

## **GWE NATIONAL CATEGORISATION PROCESS REPORT (DECEMBER 2019)**

### **Training for National Categorisation**

- The Primary and Senior Leads provided update training for all Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) during the autumn term 2019, using the guidance document.
- All new SIAs attended training with Senior Primary or Secondary Lead and, where appropriate, were provided with a 1:1 session with Core Leads.
- Head teachers were appropriately briefed on the National Categorisation process through Heads Strategic Forums.
- All relevant documentation on National Categorisation was shared with Local Authority Directors, Head teachers and SIAs via the weekly bulletin and the GwE website.

### **National Categorisation – Visits to Schools**

- The categorisation process is an ongoing process throughout the spring, summer and autumn terms and is captured on G6. First draft categorisation was completed by the end of the summer term
- Clear guidance and exemplified templates were shared with all SIAs. This ensured a greater consistency across the whole region.
- Nearly all categorisation visits were completed by the 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2019 which was the agreed deadline.
- Categorisation has been completed accurately and robustly. Core Leads ensured that the categorisation process was quality assured by Senior Leads and Assistant Director also routinely quality assured the process.
- The Core Leads completed joint visits to a sample of schools in all LAs as stipulated in the guidance.
- Senior Leads and Assistant Director met for a whole day to further QA categorisation for a sample of reports.
- All SIAs used an appropriate evidence base on which to make an accurate and well informed categorisation judgements.

### **Quality of National Categorisation Reports and Quality Assurance Processes**

- Core Leads quality assured at least 3 categorisation reports from each SIA and scrutinised the information held about the schools on G6. SIAs are invited to explain their link schools' improvement journey in QA meetings with senior staff, and are held accountable for the challenge and support provided. This quality assurance process ensures that schools are accurately categorised. Feedback is continually provided to SIAs to ensure robust categorisation.
- Senior Leads and AD scrutinise a random sample of categorisation reports to ensure greater consistency.
- Where joint visits were undertaken between the core leads and SIAs, a wide range of evidence was scrutinised, including the information held on G6, to ensure that accurate

judgements were made. Feedback provide good commentaries that reflect the rigour in the processes and procedures applied in line with the National Guidance.

- Where there were a few initial disagreements with support categories between Head teachers and SIAs, joint visits with the Core Leads and SIA were successful in coming to an agreement on categorisation, prior to the regional moderation board. The Senior Leads also spoke to the head teacher on some occasions (very few).
- Categorisation is discussed throughout the year with LA representative in the County Quality Boards that meet on a fortnightly basis.

## Regional Moderation

- The Managing Director nominated the Assistant Director to act as the Regional Lead Moderator (RLM).
- The Regional Moderation Board comprised of the RLM, Primary and Secondary Leads overseeing the work with each local authority, a representative nominated by the Lead Director from within the region, and Head teacher representation from primary, special and secondary schools (English/Welsh Medium and Faith). All members of the board had the appropriate skills and knowledge and were suitably prepared.
- The Regional Lead Moderator from ERW joined the Moderation Board.
- 32 schools (>5% sample) across the 6 LAs were selected for Regional Moderation - the number of secondary schools in the sample was increased last year as agreed by the National Quality and Standardisation Board. A similar sample was chosen this year that included 16 primary, 15 secondary schools and 1 special. These included: schools that represent each of the four judgements about improvement capacity; schools that represent each of the four support categories and schools where consideration has been given to more than one support category.
- No F1 appeal forms were submitted.
- There was robust discussion during moderation. However, no Step 2 or Step 3 categorisation were changed. All relevant comments to the categorisation process and quality of reports were noted on the F4 form for each school.
- F5 form was completed as outlined in the guidance.
- The quality of the categorisation reports in the sample were generally good – some minor points for improvements were recorded to be shared with individual SIAs. Other points for improvement had also been identified during internal scrutiny of reports.

