

## Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee

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Meeting Venue  
**Council Chamber, County Hall -  
County Hall**

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Meeting Date  
**Friday, 26 April 2019**

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Meeting Time  
**10.00 am**

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For further information please contact  
**Elizabeth Patterson**

[elizabeth.patterson@powys.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.patterson@powys.gov.uk)



County Hall  
Llandrindod Wells  
Powys  
LD1 5LG

Issue Date

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The use of Welsh by participants is welcomed. If you wish to use Welsh please inform us by noon, two working days before the meeting

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### AGENDA

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>
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To receive apologies for absence.

<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
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To receive declarations of interest from Members.

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP</b>
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the following meeting(s) as a correct record:

- 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019

(Pages 3 - 10)

<b>5.</b>	<b>CATEGORISATION</b>
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To undertake performance review scrutiny of the Powys Schools categorisation 2019 together with plans for the future regarding accountability measures. Documents provided:

- Scrutiny briefing
- Categorisation Powys Schools
- Categorisation across ERW region
- Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales

(Pages 11 - 32)

<b>6.</b>	<b>CHAIR'S BRIEFING</b>
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To receive a verbal update from the Chair of the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

<b>7.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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To consider the scrutiny work programme.

# Public Document Pack

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee Monday, 11 February 2019

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON MONDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2019

PRESENT

County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)

County Councillors G Breeze, B Davies, S C Davies, K Laurie-Parry, E Roderick,  
L Roberts, R G Thomas, Mrs A Davies, Mrs S. Davies, Mrs M Evitts, Robson,  
A W Davies and MC Alexander

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors D R Jones

<b>1. APOLOGIES</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor D Jones.

In attendance:

County Councillors M Alexander (Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language) and A Davies (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport).

A Clark (Head of Learning), M Evans (Senior Manager Schools Transformation), R Waggett (Finance Manager) and D Thompson (Schools Capital and Property Manager).

<b>2. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIR</b>
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**RESOLVED** that Co-opted Member Angela Davies be elected as Vice-Chair until the Annual meeting in May 2019.

<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
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No declarations of interest were received.

<b>4. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP</b>
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No declarations of party whip were received.

<b>5. SCHOOL BALANCES</b>
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**Documents:**

- School budgets 2018-19 update as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

**Discussion:**

*The report lacks detail to provide scrutiny with confidence that necessary actions are being taken.*

There is a requirement that reports are limited to four pages and there is a limit to what can be shared in open session if information relates to matters which are subject to HR processes. Additional information can be provided in appendices.

*The report would be enhanced by including trends over the last five years and benchmarking with other authorities.*

It would be possible to include trends but benchmarking is more complex as different authorities delegate in different ways.

*In 2014 the PwC report concluded a High School needed 750 pupils to be viable. As there are 8 High Schools in Powys with less than 750 pupils are the authority setting schools up to fail?*

The Portfolio Holder for Learning advised that she did not accept the PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) report as it did not take into account transport costs. If pupils were moved to larger units then it would be necessary to top slice more money for transport costs meaning less funding would be available for education. The Portfolio Holder advised that at present transport costs are £68k a day but these could rise to £98k a day if schools were closed. When pressed, the Portfolio Holder was unable to substantiate this figure. Given that this appears to be underpinning policy in relation to school organisation scrutiny are concerned that a policy developed in an apparent vacuum of evidence may be exposing pupils to a less than ideal educational environment and the authority to unnecessary expenditure.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that the viable size for a High School had been set by the council not PwC and that it would be necessary for any future changes to the structure of schools would need to be evidenced.

The Head of Learning advised that there are some small high schools who are able to manage their budgets and have good learning outcomes whilst some of the biggest schools are struggling the most.

He advised that Welsh Government consider small schools to be less than 91 pupils which in Powys would be considered a more viable school. It will be necessary for all to consider how small schools fit into the network in Powys for example by closer inter-school working both at primary to primary level and at primary to high school level. There are opportunities for federation, all-through schools and collaboration but if there are local solutions which would work but for which there are no permissions then it will be necessary to discuss this with Welsh Government.

The Chair noted this as an area which scrutiny may wish to explore further.

*What information is available to ascertain what the costs of transport would be if x number of high schools closed?*

This information is taken into account when proposed changes are considered for example when looking at the arrangements for secondary provision at Ysgol Calon Cymru.

*What capacity does the schools service hold to help schools who are experiencing difficulties balancing their budget and who is charged for this support?*

The Head of Schools confirmed that if schools request additional support in working towards a balanced budget, there will be a charge for this. If a school receives a Warning Notice and the authority act within these parameters, then

the costs of this are met centrally. This is resource intensive and the schools service do not have the capacity to undertake this level of work across the county.

He observed that there needs to be additional Governor training to draw attention to the link between finance and outcomes. If for example a school has a heavy TLR (Teaching and Learning Responsibilities) structure, then this impacts not only on the financial position of the school but also on the teaching workload as a TLR removes the teaching commitment by one third. The Council budget for 2019/20 includes an additional £1million which is welcome but this does not cover the additional costs and therefore there is a real term cut in delegated funding.

There are opportunities to change which will result in reduced cuts. For example, better contracting can save costs, not having subject leads in every subject (no longer affordable), school teachers need upskilling (for which ERW has not been sufficiently pro-active) and using senior tier teachers for appropriate whole school's tasks. These changes need to take place at pace over the next three to six years.

The Portfolio Holder observed that there was a role for Bursars to take the lead in finance management to enable the Head Teacher to focus on teaching and learning.

*Will reports be produced of the intensive work undertaken with schools who have received a Warning Letter so other schools can learn from this information?*

Reports of this work could be provided but are extremely resource intensive and have limited value as each school has individual circumstances. There is however potential for school to school learning and an improved network of cluster heads meetings could be a way for this information to be shared.

