Estyn

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Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

The use of performance data in local authorities and schools

March 2008

BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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- secondary schools;
- special schools;
- pupil referral units;
- independent schools;
- further education;
- adult community-based learning;
- youth support services;
- youth and community work training;
- LEAs;
- teacher education and training;
- work-based learning;
- careers companies;
- offender learning; and
- the education, guidance and training elements of The Department for Work and Pensions funded training programmes.

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Appendix A – Schools Causing Concern

Glossary

Introduction

1 The Welsh Assembly Government asked Estyn, as part of the 2007-2008 remit, for advice on how well local authorities use performance data to identify and challenge poor performance in schools and to identify and share good practice. In particular, this report considers how well local authorities use performance data, with other evidence, to identify schools causing concern early; to target support towards these schools; and to support school improvement. For the purposes of this report, performance data means data on the outcomes achieved by individual pupils, classes, year groups and schools. Performance data includes data on performance in different national curriculum subjects as well as comparative data which helps a school to compare its performance with other schools. The report also considers how well local authorities support schools in using performance data and, as a result, how well schools use the available data to help them improve. Throughout the report a number of case studies show examples of good practice.

2 The report is based on evidence gathered from:

- inspections of primary, secondary and special schools and local authority school improvement services covering the period September 2005 to June 2007;
- interviews with officers responsible for school improvement and data analysis in all local education authorities and from Cynnal and ESIS (explained in the glossary); and
- interviews with headteachers and other staff with responsibility for the analysis of performance data in 12 secondary schools and 11 primary schools.

3 Inspectors visited a sample of primary and secondary schools, nominated by local authority officers, across Wales during the summer of 2007. The schools were chosen to show the impact of the local authorities' work in supporting schools in their use of available data to improve standards of teaching and learning.

4 A number of specialist terms are used in this report and these are explained in the glossary.

Background

5 Schools are responsible for improving standards of teaching and learning but the support they receive from the local authority is very significant in securing better outcomes. The Welsh Assembly Government's Code of Conduct on LEA-School Relations[1] explains the role of the local authority in supporting school improvement. The Code states that local authorities should work closest with schools which need the most support to help them improve. As a result, all schools should be successful, improving or both – local authorities and schools should have zero tolerance of under-performance. The Code emphasises the key role of local authorities in supporting schools through the sharing of good quality data and advice on using data. In addition, it states that schools should use this data to help them set targets and plan developments which will improve teaching and learning. In particular, the Code states that local authorities should:

- facilitate schools' access to national and local school performance data including benchmark and subject analysis data;
- identify other data or analyses which could help schools set targets to improve pupils' achievements;
- monitor school performance regularly; and
- help schools to improve teaching and learning through well-targeted support and intervention.

6 Between 2003 and 2007 the Welsh Assembly Government worked with local authorities and schools to make significant improvements to how school performance data is collected, shared and analysed both locally and nationally. These improvements include data on pupils' achievements and their personal characteristics such as age, gender or ethnicity. Schools have increased access to information technology hardware and software which has made their collection, sharing and analysis of data easier. The Data Exchange Wales initiative (DEWi) provides a secure electronic transfer facility for pupil level data. The Welsh Assembly Government has improved the range of data available on pupils through:

- the allocation of Unique Pupil Numbers (UPNs) to all pupils in maintained primary and secondary schools;
- the introduction of the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC);
- the development of a range of comparative and analytical tools using the National Pupil Database (NPD); and

[1] The Code of Conduct on LEA-School relations is a requirement of Section 127 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It sets out the principles upon which the partnership between local authorities and schools should be based and describes the role of each of the main players. It also sets out specific local authority powers and duties and explains how they may be appropriately used.

- the move towards the electronic collection of pupil level teacher assessment and attendance data.