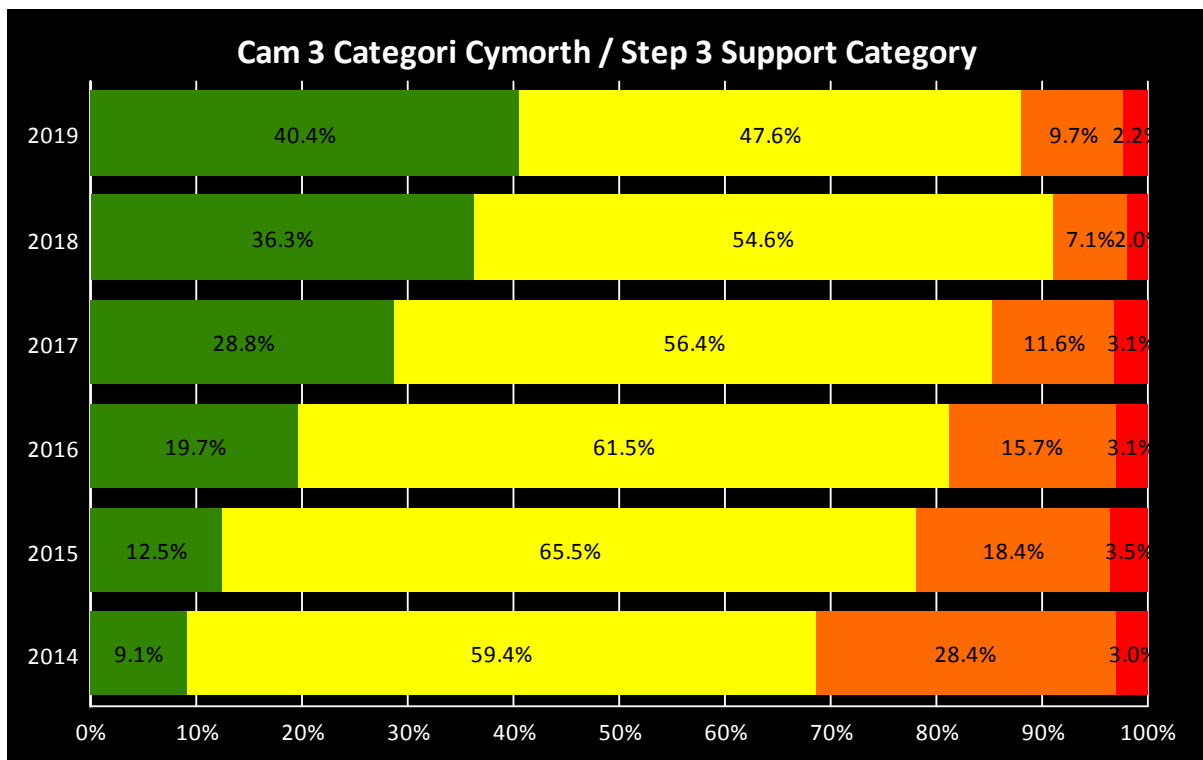
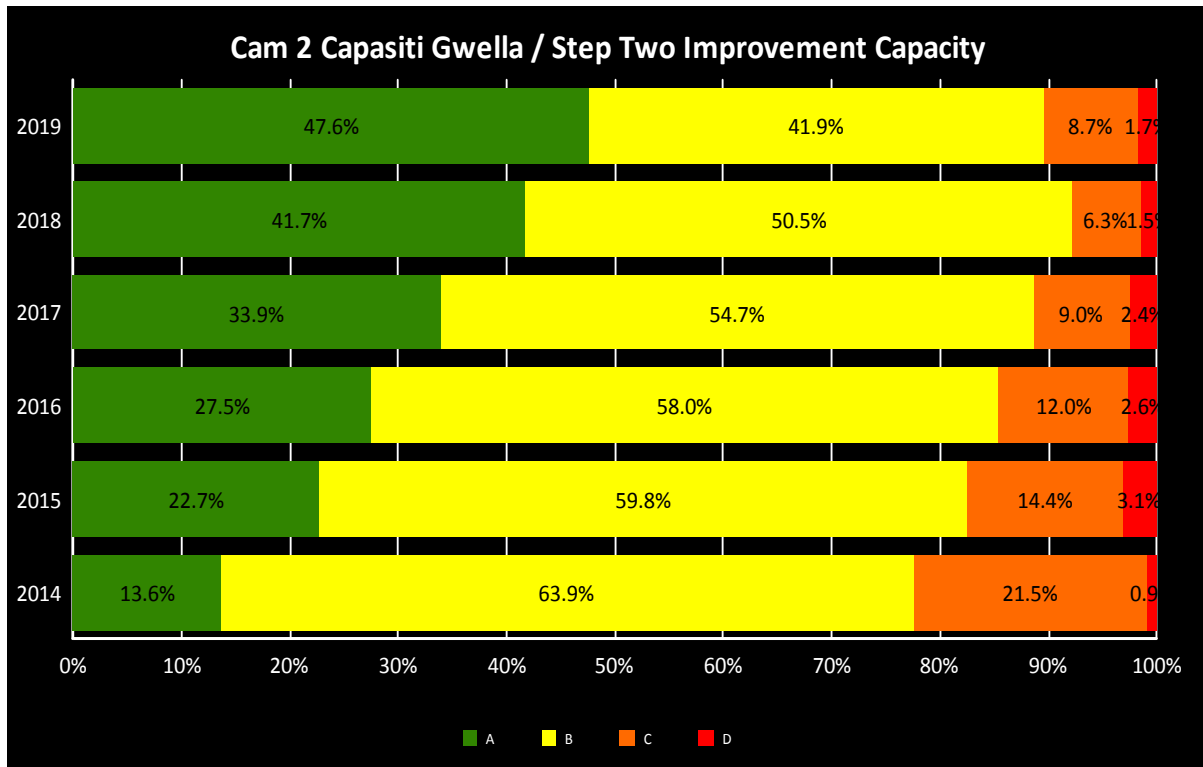
## LA and Regional Categorisation Overview (excluding PRUs)