*What is the definition of licensed, unlicensed and approved budgets?*

An unlicensed position is where a deficit budget has been set with no means of bringing the budget back to balance. A licensed position is where a deficit budget is set with a plan to bring the budget back into balance within 3 or 5 years. An approved budget is one which is in balance in the current year and may or may not remain in black over the next 3 years.

Schools with approved budgets get little additional in year support. Schools with licensed budgets get some support whilst schools with unlicensed budgets get a higher level of support and challenge.

*What capacity has the authority to provide sufficient support and challenge?*

The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that well run schools (green under categorisation) should not be requiring resource from the authority to provide support and challenge on financial matters. These schools are taking resource from those schools more in need (those categorised as red).

*It seems perverse to charge schools who are struggling for support.*

All support provided incurs a cost and funds are limited.

*Does the additional £1million provided within the school's budget include inflation, pension and salary uplift?*

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the additional costs resulting from inflation and the teachers' pay award (funded by Welsh Government) are included within the additional £1million. To date there has been no information regarding the

additional costs relating to teachers' pensions from Westminster. This may result in additional costs in Powys.

*What impact will the newly agreed funding formula have on the figures contained within this report? What help and support will be available to those schools adversely affected?*

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that the new funding formula would be phased in over two years but that the detail of the phasing methodology had yet to be confirmed.

The Finance Manager advised that over the next two months' meetings would be arranged with all schools to go through their budgets. Two potential ways of phasing the changes are being examined:

- 50% this year 50% in the following year for all schools
- If the changes are less than 3% the new formula is immediately applied. If the changes are greater than 3% the new formula is phased in over 2 years

It will be essential that the overall budget balances in each of the two years.

*Can scrutiny have sight of the populated model that has been run for each school?*

This information has been calculated for High Schools first as High Schools undertake their own budgets. The information for Primary Schools will be shared with schools during their financial surgeries.

The Head of Learning confirmed that detail for individual schools had not been closely examined but modelling shows the majority of schools sit close to their current position although there are some outside it. This is a full reset of the £77million delegated schools budget.

*Are special schools subject to the same budgetary arrangements as mainstream schools?*

Yes.

*Are Governors always represented at School Finance meetings?*

Yes, with either the Chair of Governors or the Chair of the Finance Committee attending.

*It appears that small schools are being protected at the expense of larger schools who are being forced to teach pupils in ever larger classes to keep a balanced budget.*

The Portfolio Holder for Learning advised that the authority are closing schools for example in Newtown where four are being closed to be replaced by two. The authority is also changing schools for example by federating (Carno, Glantwymyn and Llanbrynmair are a good example of federation which has resulted in very pleasing Estyn Inspection outcomes). It is necessary to ensure that if schools are closed it is for sound educational and financial reasons and that communities are worked with. Cost savings from the Newtown proposals are considerable and will mean money can go back into schools.

The Head of Learning confirmed that there are a number of schools on the cusp of viability and there is a limit with what he can do with the deficit in the schools delegated budget. Working with schools however has reduced the projected deficit in 2020/21 from -£7.6million to -£5.1million.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that the level of school balance deficits is a risk to the Council. Schools and the Schools Service are working hard to bring down the levels of deficit but it is of particular concern that the overall balances are in deficit (a slight surplus in primaries is written off by the deficit secondary's). The funding formula review will help get clarity going forward but it is necessary to look at the pattern of schools and provision across Powys. Decisions will need to be evidence driven. Learning is the biggest budget in the Council (approximately 40%).

The Portfolio Holder for Learning advised that when the top slice for school transport and ALN was removed Powys spend an average amount on schools. There are pupils in special education who would not be accessing this provision elsewhere and the work undertaken by the ALN transformation should mean that more money will be available for delegated funding. It should be noted that much hard work has been undertaken to reduce the projected deficits in the schools delegated budget and the reducing the funding for ALN.

**Outcomes:**

- **Scrutiny would encourage the use of appendices in formal Cabinet reports as it believes the rigorous enforcement of a four-page report model hampers scrutiny and the general public from understanding and being able to question officers and Portfolio Holders during the pre-cabinet scrutiny process**
- **That those schools who have worked to improve their forecast budgets are commended and those who still have work to do are urged to take necessary and urgent action to bring their budgets back into balance**
- **That Learning and Skills Scrutiny continue to monitor school budgets both delegated and central**
- **That Learning and Skills Scrutiny would highlight the comments of the Portfolio Holder for Finance regarding the need to be evidence driven and believe that greater resource should be deployed to ensure that relevant information is available to inform any future reconfiguration process**
- **That consideration is given to improving the opportunities for peer to peer support for schools struggling with budget issues**
- **That consideration is given as to how the role of governors, and specifically local authority governors can be supported to enable them to fulfil their role whilst acting with a full understanding of the local authority position**

<b>6.   SCHOOLS MAJOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME</b>
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**Documents:**

- Schools Service Major Improvements Programme 2019-2020
- Appendix A – Buildings and site priorities

**Discussion:**

*Why is only one school benefitting from the Welsh Government Feminine hygiene and toilets grant?*

Under the scoring system the only school toilets due for capital spend were at Llangattock Church in Wales Primary school. The capital grant has therefore been spent at this school. The revenue grant received is being distributed by the schools service.

The Portfolio Holder described a new project 'Bags of Confidence' which was starting in Llanidloes, as a Powys based solution for period poverty but also looked to reach a wider audience toothbrushes and deodorant for pupils in need of both gender. It is hoped to roll this project out across Powys.

The Head of Learning noted that in terms of capital spend on school's toilets the grant would not go far and it had therefore been prioritised to where it will have the greatest impact.

