



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 14TH MARCH, 2017

SUBJECT: SCHOOL CATEGORISATION 2016-17

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the national school categorisation system and Caerphilly school categorisation.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report presents Members with information outlining the National Categorisation System and how schools in Caerphilly have been categorised for support this year.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

Education Achievement Services (EAS) Business Plan
Education Service Improvement Plan
Single Integrated Plan

- 3.1 The attainment results published in this report contribute towards the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016

- *A prosperous Wales**
- *A more equal Wales**

This is because 'a prosperous Wales' is about developing a well educated and skilled population and 'a more equal Wales' is defined as a 'society that enables people to fulfil their full potential no matter what their background or circumstances, education attainment is a part of fulfilling that potential.

4. THE REPORT

National School Categorisation

- 4.1 The Minister for Education and Skills announced the introduction of the National School Categorisation System in September 2014. The system, which covers both primary schools and secondary schools, brought together the Programme for Government commitment to introduce a primary school banding system and builds on the improvements already achieved by secondary school banding.
- 4.2 Both secondary school banding and the commitment to introduce primary school banding have now been superseded by the National School Categorisation System. Using performance data to drive school improvement has made positive strides for many schools and learners. Since banding was introduced, secondary schools in bands 4 and 5 made real progress year-on-year. Band 5 secondary schools in 2012 saw the overall percentage of learners achieving the Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh first language and mathematics increase from 35.0 per cent in 2012 to 45.0 per cent in 2013. Similarly, band 4 secondary schools went from 45.8 per cent in 2012 to 49.5 per cent in 2013.
- 4.3 Robert Hill's report *The Future Delivery of Education Services in Wales* (2013) noted that regional consortia should achieve a common understanding of how to apply a four-level categorisation to measure schools' performance. As part of the agreed National Model for Regional Working, the Welsh Government, local government, regional consortia and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) worked together to ensure a national approach to the categorisation of schools.
- 4.4 This system is not purely data-driven. It also takes into account the quality of leadership and teaching and learning in our schools. The system evaluates and assesses schools and places them in a support category using the following information:
- a range of performance measures provided by the Welsh Government
 - robust self-evaluation by the school of its capacity to improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning
 - assessment of the school's self-evaluation by challenge advisers in the regional consortia, agreed with the local authority.

The three steps of the system are:

- 4.5 **Step One** generates a judgement about standards. The Welsh Government places each school in one of four numerical groups (1-4) related to performance against the agreed measures for primary and secondary schools, with schools in Standards Group 1 being the highest and schools in Standards Group 4 the lowest.
- 4.6 The measures used for primary categorisation are based on end of foundation phase and end of key stage 2 teacher assessment and pupil attendance. The following measures are used:
- **Measure 1 Overall achievement (Expected Level)**
Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)
 - **Measure 2 Language (Expected Level, Expected Level +1)**
Language, Literacy and Communication
 - **Measure 3 Mathematics (Expected Level, Expected Level +1)**
Mathematical Development, Mathematics
 - **Measure 4 Attendance**

4.7 The following measures are used for secondary categorisation:

Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh First Language and Mathematics (L2 incl. E/W & M)

- Overall performance during the previous three years
- Free School Meal (FSM) pupil performance during the previous three years
- Relative progress (based on overall performance)
- Performance set against Free School Meal (FSM) level of the school

Capped Points Score including English/Welsh First Language and Mathematics

- Overall performance during the previous three years
- FSM pupil performance during the previous three years
- Relative progress (based on overall performance)
- Performance set against FSM level of the school

5+ A*-A or equivalent

- Overall performance during the previous three years
- FSM pupil performance during the previous three years
- Relative progress (based on overall performance)
- Performance set against FSM level of the school

Attendance

- Current performance set against FSM level of the school
- Persistent absentees set against FSM level of the school

Performance of eFSM pupils

4.8 The performance of eFSM learners is analysed to determine whether a school is making progress to break the link between disadvantage and educational attainment. Socio-economic disadvantage should not be used as an excuse for poor performance.