Full analysis of the categorisation including 3-year trends for each LA are carried out with regional summary below.

### All schools

Across all sectors the percentage of schools categorised as Grade A and B for Step 2 has decreased slightly from 92.2% in 2018 to 89.6% (361 schools) in 2019 due to the number of schools awarded a grade C increasing by 9 to 35 (8.7%) and the number of schools awarded a D grade increasing by 1 to 7 (1.7%) . The percentage categorised as Grade A continues to increase with 47.6% (192 schools) awarded an A grade.

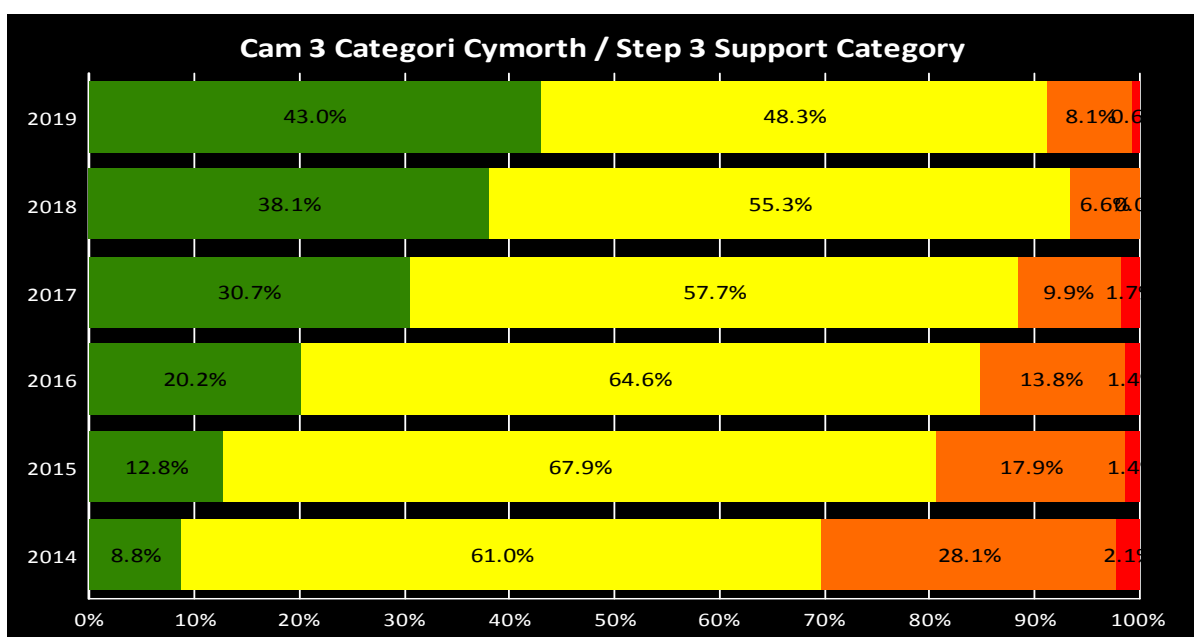
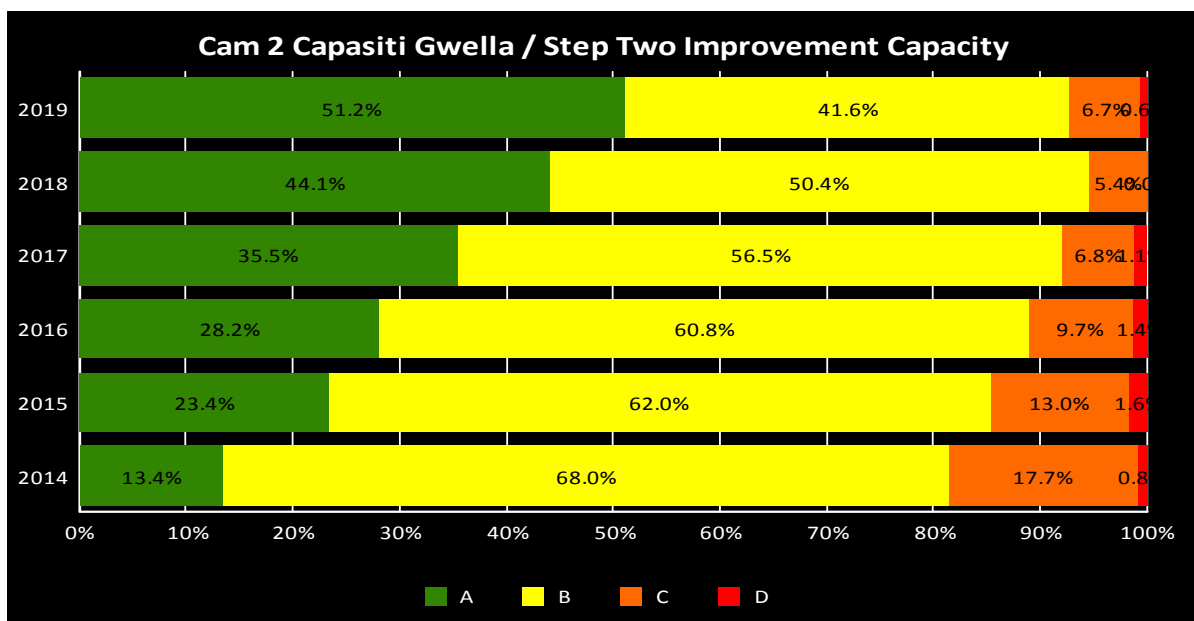
The percentage of schools categorised as Green or Yellow for Step 3 decreased from 91.0% in 2018 to 88.1% (355 schools) in 2019 with the percentage of Amber or Red school increasing by 2.9% due to an additional 10 schools classed as Amber and 1 additional classed as Red. The percentage categorised Red increased by 0.2% to 2.2% (9 Schools) and the percentage categorised as Green increased yet again to 40.4% (163 schools).



## Primary

The percentage of schools categorised as Grade A or B for step 2 decreased from 94.6% in 2018 to 92.7% (319 schools) with the number schools awarded a C grade increasing by 4 to 23 and the number of schools awarded a D grade increasing from 0 to 2. The percentage categorised as Grade A has increased significantly from 35.5% in 2017, 44.1% in 2018 to 51.2% (176 schools) in 2019.