*What will be the impact of reducing the capital spend available for Schools Major Improvements from £2million to £1million in future years?*

There will be an impact on the ability for to respond to DDA requirements. The service is still responding to the condition of blocks but the reduction will reduce the ability to respond to maintenance and repairs. It will be necessary to ensure that the schools major improvements programme closely aligns to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools programme. It will be necessary to make in year changes to the programme if, for example, health and safety issues arise.

The Portfolio Holder advised that it was important to consider capital investment proposals at an early stage and be mindful of value for money considerations. For example, would it be good value for money to spend £250k of capital on a small school. However, when those schools in very poor condition have been replaced there will be more money available. The changes made in school for DDA purposes will be long lasting providing they are maintained and they are more cost effective than transporting a pupil to a special school.

The Schools Capital and Property Manager noted that a huge benefit accrued by enabling pupils to access mainstream education having made alterations for DDA requirements.

*Why are certain schools who are known to be in poor condition not on this programme?*

Those schools who are identified for feasibility work under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, for example Sennybridge, will not feature on the Major Improvements Programme.

*Should the authority be considering spending more money through Major School Improvements rather than the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme?*

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that these were difficult decisions and whilst there was a need to improve 'tired schools' the focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools funding was transformational. Thus there are opportunities in for example Newtown where subject to detailed work it is proposed across the primary sector to close five and open two. There is always a balance between maintaining schools and accepting that a new build is necessary. Value for money is paramount.

*What would be the cost of bringing all schools up to standard?*

Under the Schools Asset Management Plan the service is collating the asset information and in the next quarter will be reviewing the condition of all schools together with the liability. This will enable a forecast to be produced on a school by school basis and will be provided to scrutiny.

*Do all schools subscribe to Property Plus?*

Not all schools have chosen to subscribe to Property Plus. When a new school is built there will be an opportunity to subscribe to Property Plus. The minimum period of subscription is three years.

*How confident can schools be in signing up for Property Plus if for extended period the service offered is 'emergency only'?*

This was a difficult time for schools and the 'emergency only' period did include health and safety matters. Part of the reason for this period was because the service was dealing with a backlog.

*Who is responsible for fencing school sites?*

The local authority.

*Are there any plans to put solar panels on the school estate?*

This work would be part a corporate approach to energy generation.

*Although LED lights are energy efficient how is this assessed against payback times?*

Design life information has been requested so a business case can be put forward. It appears there is a mixed picture and HoWPS will be asked for their experience. This can then be provided to schools.

*How is the service assured that jobs are completed to the appropriate standard?*

The service aim to sign off every project to have a visual record and handover.

#### **Outcomes:**

- **That Scrutiny Observations on the Schools Major Improvement Programme be prepared for submission with Cabinet papers.**
- **A copy of the report on bringing schools up to standard (including cost) be provided to scrutiny on completion.**

<b>7. CHAIR'S BRIEFING</b>
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The Chair explained that there was a new method for commissioning scrutiny which meant that the three new Scrutiny Committees effectively have to bid for work to the Co-ordinating Committee who will consider it for inclusion at a full scrutiny committee, appropriate for a working group or reject it.

At the first meeting the following bids were made:

1. The Welsh immersion scheme. The Co-ordinating Committee have asked that it be ascertained how this links to the WESP and what would be appropriate timeframes for this work.
2. A School Improvement Working Group. The Co-ordinating Committee have requested terms of reference for this group.
3. School Finance Working Group. The Co-ordinating Committee have requested terms of reference for this group.

<b>8. WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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Dates for future meetings of the full Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee are as follows:

- 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019
- 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019
- 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019
- 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**County Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)**

## **Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee**

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

### **Scrutiny briefing on:**

- **Categorisation and future accountability measure**

The papers attached provide information on the categorisation of Powys Schools, a presentation on the categorisation of ERW Schools and information on the future accountability measures.

This session provides scrutiny with an opportunity to review, assess and challenge the overall outcome of the categorisation of Powys schools and to provide any observations or recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language or the Head of Education. The information provided regarding the categorisation across ERW gives an opportunity to see what levels of support are being identified as necessary for Powys schools in comparison to regional partners.

Information is also provided on the Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales. These documents explain why arrangements are changing, what changes are proposed and a timeframe for this reform. This information will help to explain to scrutiny the changes that are taking place in the area of school improvement and accountability which scrutiny will need to understand in the role of monitoring school improvement. Further updates on this review will be brought to scrutiny as the review progresses.

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**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**SCRUTINY  
26<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander  
Portfolio Holder for Learning and Welsh Language

**SUBJECT:** Briefing on National Categorisation of Powys Schools 2018-2019

**REPORT FOR:** Discussion / Information

**1. Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide information on national categorisation profiles for all Powys schools.

**All Powys' Schools Categorisation**

All Schools Capacity to Improve 2018-19			
Group A	34 Schools	36%	71%
Group B	33 Schools	35%	
Group C	24 Schools	25%	28%
Group D	3 Schools	3%	

**94 schools**

All Schools Capacity to Improve 2017-18			
Group A	31 Schools	33%	67%
Group B	32 Schools	34%	
Group C	29 Schools	30%	33%
Group D	3 Schools	3%	

**95 schools**

2018-2019	
All Schools	
Green	(34) 36%
Yellow	(34) 36%
Amber	(23) 24%
Red	(3) 3%
94 schools	

2017-2018	
All Schools	
Green	(28) 29%
Yellow	(36) 38%
Amber	(27) 28%
Red	(4) 4%
95 schools	

In 2018-2019, the number of Powys schools categorised in the top category 'A' has increased to 36%, compared to 33% the previous year. There has also been an increase in the number of schools deemed to be self-improving, i.e., A & B schools, with 71% of Powys schools now in these two categories. Subsequently, the number of schools in the lower two categories, C & D, have reduced, with three Powys schools categorised in the lowest category of D.