4.9 In 2014, this analysis was performed between steps two and three to determine the overall support category. In 2016 it is a judgement on the standards at the school and is made at the end of step one, the standards group. In order to continue to drive improvement for all learners, the Welsh Government set a minimum standard for eFSM learners of 30% in 2015, 32% in 2016 and 34% in 2017.

4.10 This minimum standard is a three-year weighted average at school level. In secondary schools, where performance of eFSM learners is below the agreed minimum standard, the judgement in relation to the school's standards group will not be assessed as being better than a 3, which means that the school cannot be categorised as a green school. i.e. additional support is required to increase the achievement of eFSM pupils.

Step Two: Self-evaluation and capacity to self-improve in relation to leadership and teaching and learning

4.11 Whilst step one is data driven and will have generated a standards group for each school (1–4), step two consists of a judgement (A–D) based on the school's capacity to self-improve. Schools where the judgement is A show the greatest capacity to improve, along with the ability to support other schools. Those where the judgement is D require the most support. The process of coming to a judgement on the school's capacity to bring about improvement begins with the school's self-evaluation. This is discussed by the regional consortium's challenge adviser with the school's leaders and governors. The judgement should reflect the considered view of the Headteacher, governors and the challenge adviser and be supported by evidence. Learners' performance and the judgement about the capacity to improve should be closely aligned.

- 4.12 This judgement indicates the degree of confidence in the school's capacity to drive forward its own improvement. As such, it is a key element in the decision about the level of support the school will require at step three. The national system is intended to strengthen schools' capacity to bring about their own improvement and to contribute to system-wide change.
- 4.13 The outcomes of step one and step two should generally align – if standards are not good or not improving, leadership cannot be judged as wholly effective. Challenge advisers should be assured that all school leaders use performance data robustly and effectively. This includes governors, Headteachers, middle leaders and subject leaders. There must be evidence of the effective and timely use of accurate data at individual learner, class, group, cohort, subject and whole-school level, including careful consideration of ALN and eFSM learners.

Step 3: The Categorisation and level of support, challenge and intervention

- 4.14 The outcomes of step one and step two will be combined to determine the school's support category (step three of the process). The final categorisation will be based on a colour coding system and this will be discussed with the school and agreed with the local authority. The categorisation colour indicates the level of support a school requires – green, yellow, amber or red (with the schools in the green category needing the least support and those in the red category needing the most intensive support). Each school will receive a tailored programme of support, challenge and intervention based on this category. The support category along with the outcomes for step one and step two are published annually on the My Local School website (<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk>).
- 4.15 The level of support available for each category is as follows:
- Green support category - A school in this category will receive up to 4 days of challenge adviser time.
 - Yellow support category - A school in this category will receive up to 10 days of challenge adviser time.
 - Amber support category - A school in this category will receive up to 15 days of challenge adviser time.
 - Red support category - A school in this category will receive up to 25 days of challenge adviser time.

Each challenge adviser will determine the nature of the bespoke support package to be provided to each school according to need.