7 The numbers of schools identified by Estyn as causing concern[2] has risen between 2004 and 2007.

Chart 1: Numbers of schools requiring special measures in 2004-2007

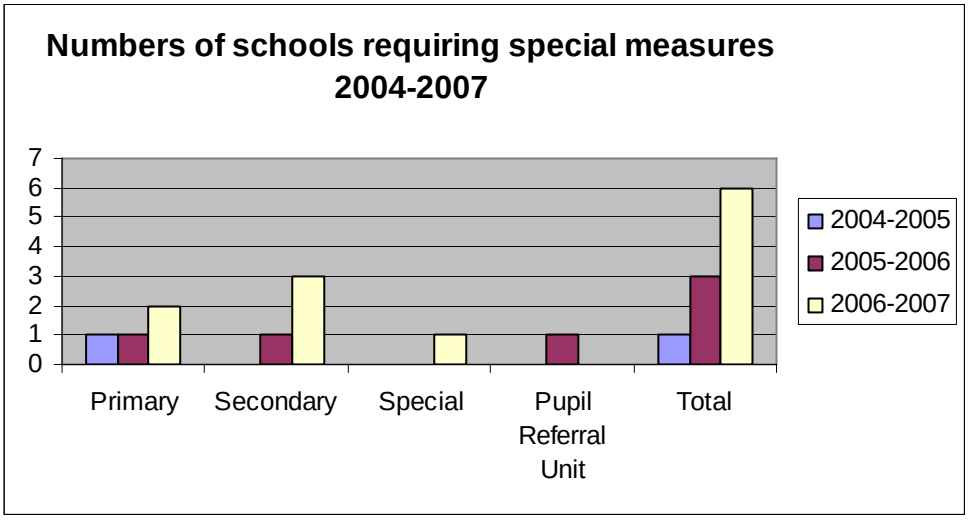
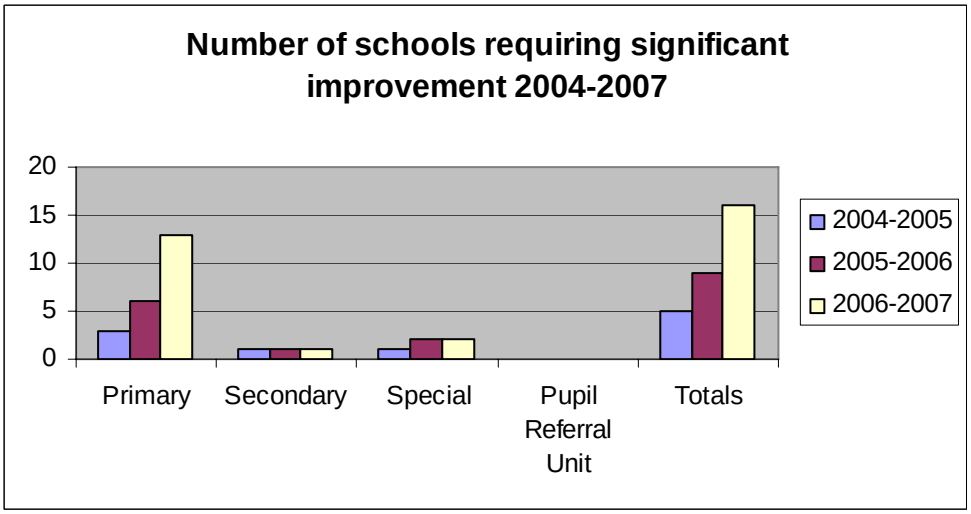


Chart 2: Numbers of schools requiring significant improvement 2004-2007



[2] Schools causing concern are identified as requiring significant improvement or requiring special measures. See appendix A for further information and recent data.

8 All schools and local authorities have access to teacher assessment and examination data for all pupils. In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government publishes a range of analyses of pupil performance data from all schools. Schools and local authorities often purchase additional analyses of pupil performance data from other organisations. The glossary explains the different types of data analyses that are available to local authorities and schools.

Main findings

9 All local authorities use performance data, inspection outcomes and other evidence to evaluate school performance. Local authorities' use of data helps them to identify schools that are not performing as well as might be expected compared with other similar schools. However, not all local authorities analyse performance data and other evidence annually and in sufficient detail for all schools. As a result, these local authorities are sometimes slow to identify, challenge and support those schools most in need of improvement.

10 Individual officers in a few local authorities do not challenge schools robustly enough about their performance and targets for improvement. In particular, officers do not challenge sufficiently when schools perform poorly in individual subjects or in comparison with other similar schools in their own local authority or more widely. These schools are not, therefore, encouraged to strive for the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

11 A few local authorities do not carry out analyses that are detailed enough to provide good information on subject departments which are underperforming in secondary schools.

12 Most local authorities and schools do not make good use of the range of data available to analyse the performance of groups of pupils at risk of underachievement. However, their use of data helps local authorities and schools to understand differences in achievement between boys and girls and to plan work to support boys in their learning.