The support provided for schools is represented by the colour category of each school. Each colour represents a number of days support available for each school, with Green being the highest category (equivalent to 4 days support) and Red being the lowest category (equivalent to at least 20 days support).

In 2018-19, there has been an increase in the number of Green schools, meaning that these schools require less support. The number of primary schools categories as Green for support is the fundamental reason for the increase in the number of Powys Green schools, increasing from 30% to 39% in 2018-19. There has also been a small decrease in the number of schools

needing the highest amount of support of greater than 20 days, i.e, Red for support, going from 4 schools in the previous year to 3 in 2018-19.

### Primary School Categorisation

Primary Schools Capacity to Improve 2018-19			
Group A	31 Schools	39%	77%
Group B	30 Schools	38%	
Group C	16 Schools	20%	23%
Group D	2 Schools	3%	

**79 schools**

Primary Capacity to Improve 2017-18			
Group A	27 schools	34%	73%
Group B	31 schools	39%	
Group C	21 schools	26%	27%
Group D	1 schools	1%	

**80 schools**

2018-2019	
Primary Category	
Green	(31) 39%
Yellow	(31) 39%
Amber	(15) 19%
Red	(2) 3%
<b>79 schools</b>	

2017-2018	
Primary Category	
Green	(24) 30%
Yellow	(34) 43%
Amber	(20) 25%
Red	(2) 2%
<b>80 schools</b>	

The categorisation of Powys primary schools has improved in 2018-19, with 39% of primary schools now categorised as A for capacity to improve. There has also been an increase in the number of self-improving schools, with 77% of Powys primary schools now categorised as an A or B.

There are two primary schools categorised in the lowest category 'D'. One of these schools is in Estyn Special Measures and the other is currently undergoing a period of unstable leadership and being heavily supported by several officers.

In 2018-2019, the number of primary schools in the Green support category has increased to 39% from 30% in 2017-18. There has been a reduction in the number of schools in the Amber support category. Out of the 17 schools in the Amber and Red support categories, 11 of these schools have a new or acting headteacher in post at the start of the academic year.

### Secondary School Categorisation

Secondary Capacity to Improve 2018-19			
Group A	3 Schools	27%	45%
Group B	2 Schools	18%	
Group C	5 Schools	45%	55%
Group D	1 Schools	9%	

**11 schools (inc. Bro Hyddgen)**

2018-2019	
Secondary Category	
Green	(3) 27%
Yellow	(2) 18%
Amber	(5) 45%
Red	(1) 9%
<b>11 schools (inc. Bro Hyddgen)</b>	

Secondary Capacity to Improve 2017-18			
Group A	4 schools	33%	33%
Group B	0 schools	0%	
Group C	7 schools	58%	66%
Group D	1 school	8%	

**12 schools (inc. Bro Hyddgen)**

2017-2018	
Secondary Category	
Green	(4) 33%
Yellow	(0) 0%
Amber	(7) 58%
Red	(1) 8%
<b>12 schools (inc. Bro Hyddgen)</b>	

The National Categorisation profile for Powys secondary schools has improved in 2018-19, with more schools in self-improving categories (A& B) compared to the previous year's categorisation. Although there is one less school in the A category, this is due to a new headteacher taking up their post during the 2017-18 academic year. There are also less schools in the C and D categories reflecting an improving performance of Powys schools. Of the 6 schools in the lowest two categories, all of these schools are either in an Estyn follow up category or have only recently been removed and still require support to embed and improve outcomes, provision and leadership.

### **Three Year National Categorisation Trend for all Powys Schools**

	2017		2018		2019	
A	29	30%	31	33%	34	36%
B	40	41%	32	34%	33	35%
C	26	26%	29	30%	24	25%
D	3	3%	3	3%	3	3%
	98 Schools		95 Schools		94 Schools	

Over the last three-year period, 35 schools have remained in the same category for National Categorisation for each of these years, with 29 of these schools being in the A or B categories. There are six schools which have been in the C category for the last three years. Two of these are high schools which have recently been removed or are still in Estyn follow up categories. One primary school has had an acting headteachers over this period. Two other primary schools have been identified as causing concern due to the lack of progress in addressing the schools' priorities. The final school is a special school with a headteacher starting their second year of headship.

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# Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales

# Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales

## **Audience**

Primary schools; middle schools; secondary schools; special schools; governing bodies of maintained schools; local authorities; diocesan authorities; regional consortia; challenge advisers; Estyn; teaching unions; national bodies with an interest in education; and members of the public.

## **Overview**

This document sets out draft proposals for new evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements to support the realisation of the new curriculum.

## **Action required**

None – for information only.

## **Further information**

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

Schools Effectiveness Division

The Education Directorate

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

e-mail: [SMED2@gov.wales](mailto:SMED2@gov.wales)



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## **Additional copies**

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at [www.gov.wales/educationandskills](http://www.gov.wales/educationandskills)

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## Introduction

This document, and attached infographics, set out a summary of the draft arrangements that form part of the significant education reform programme that we are undertaking in Wales. These draft arrangements relate to:

- evaluation and improvement
- accountability.

It is important to recognise that these arrangements will be developed and phased in over time and there will be an evolving picture as we make the transition between the current system and future plans.

These arrangements have been developed with the profession and key stakeholders including international experts. We are grateful for their contributions so far and intend to continue working with them.

## Background

Since the publication of *Education in Wales: Our national mission* and informed by the OECD review of Welsh education in 2017, the Welsh Government has worked with the teaching profession, local government, consortia, Estyn, unions and international experts to undertake a fundamental review of the current accountability system.

