33.3% (3 schools) in 2016-17 to 44.4% (4 schools) in 2017-18.