13 Most local authorities target additional resources to help improvement in schools which perform poorly. However, the criteria for allocating this additional support are often not clear enough or agreed with schools.

14 Nearly all local authorities work well with schools identified by Estyn as causing concern. As a result, most schools are removed from special measures within two years and from the category of requiring significant improvement in one year.

15 All local authorities provide schools with appropriate data for the core subjects of English or Welsh, mathematics and science. This data helps school managers, governors and teachers to:

- measure the progress made by pupils;
- compare the performance of boys and girls;
- compare the performance of pupils over time;
- consider performance in the socio-economic context of the school; and
- predict the future performance of pupils based on their prior attainment.

16 The Welsh Assembly Government provides nationally prepared data analyses too late to support schools and local authorities in setting performance targets at the outset of the academic year.

17 Many local authorities offer training and support to schools in using data. However, most local authorities do not evaluate the impact of this training well enough to know whether or not it is helping to improve how schools use data.

18 Senior leadership teams in most secondary schools use performance data appropriately as part of their self-evaluation about how well the school is doing and to identify areas for development. In the best examples, key staff in the secondary schools understand the performance data well and analyse it in detail to help improve teaching and learning. The majority of primary and secondary schools use data well to set challenging but realistic targets for individual pupils. However, heads of departments and their staff in secondary schools do not always make effective use of data as part of their annual self-evaluation process.

19 Officers and headteachers do not provide data which is detailed enough or provide an appropriate level of support for governors and elected members to be able to interpret the data they are given. As a result, governors and elected members rarely know enough about which schools perform poorly or why, or what the local authority and schools are doing to make improvements.

Recommendations

The Welsh Assembly Government should:

R1 ensure that existing nationally prepared data sets are made available to local authorities earlier in the autumn term so that they can be used in target setting and planning for that academic year;

R2 review the range of data and analyses being purchased by individual schools and local authorities to establish whether any further analyses should be provided nationally to support all schools and local authorities; and

R3 review the Code of Conduct on LEA-School Relations to strengthen the guidance on the range of school performance data that is shared with elected members, all schools and relevant partners as appropriate.

Local authorities should:

R4 make better use of the range of data available to evaluate the performance of groups of learners at risk of underachievement;

R5 evaluate the impact of training on schools' use of data;

R6 make sure that officers evaluate pupil performance within special schools and pupil referral units; and

R7 make sure that their criteria for identifying and supporting underperforming schools are clear, robust and agreed with all schools.

Schools should:

R8 ensure that heads of department and their staff in secondary schools are supported by school leadership teams to make effective use of data as part of an annual self-evaluation process; and

R9 provide governors with appropriate data and the support to help them understand their school's performance compared with other similar schools.

How effectively is data used to support school improvement?

Analysing performance data and target-setting

20 Overall, the few local authorities who use data very well have productive relationships with schools and a shared understanding of the role that each has in using data to identify and challenge underperformance. As a result, the greatest impact on standards is found where:

- local authorities and schools have a shared understanding of areas of underperformance and the local authority supports the school to develop improvement strategies;
- heads of department analyse and interpret data well as part of regular departmental reviews; and
- there are opportunities for heads of department and senior managers to meet regularly with counterparts in other schools to openly discuss performance data and strategies for teaching and learning.

Case study 1

Using data to set individual pupil targets

One school has its own database of pupils' attainment, which has been developed in addition to the standard management information system. It records a range of data for each pupil including end of key stage national curriculum levels, Fischer Family Trust (FFT) predictions, Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs) outcomes and teacher assessment. Individual teachers use the database well to identify the underperformance of individual pupils and to plan targeted support. This support includes mentoring for groups of pupils.

Pupils start setting targets for themselves at the end of year 7 for core subjects and in year 8 for foundation subjects. Each term teachers review learning with pupils and pass information from the database to parents through either a final report, a parents evening or a mini-report. Every parent is invited to an annual target-setting appointment with the form teacher and the pupil. A mini-report, which gives grades for homework, achievement and effort, is used as the basis for discussion about a pupil's performance. Pupils are well prepared to set targets through the school's Personal and Social Education (PSE) module, 'Improving my own learning'. As a result, pupils, their parents and teachers all have the same understanding and work better together to achieve the targets set.