The conclusions from the accountability review are clear. The unintended consequences of the current assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements and performance measures include:

- a narrowing choice of the curriculum at both primary and secondary sectors
- the current Level 2 inclusive measure placing an excessive focus on the GCSE C/D boundary (not recognising the achievements of learners either below or above that threshold)
- the way in which benchmarking is used has driven competition between schools and local authorities rather than encouraging collaboration
- increased and unnecessary workload for teachers and others in the system, without the necessary impact or benefit for learners.

As such, schools are subject to potentially conflicting messages about what matters and this may divert effort from learning, teaching and raising standards towards a culture of compliance and bureaucracy.

The school and school improvement system in Wales is made up of three distinct aspects. Firstly, policy design and development; secondly delivery and implementation; and finally the underpinning accountability and improvement functions which enable us to provide and receive assurance that there is efficiency and effectiveness throughout the system.

We have made significant gains in the policy design aspect because of the ongoing engagement of stakeholders. We envisage receiving feedback over the next few months on this pivotal aspect.

## The new evaluation and improvement arrangements

We have been developing new evaluation and improvement arrangements to replace parts of the current accountability system. We have taken care to ensure that the arrangements align with the emerging curriculum. This work is ongoing. We are publishing this draft to support and encourage engagement in the next stages.

These new arrangements will be robust, coherent and transparent. They will bring a new rigour to arrangements, with schools expected to take increasing accountability for their improvement journeys. We understand that this will require significant changes to culture and behaviours across the whole system, and it is not expected that these changes will happen immediately. There will be a transition period.

These new evaluation and improvement arrangements will help to bring about the cultural change needed to support the implementation and realisation of the new curriculum. It will support our aim of raising standards, reducing the attainment gap, and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.

The arrangements are based on the following four key principles. They will be:

- **fair** – they will promote equity, inclusion, choice, individual pathways to learning and never losing sight of the learner
- **coherent** – allowing each part of the system to work together without overlapping, with clear roles and responsibilities
- **proportionate** – ensuring that the implementation of the new arrangements and process is manageable and makes a difference. They will be underpinned by the principle of subsidiarity, allowing responsibility for accountability for schools to be local, led by self-aware schools
- **transparent** – recognising the breadth of learning experience across schools and the value added by teachers in class.

We will bring national consistency in self-evaluation to support high-quality, school improvement work. At the heart of the evaluation and improvement arrangements is robust and continuous self-evaluation for **all tiers** of the education system. This, along with peer engagement will support learning and improvement, embed collaboration, build trust, drive self-improvement and raise standards for all our learners.

We will begin to move away from a disproportionate emphasis on narrow performance measures to a wider range of indicators which better capture the whole learning experience, learner progress and our ambitions for the new curriculum.

[Overview of arrangements](#) shows the evaluation and improvement cycle and provides greater detail of how it will practically apply to each tier of the education system. We are currently working with our colleagues across government, in Estyn, Qualifications Wales and in local government to capture a comprehensive oversight of arrangements and how it will practically apply to each tier of the education system. Rigorous, data rich self evaluation will be a strong feature of future arrangements. Schools, local authorities (and their regional consortia) and Welsh Government will

all be expected to go through a process of self-evaluation, implementation planning and the publication of summary priorities.

- **Self-evaluation**

Self-evaluation will focus on the learner, their achievements, progress and experiences in school. At the heart of this, for example, will be a focus on learning and teaching, leadership, the development of a learning organisation culture, well-being of pupils and staff, equity and inclusion. Self-evaluation should focus on the four purposes of the new curriculum and evaluate the progress the school is making towards realising the new curriculum. The self-evaluation processes should identify areas of strengths and priorities for improvement.

This will be supported through a new national self-evaluation for improvement toolkit which is being developed by the OECD, Estyn and the profession. The evaluation criteria and tools and approaches will provide coherence and a common language for self-evaluation for schools; as well as for local authorities, consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government.

Self-evaluation is not the sole responsibility of senior leaders; it should involve all staff and other stakeholders and is strengthened by the involvement of peers. Schools should also include their learners, parents/carers and governors. It will focus on the four purposes of the new curriculum; and it will be a continuous process and not merely happen at a particular point in time.

To ensure rigour and support, self-evaluation, implementation planning and the summary of priorities will undergo a process of external authentication. For schools, local authorities and regional consortia further rigour will be provided by Estyn who will continue to undertake inspection to validate self-evaluation.

- **Planning for improvement**

The outcome of the self-evaluation process will be the identification of priorities for improvement.

- **Publication of summary priorities and implementation plan**

A summary of the key findings and priorities will be published. This is in line with current expectations for schools as part of the regulations on publishing school development plans, and do not add to workload. Our intention is that for schools, these priorities for improvement will form part of the statutory process of target setting which will need to be agreed by the governing body and approved by the local authority.

It is expected that schools will include peers to support their self-evaluation arrangements.

- **Authentication**

For schools this process of authentication will be undertaken by regional consortia. National school categorisation, which indicates the level of support schools need from the system to improve, will evolve into a more sophisticated

self-evaluation process that looks at a broader range of indicators, such as learner well-being. To ensure rigour and support, local authority, regional consortia and Welsh Government self-evaluations will also undergo a process of external authentication. This will ensure that the self-evaluation is a true and authentic reflection of the institution's strengths and priorities for improvement and match that to an appropriate level of support.

- **Inspection**

Estyn will continue to inspect schools. As a response to the report *A Learning Inspectorate* the nature of inspection will change. Estyn will consult on those arrangements in due course. Estyn will also inspect local authorities and regional consortia and judge the arrangements in place in each region to ensure rigour and consistency.