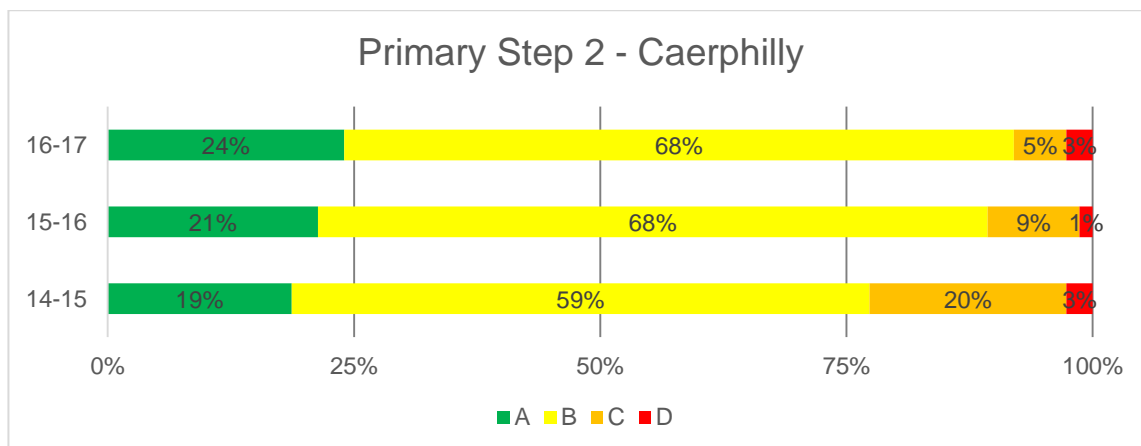
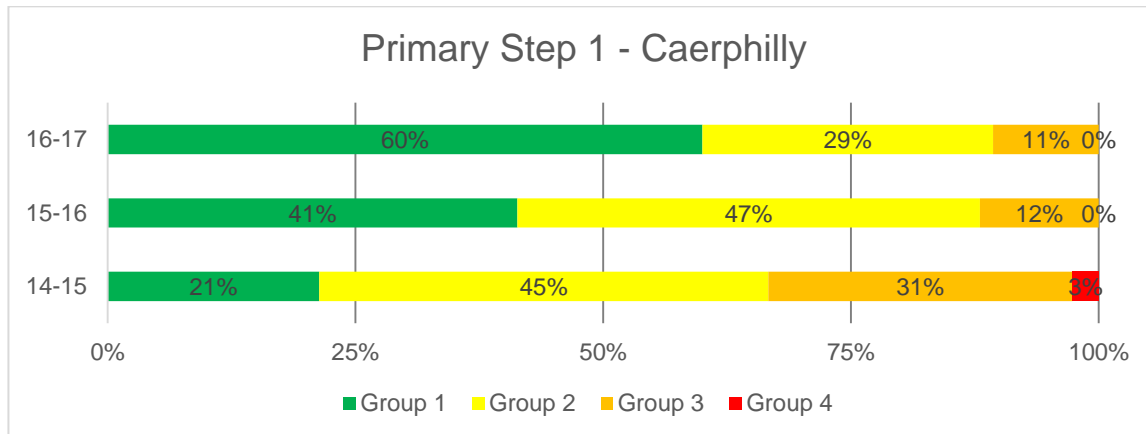
New arrangements from 2015-2016 - Regional Moderation and National Verification

- 4.16 Since 2015, there has been a consistent approach across Wales to regional moderation, and this takes place during the Autumn term. This is followed by a national verification process early in the Spring, prior to publication of all school categorisations on My Local School at the end of January. A further refinement to the process in 2015-2016 included a nationally agreed approach where there is disagreement with a school about the judgements at steps 2 and 3.
- 4.17 Training materials for use across Wales for Headteachers, governors and elected members to support understanding of the national categorisation system have been refined and delivered to all stakeholders. The Welsh Government's guidance and the guidance for parents has also been revised.

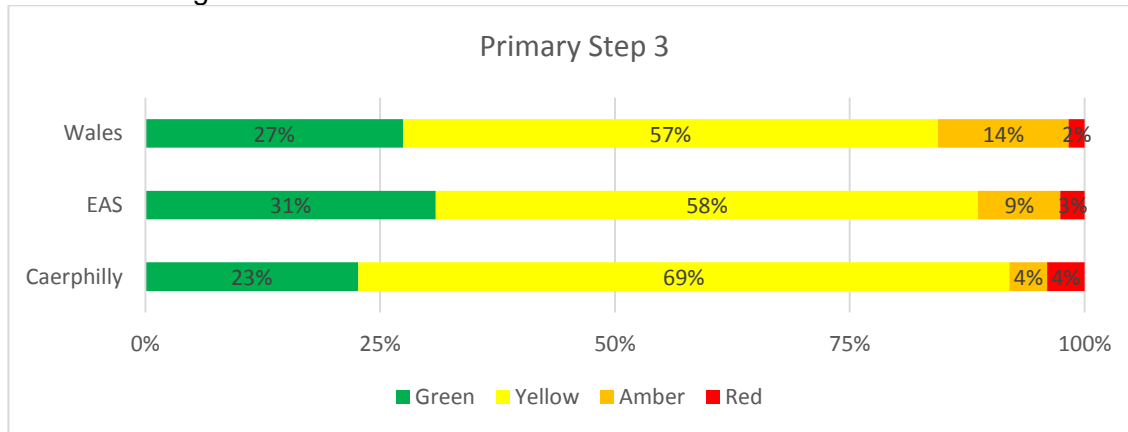
Primary School Categories 2016/17

There are no national averages readily available for Step 1 and Step 2 data. The charts below show that during the past three years, the proportion of schools in the green category has increased for both steps, and is now 60% for Step 1 and 24% for Step 2.