21 In the majority of local authorities, officers do not challenge underperforming schools effectively enough about their performance and targets for improvement. Within individual local authorities there is too much variation in officers' analysis of data. As

a result, local authority officers are not able to have robust discussions with schools about their performance. In particular, there is often not enough challenge where:

- a subject or department is underperforming;
- there are significant differences in performance of boys and girls or between core subjects; and
- a school has good results compared with all schools but underperforms compared with similar schools.

The result is that, overall, schools do not receive enough encouragement to strive for excellent outcomes for all learners.

Case study 2

Using analysis of data to improve teaching and learning.

In one local authority, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) reading, maths and non-verbal reasoning tests are given to pupils each year from year 1 to year 7 in almost all schools. The analysis of the data shows the year-on-year progress of year groups, classes and individuals and the analyses are presented clearly in graphs and tables. This helps teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in English and mathematics.

In several schools the high reading scores of many pupils compared with their non-verbal reasoning scores were investigated. In another school the difference between NFER results and teacher assessment in year 6 was explored. As a result of these investigations, the local authority targeted additional training in assessment procedures at some schools. Most schools have improved teaching and learning and NFER test results have improved.

22 As a result of national and local developments and support, nearly all schools have improved the way that they collect, analyse, interpret and share data since 2003. The senior leadership teams in most secondary schools use data in their self-evaluation processes and this helps them identify areas for improvement. Many secondary schools undertake a wide range of data analyses in addition to those provided by the local authority. However, in the minority of secondary schools, senior and middle managers still do not make enough use of data to compare their performance with similar schools. This means they do not always set challenging targets which help them to strive for the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

23 In many secondary schools, there is still too much variation in the levels of competence and confidence of heads of departments, subject leaders and individual staff in preparing and analysing data with sufficient rigour. A few schools rely too heavily on the local authority for support. In the best examples, heads of departments involve all staff in regular self-evaluation and use data well as part of this process. In a minority of schools, heads of department discuss how well individual teachers use achievement data. This helps middle managers to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning as part of the school's annual performance management processes.

24 In the schools visited, many secondary schools have designated support staff to help teaching staff analyse and interpret data. This support helps to ensure the robustness and accuracy of the data collected and analysed.

25 In primary schools, the skills and interest of the head are often the key drivers in how well data is used by all staff. As a result, there is a much wider variation in how well data is used than in secondary schools. In primary schools with administrative support staff, these staff often played a valuable role in collecting and collating data.

26 Leaders and managers in secondary schools are well informed about the performance of the areas for which they are responsible in over three-quarter of schools inspected during 2006-2007. Often, they also set and meet challenging and realistic targets. Two-thirds of inspected schools received a grade 1 or 2 for this aspect of their work which is reported in key question 5 of Estyn's Common Inspection Framework.

27 Estyn inspections between September 2005 and June 2007 show that many leaders and managers in primary schools are well informed about performance and use the information available effectively. As a result, 71% of primary schools received grade 1 or 2 for this aspect of key question 6. Primary schools use a narrower range of data than secondary schools and do not analyse overall trends in school performance enough. However, they use assessment data well to diagnose needs and plan work with individual children.

Case study 3

Comparing relative performance in different subjects to help identify underperforming departments

In one local authority, officers compare pupil achievement across core subjects at each key stage to identify any poor performance in one subject compared with the other two core subjects. The outcome of this work helped a secondary school to identify relatively poor performance in science. As a result, a detailed review of the department was carried out by the local authority with the school. The review identified areas for development including the quality of investigative science work, underachievement by girls and underachievement by pupils in the grade C-G range at GCSE. The head of department was supported by the authority to develop his use and understanding of relevant data to inform the annual departmental review. This has led to improvements in teaching and learning. Standards in science have steadily improved since the time of the review.

Identifying schools in need of support

28 Most local authorities study the performance reports that they create for each school to identify those schools that are either not performing as well as they should or are not making the improvements of which they are capable. In the best examples, local authorities analyse school documentation, inspection outcomes and a range of performance data, including information about attendance, exclusions and special educational needs. This allows officers to analyse a school's overall performance

and reach robust conclusions about its effectiveness. Although nearly all local authorities review school effectiveness robustly prior to Estyn inspections, too few carry out this thorough review regularly enough on each of their schools. In addition, only a few local authorities have very good knowledge of subject departments that are not doing well enough in secondary schools.