- **Improvement indicators**

Schools, local authorities, regional consortia and Welsh Government are data rich, but do not always currently use this information to drive improvement. The intelligent use of data is an integral part of self-evaluation. Working with stakeholders, we are currently mapping the range of data which can inform self-evaluation. This will extend further than learner performance alone and include other key measures regarding well-being, learning and teaching and leadership. We envisage that the indicators we use will be wide ranging. They will be non-hierarchical and provide a wider range of both qualitative and quantitative information to support a school's ongoing improvement journey. We will look at system-wide indicators as well as school level indicators. We are taking consideration of workload and bureaucracy, as we plan for the changes necessary culturally whilst maintaining a clear focus on accountability to make sure every learner gets equity in our schooling system.

[Overview of arrangements](#) gives additional clarity on how self-evaluation applies to each tier in the system. We will continue to work with schools and all stakeholders as we develop these arrangements.

[Key planning milestones for schools to 2022](#) provides additional information on the timelines for developing the new evaluation and improvement arrangements and the key products within it, namely: the self-evaluation for improvement toolkit, the authentication process and proposed changes to Estyn inspection.

## Accountability

Effective and rigorous accountability arrangements are pivotal to the success of our ambitious reform programme and the high aspirations set out in the *Our national mission*. We will plan appropriately so that we make the best use of each aspect of the system to build proportionate and coherent arrangements.

**We will make sure that our policies, guidance documents or legislative changes include safeguards and inbuilt accountability arrangements where appropriate.** Schools will continue to be required to publish their improvement priorities, in line with school development plan regulations. We will develop system-wide measures to help us nationally to judge progress in policy implementation. We will avoid the aggregation of school level data.

**We will use our delivery mechanism and self-evaluation arrangements for schools, local authorities and regional consortia to drive improvement in an environment where accuracy and transparency is given precedence.** School level target setting expectations will remain as will the need for local authorities to approve the process of target setting. It will evolve however, to give schools more flexibility to identify improvement targets appropriate to the school's context. We will expect schools to increase further the range and quality of evidence used to inform their self-evaluation arrangements and improvement priorities. The school improvement functions, which are delivered on behalf of local authorities by regional consortia, will remain. Regional consortia will continue to provide support to schools in proportion to need, and in line with the improvement priorities identified.

National school categorisation, which indicates the level of support schools need from the system to improve, will need to evolve into a more sophisticated process that looks at a broader range of indicators, such as learner well-being. It is expected that this will evolve into an ongoing process of authentication of a school's self-evaluation and priorities for development.

**We will also use democratic accountability arrangements at national, regional and local level to support the implementation of our reform programme.** Governing bodies will remain the first line of accountability for schools. Their duties will remain. We will develop a training package for governors on the new expectations. Estyn will continue to inspect schools and the work of local authorities and regional consortia. Estyn will continue to produce annual reports and thematic reports. They will also produce a state of the nation report every three years. The Welsh Government will develop and deliver a programme of monitoring performance in the national priorities. The Welsh Government will continue to participate in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) on a three-yearly cycle.

**We will also continue to work with the middle tier on the cultural and behavioural changes needed to support these arrangements.** We understand that we must also ensure alignment of each aspect of work and take care to avoid conflicting messages, unnecessary bureaucracy and excessive workload.

## A learning inspectorate

Estyn will play a key role in the new evaluation and improvement arrangements as set out in *A Learning Inspectorate – Independent review of Estyn*. We fully supported Estyn in undertaking the review and welcomed the report. The Minister for Education has announced that she has agreed to support all the recommendations in the report that required the consideration and approval of the Welsh Government and fully support Estyn in taking forward those recommendations that fall to them as an Inspectorate. We will continue to work closely with Estyn on taking these forward, and there will be a period of consultation before proposals are implemented, but to be clear Estyn will continue to be independent from Welsh Government.

In respect of the recommendations that require the approval of Welsh Government, Estyn's statutory duties remain. Inspection will continue, it will be robust, provide rigour and clear evidence on the quality and standards of education and training provided in Wales.

Schools will continue to be inspected against the provisions that are set out in primary legislation along with the four main questions set out in *A Learning Inspectorate – Independent review of Estyn*.

There will be a partial suspension of inspection from September 2020 to August 2021 to enable the inspectorate to work more closely with schools and consortia on the curriculum reform. This will be achieved through amending current regulations to extend the inspection cycle from seven years to eight years. However, those schools that continue to give cause for concern will be monitored by Estyn during this time and will continue to receive support from their regional consortia and local authorities.

Moving forward Estyn will change the way they undertake their inspections. This will involve the validation of the school's self-evaluation and improvement processes and will take place more regularly than in the current cycle. Estyn will shortly begin a process of consulting with stakeholders on the new arrangements from 2021. This will include inspecting schools more than once within a seven year cycle – giving parents/carers even greater and more frequent clarity of how their child's school is doing. There will be the continued use of statutory categories of 'Significant Improvement' and 'Special Measures'. Working with our stakeholders, Welsh Government will also review and strengthen the approach to support those schools causing most concern.

We have continued to listen to and work with our workforce, and international experts, and it is our view that these arrangements, along with the wider evaluation and improvement arrangements, are the right thing to do for our school system and for our children in schools. Estyn will make a further announcement on the detail of what this means for them shortly.

## Next steps

The publication of these draft arrangements is the starting point for discussion and development. We will need to work with the profession and our key partners in the middle tier to develop and provide clarity around the processes, roles and responsibilities and mechanisms sitting behind this proposal.

As we reform the arrangements, we expect to see the following developments inform our work.