Primary	Green		Yellow		Amber		Red	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Step 1	45	60%	22	29%	8	11%	0	0%
Step 2	18	24%	51	68%	4	5%	2	3%
Step 3	17	23%	52	69%	3	4%	3	4%



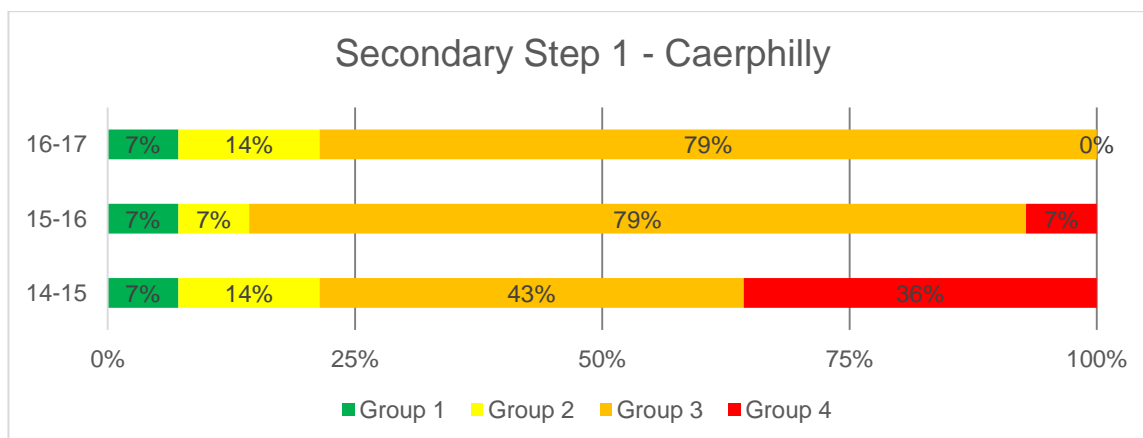
At Step 3, the proportion of schools in the green category is below both the regional and the national average, and the proportion in the red category is slightly above the regional and national averages.