29 The majority of local authorities have less awareness of underperformance in special schools and pupil referral units than they do for other schools. Many officers do not accurately identify poor standards and quality or weak leadership and management in these establishments. They often do not work closely enough with specialist staff in the local authority special educational needs, inclusion or behaviour support teams. However, many local authorities are starting to improve the links between school improvement officers and other teams such as the youth offending team, special educational needs or children's services. In the best examples, data from all relevant local authority teams informs judgements about a school's effectiveness and subsequent discussions about the levels of support needed to improve a school.

30 In most local authorities, the wide range of data on pupils and their achievements is not shared across all the local authority education teams and partners which reduces the use of such data. As a result, partners are unable to plan their contribution to school support effectively. For example, they cannot target appropriate support for young people or develop curriculum options as part of Learning Pathways 14-19. A few local authorities are taking steps to address this as part of their preparation for the Children and Young People's Plans.

31 Most local authorities have agreed criteria with schools which are used to identify good or poor performance and classify schools accordingly. However, these criteria are often not clear or robust enough and do not make use of a broad enough range of evidence to clearly identify schools in need of additional support.

Providing support based on need

32 All local authorities use their knowledge of schools to provide additional support or resources to help underperforming schools to improve. However, the criteria and process for allocating these additional resources are often not communicated clearly enough to schools. In addition, in a minority of local authorities, the extra support is not given early enough nor targeted to schools that are most in need of significant improvement. In a few local authorities, there is insufficient capacity to provide the range of additional support needed, nor do officers help schools enough in their decisions to purchase support from non local authority providers.

33 Across Wales, local authorities support schools in need of improvement in different ways. This support includes training, peer mentoring and consultancy, appointing new governors or staff and additional support from other teams such as behaviour support. In one local authority, case conferences are held that involve a wide range of officers and partners. These help to identify and co-ordinate a range of targeted support to help the school to improve.

34 Most local authorities act quickly to give effective support to those schools identified through Estyn inspections as causing concern. As a result, most schools are removed from special measures within two years and from the category of requiring

significant improvement in one year. In local authorities where support had the biggest impact, officers worked with the school to improve standards of teaching and learning in addition to management processes. However, these effective models of support are not evaluated. As a result, this good practice in supporting schools is not applied to other schools identified by local authorities as underperforming. There is no guidance across Wales on how local authorities and schools should work together when a school is identified as causing concern. As a result, the quality of support provided in a few local authorities is inconsistent.

How well do local authorities support schools in using data?

Performance data used by schools and local authorities

35 All local authorities provide appropriate core subject data to schools. The range of data helps schools to:

- measure the progress made by individual pupils and to compare pupils' performance over time;
- compare boys' and girls' performance and predict the future performance of pupils based on how well they have already achieved; and
- help school staff and governors to understand performance in the context of their schools.

However, not all schools use the data provided by the local authority for all these purposes. In many local authorities, there is no formal agreement between the local authority and schools to openly share performance data for individual schools with other schools or elected members. This means that schools cannot easily judge their performance against that of other similar schools or identify and share good practice in the delivery of individual subjects.

36 The Welsh Assembly Government provides data analyses to local authorities and schools which evaluate pupil performance based on information about the individual schools such as levels of free school meals, school size and the prior achievements of pupils. Most of this data arrives too late for schools and local authorities to use it to set targets in the autumn term and plan their work for that academic year. As a result, schools' planning and target-setting is not informed by a good range of comparative data. An example of the data analyses provided by the Welsh Assembly Government is the national free school meal (FSM) benchmark data. When analyses and data are received from the Welsh Assembly Government, the majority of local authorities share these with schools electronically. As a result, data is shared securely and schools receive it promptly.

37 A few local authorities support schools to set targets in the autumn term by providing a comparison with similar local schools using schools' raw data. Sometimes, the local authority does this in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities. This helps managers and governors to set challenging but realistic targets.

38 Across Wales, all schools and local authorities increasingly use data to identify differences in performance between boys and girls. As a result, additional work and resources, for example using the Better Schools Fund[3], is targeted at reducing differences in achievement. This work has not yet had a significant impact on reducing the gap in performance between boys and girls. Most local authorities do not analyse the performance of different groups of pupils compared with their peers based on pupil characteristics other than gender. This means that they do not know

[3] The Better Schools Fund provides targeted support for local authorities and schools to develop new initiatives and innovation to address local and national priorities.

how well pupils who are vulnerable to underachievement perform. These pupils include those who are from different ethnic backgrounds, looked-after by the local authority, young carers or who have special educational needs.