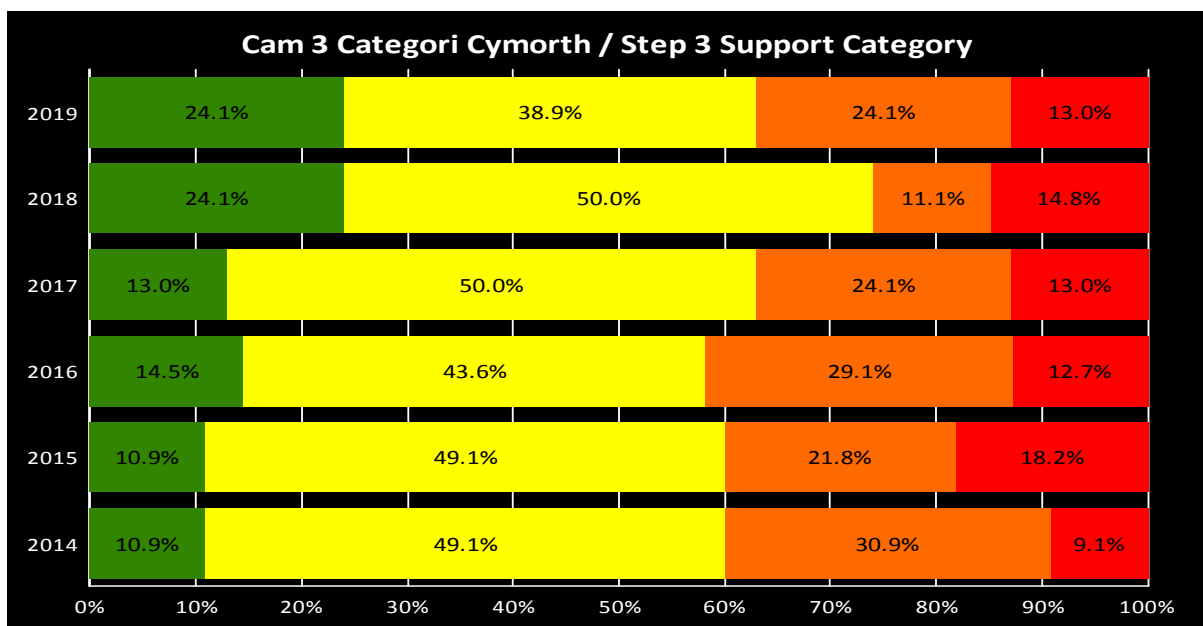
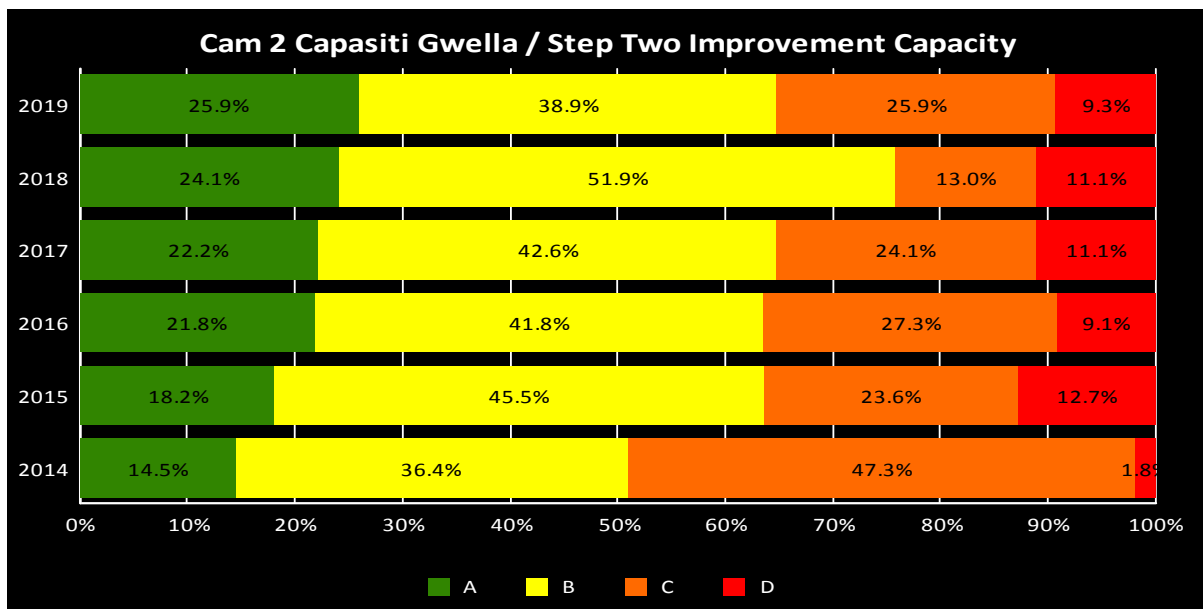
The percentage of schools categorised as Red or Amber for Step 3 increased from 6.6% in 2018 to 8.7% (30 schools) with an additional 7 schools categorised as Amber or Red. The percentage categorised as a red increased from 0% in 2018 to 0.6 % in 2019 due to the Red categorisation of 2 schools. The percentage categorised as green has increased significantly from 30.7% in 2017, 38.1% in 2018 to 43.0% (148 schools) in 2019.