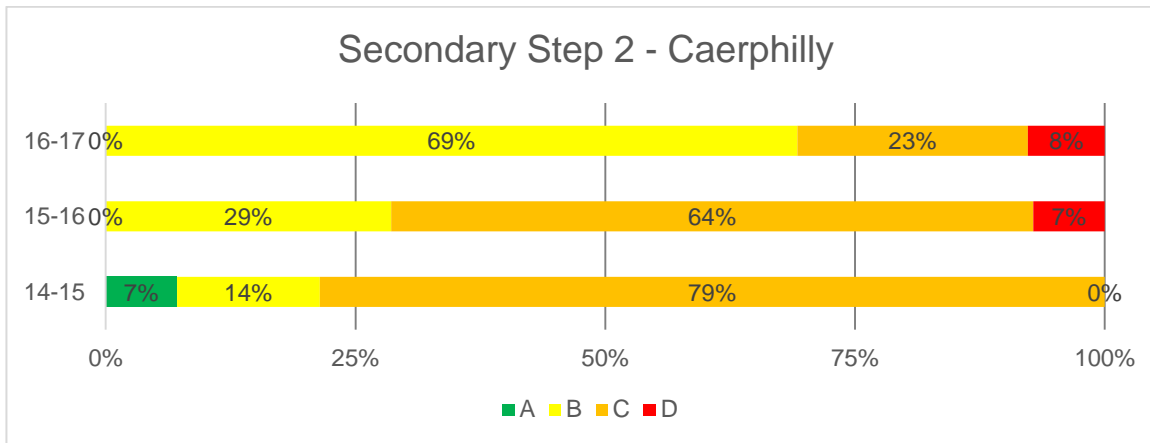


Secondary School Categories 2016/17

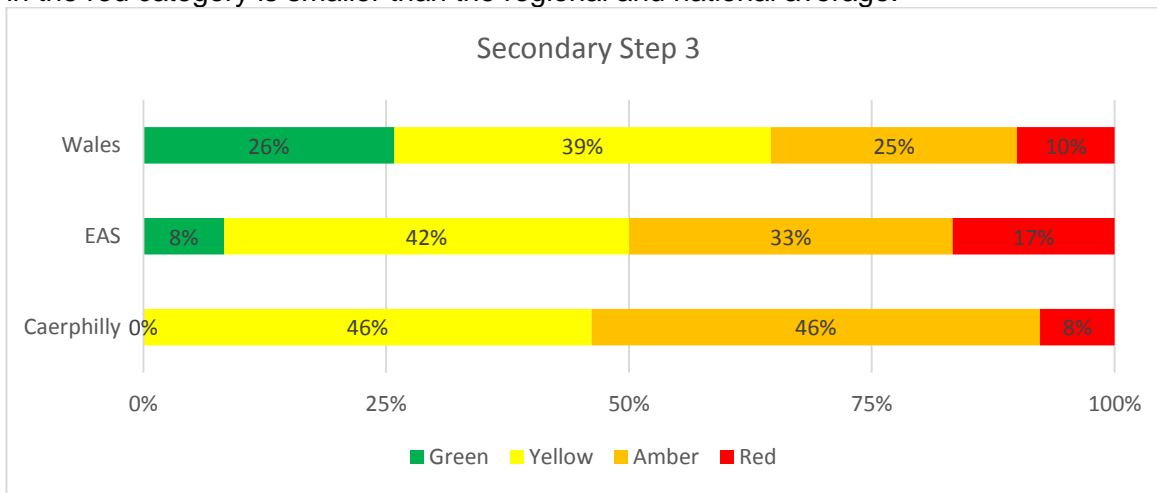
The charts below show that during the past three years, the proportion of schools in the green category has remained at 7% for Step 1 and decreased so no schools are green for Step 2. One school was affected by the FSM threshold applied to Step 1 data.

Secondary	Green		Yellow		Amber		Red	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Step 1	2	14%	5	36%	7	50%	0	0%
Step 1 inc FSM threshold	1	7%	2	14%	11	79%	0	0%
Step 2	0	0%	9	69%	3	23%	1	8%
Step 3	0	0%	6	46%	6	46%	1	8%





For Step 3, there are no secondary schools in the green category, however, the proportion of schools in the red category is smaller than the regional and national average.



5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This report content (Education attainment) contributes to the Well being Goals as noted and explained in 3.1
- 5.2 This report is for information only and so does not analyse the 5 ways of working in terms of decision making but it does recognise that going forward interventions that are put in place to improve attainment must take a **long term** view as part of its impact on life chances, employment and quality of life. One of the principles of the 5 ways of working is to look at how we can **prevent** problems occurring and to do this we need to understand what the causes are. Causes within attainment are complex although one of the main ones is deprivation. The measure that is commonly used to measure deprivation is a pupil's eligibility to receive Free School Meals. The data provides an insight into the performance of all pupils in comparison to the pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and the gap in performance increases throughout school life (para 4.7). One of the Council's Well-being Objectives is to 'Improve outcomes for all learners but we want to particularly focus on those vulnerable to underachievement. We have an action plan to achieve this and it we will **involve and collaborate** with a range of partners such as schools, parents, governors and children to raise aspiration and attainment.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is no specific equalities impact in relation to the content of this report. When performance information is discussed with schools as part of the monitoring, challenge, support and intervention programme, equalities issues, such as gender and ethnicity are taken into account. Similarly the Local Authority self-evaluation considers all equalities issues.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific financial implications.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific personnel implications.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 All comments have been reflected in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 These plans link to the local authority's duty to monitor and improve standards of education.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) 2013.

12.2 Schools Causing Concern Guidance 2013.

12.3 Children and Families Measure (Wales) 2010.

12.4 Education Act 1996.

12.5 Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) 2015.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Caerphilly School Categorisation 2016/17 Academic Year

Appendix 2 Welsh Government Supplementary Guidance 2015 / 2016