- A full review of performance indicators, what they will look like and how they will be used.
- The evolution of the current school categorisation model.
- Clarity on how schools causing concern will be supported.
- Working with our new 'Strategic Education Delivery Group'.
- Greater clarity around roles and responsibilities in the middle tier.
- Clarity on future assessment arrangements and target setting.
- Developments to inspection and the role of Estyn.
- The development of a common self-evaluation for improvement toolkit for schools.

We expect these factors to positively affect system change, increasing collaboration between schools and those in the middle tier, and the development of greater earned autonomy for schools resulting in a mature self-improving system. In turn, the new arrangements will ensure the best possible educational outcomes for all learners.

In April, we will publish the Assessment and Evaluation Framework which will set out the difference between assessment – those activities whose place lies in learning and teaching – and evaluation – those that are for the purposes of self-evaluation, external accountability and national monitoring.

We are sharing the draft evaluation and improvement arrangements now to show how the system is developing and to help you prepare your feedback to us. The assessment arrangements will be published along with the new curriculum in April.

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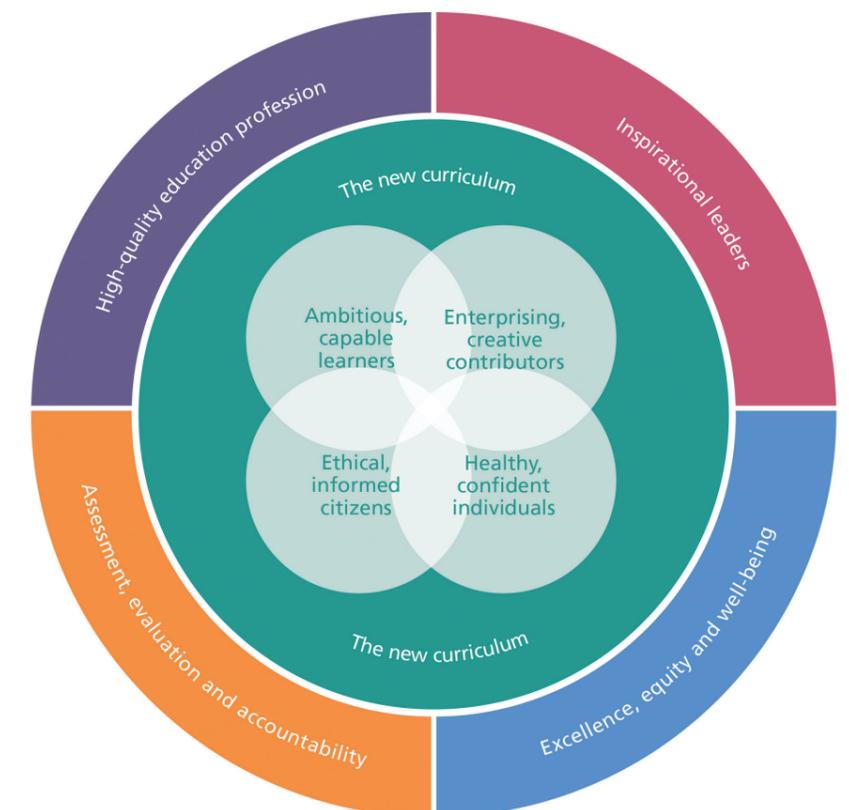
# Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales

## Key planning milestones for schools to 2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Evaluation and improvement</b>	<p><b>February</b> Evaluation and improvement arrangements published.</p> <p><b>April</b> Publish draft Assessment and Evaluation Framework for feedback and refinement.</p>	<p><b>January</b> New Assessment and Evaluation Framework for all tiers finalised and available for use. Testing and evaluation of the framework continues. Review interim performance measures.</p>	<p><b>September</b> Final Assessment and Evaluation Framework in place for all tiers of the system to adopt.</p>	<p><b>September</b> Assessment and Evaluation Framework – statutory guidance published.</p>
<b>Self-evaluation for improvement toolkit</b> <small>Page 29</small> Toolkit developed by the education profession with support from Estyn and OECD	<p><b>September</b> Draft self-evaluation for improvement toolkit available to schools for piloting and feedback. Regional consortia/Estyn support schools to use the draft toolkit.</p>	<p><b>January–September</b> Implementation and refinement of toolkit following feedback.</p> <p><b>September</b> Final toolkit available to schools.</p>	<p><b>January</b> Final refinement of toolkit following feedback.</p>	<p><b>September</b> All schools use the self-evaluation for improvement toolkit.</p>
<b>Authentication process</b> Process development by regional consortia	<p><b>April</b> Estyn and regional consortia roles and responsibilities in relation to authentication and inspection and advice communicated to schools.</p> <p><b>September</b> Authentication process defined and co-constructed with schools. National approach with regional delivery agreed between regional consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government.</p>	<p><b>January</b> Authentication process tested and refined with schools.</p>	<p><b>2021</b> Authentication process in place.</p>	
<b>Estyn inspection</b>	<p><b>2019–2020</b> Current inspection cycle.</p> <p><b>2019</b> Development and piloting of District Inspector role. Stakeholder engagement on new inspection models.</p>	<p><b>January 2020</b> District Inspectors in place.</p> <p><b>September 2020–2021</b> Phase 1 – Partial suspension. HMI support for new curriculum. Development of new models of inspection including validation of self-evaluation.</p>	<p><b>September 2021 onwards</b> Phase 2 – Inspections resume. New inspection arrangements for all schools. Validation through inspection will be phased in.</p>	

“ Every child should be taught in a school that sets high expectations for all learners and teachers. ”