## Secondary

The percentage of schools categorised as Grade A and B for Step 2 decreased from 75.9% (41 schools) in 2018 to 64.8% (35 schools) in 2019. The percentage categorised as a D fell from 11.1% (6 schools) to 9.3% (5 schools). The percentage categorised as Grade A continues to increase from 22.2% in 2017 to 25.9% (14 schools) in 2019.

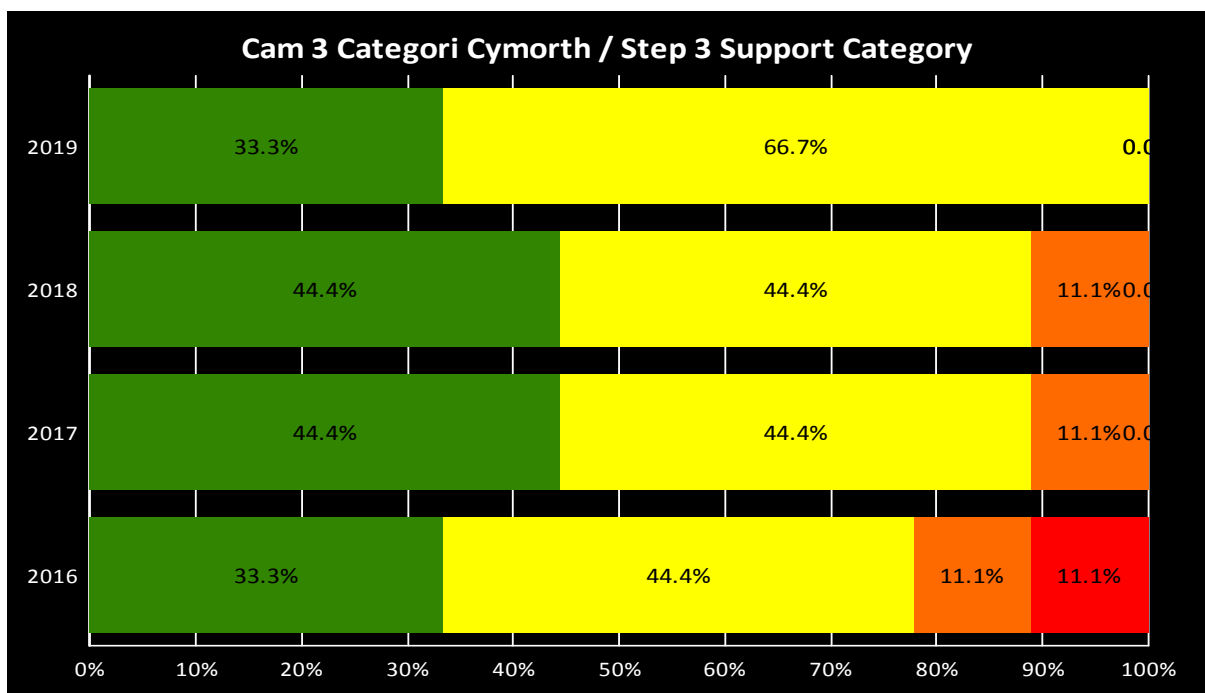
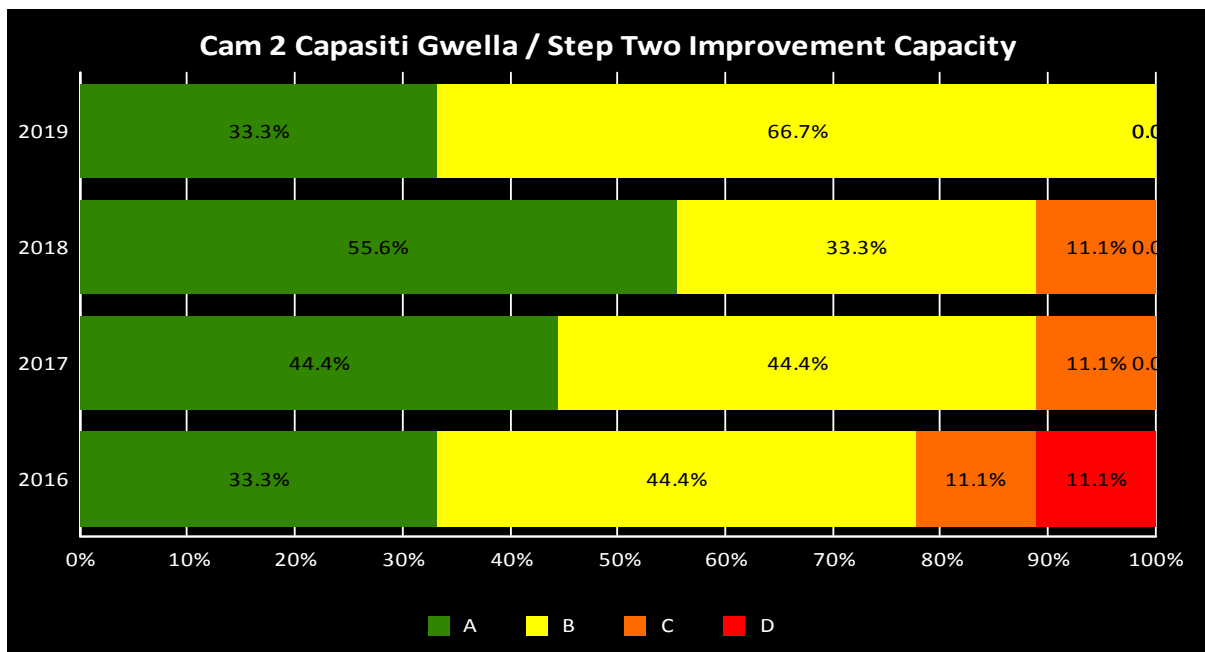
The percentage of schools categorised as red and amber for Step 3 increased from 25.9% (14 schools) in 2018 to 37.0% (20 schools) in 2019. The percentage categorised as Red fell from 14.8% (8 schools) in 2018 to 13.0% (7 schools) in 2019. The percentage categorised Green remained constant at 24.1% (13 schools) with the percentage categorised Yellow decreasing from 50% in 2018 to 38.9% and subsequently the percentage categorised as Amber increasing from 11.1% in 2018 to 24.1% with the number of Amber schools increasing by 7 to 13.