Kirsty Williams AM  
Minister for Education



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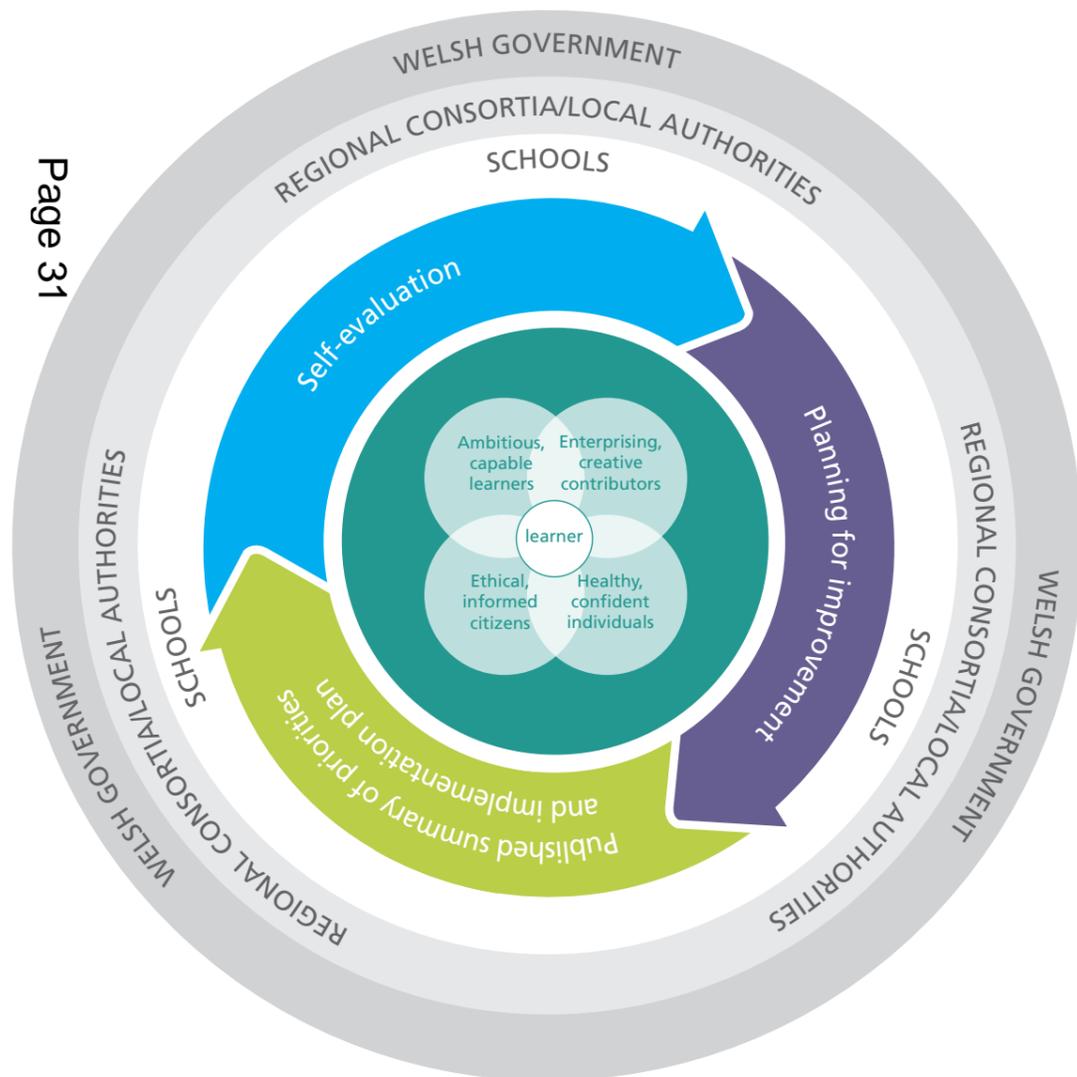
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# Draft evaluation and improvement (accountability) arrangements for Wales

## Overview of arrangements

These new arrangements will help bring about the cultural change needed to support the realisation of the new curriculum. At their heart is robust and continuous self-evaluation for all tiers of the education system, along with professional dialogue to support learning and improvement, embed collaboration, build trust, drive self-improvement, and raise standards for all our learners.

## Evaluation and improvement cycle



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	Schools	Local authorities and	Regional consortia	Welsh Government
Self-evaluation	Self-evaluate using the national self-evaluation for improvement toolkit to help schools identify their strengths and priorities for improvement, using a range of qualitative and quantitative data.	Self-evaluate against <i>Our national mission</i> priorities, corporate and strategic school improvement objectives, the delivery and quality of education, and agreed grant funding success criteria.	Self-evaluate against <i>Our national mission</i> priorities, regionally agreed school improvement objectives, and agreed grant funding success criteria.	Self-evaluate against <i>Our national mission</i> priorities, Welsh Government strategy and education reform.
Planning for improvement	Outcomes of the self-evaluation process to inform the school development plan.	Outcome of the self-evaluation process to inform the local authorities, corporate planning arrangements.	Outcome of the self-evaluation process to inform the regional consortia business plan - agreed by the Joint Committee.	Outcome of the self-evaluation process to inform policy development and improvement planning arrangements.
Published summary of priorities and implementation plan	Implementation and support taken forward with peer engagement. School development plan priorities published.	Key findings and actions published together with corporate planning arrangements. Implementation and support taken forward with peer engagement.	Key findings and actions published together with business plan. Implementation and support taken forward with peer engagement.	Key findings and actions published. Implementation taken forward with key stakeholders and middle tier organisations.
Authentication	Regional consortia to authenticate the self-evaluation demonstrating it is a true and genuine reflection of the school's strengths and areas for development.	Challenge and review with Welsh Government. Council internal arrangements for engagement and governance.	Challenge and review with Welsh Government. Joint Committee engagement.	Feedback from stakeholders. National and international peer review.
Inspection and advice	Validation through inspection and regulation.	Validation through inspection and regulation.	Validation through inspection and regulation.	Democratic scrutiny from the National Assembly for Wales.

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