**Special**

The percentage of schools categorised as Grade C and D for Step 2 has fallen to 0. No special school has been categorised as a D since 2016. The percentage categorised as Grade A has decreased from 55.6% (5 schools) in 2018 to 33.3% (3 schools) in 2019. 6 of the 9 schools are categorised as Grade B, up from 3 in 2018.

The percentage of schools categorised as red and amber for Step 3 has fallen to 0.0% and no special school has been categorised red since 2016. The percentage categorised as green decreased from 44.4% (4 schools) to 33.3% (3 schools). 6 of the 9 schools are categorised as Yellow, up from 4 in 2018.



## Step 2 and Step 3 Read Across

In most cases there is a direct correlation between Step 2 and Step 3 (90.8%). In a few cases (9.2%), there is a clear rationale for the 'higher' Step 2 capacity whilst also ensuring that appropriate support is provided (e.g., A Yellow, B Amber). There are no schools with a step 3 category higher than step 2.

## Schools currently in Estyn Statutory Category

All schools going into an Estyn statutory category are categorised as D Red and then reviewed following progress as noted in the guidance.

*'In normal circumstances the improvement capacity of a school requiring **significant improvement or special measures** should not normally be higher than D and the support category red in the first instance. As a school addresses the recommendations from its inspection, evidence about its progress should be weighed carefully and professional judgement applied when reviewing the school's support category.'*

Currently there are 7 secondary schools in Estyn statutory category (5 schools D Red, 1 C Red and 1 school C Amber).

Two primary schools have very recently been placed in special measures and are categorised D Red. One school which has been in statutory category for two years is successfully addressing its recommendations and is categorised C Amber.

There are clear rationale for reviewing and changing the support category based on progress against recommendations and end of key stage performance (time in category is also considered).

## Categorisation process in GWE

### Strengths

- On the whole, there is good correlation between categorisation process and Estyn findings, especially in the primary sector.
- G6 management information system used effectively to inform categorisation.
- SIAs know their schools well, there is a consistent process in place and schools have been robustly categorised.

### Aspects for Development

- Further develop cross-regional working for the process moving forward to ensure national consistency in the process.
- Continue to involve SIAs for peer assessment in the quality assurance process.
- Continue to work closely with the Quality and Standards Group and ensure that all stakeholders are kept apprised of any changes to National Categorisation.