Case study 4

Analysis of performance based on gender

One secondary school, through its performance monitoring and in discussion with the local authority, identified that the gap in achievement between performance of boys and girls was greater than it should be and was a cause for concern. The school undertook a detailed analysis of girls' and boys' performance. This analysis showed that there was an increasing number of boys in the school and that there were significantly more boys performing poorly in both key stages 3 and 4[4].

As a result, the school established a gender working party to look at solutions. All subject departments now carry out at least one project each to improve the performance of boys. The school purchased external support through the local authority to develop thinking skills across the school. The school expects that this action will have a positive effect on boys' approaches to learning. In addition, staff focus more on boys' transition from primary school to the secondary school. Boys at risk of having poor attendance or losing interest in school are identified in year 6 and trained counsellors work with them to support their transition from primary to secondary school. As a result, the cohort of boys have achieved good attendance in year 7 and made good progress in learning.

39 Schools' understanding and use of the range of data available nationally varies widely across Wales. Benchmarking data, which ranks a school's performance compared with groups of schools with similar levels of free school meals, is the most widely used data. Although, the benchmarking data arrives too late for schools to use it in target-setting at the outset of the academic year, they do use it as part of their ongoing self-evaluation.

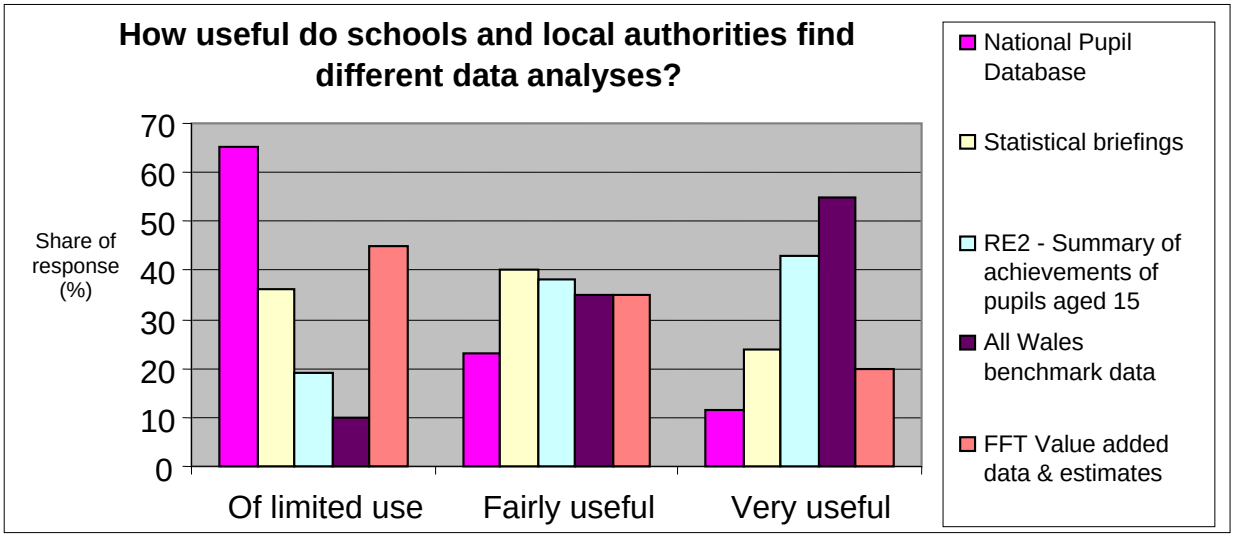
40 The National Pupil Database (NPD) contains data inaccuracies and is used least by the majority of schools and local authorities visited. A few of the schools visited are unaware of the National Pupil Database and a minority of schools has never accessed it.

41 Most local authorities make good use of the national pilot of Fischer Family Trust (FFT) value-added data (explained in the glossary) when making judgements about a school's effectiveness. However, most secondary schools do not have a good enough understanding of the models of analysis used in the national pilot. As a result, schools do not use the analysis from the national pilot to help them evaluate performance for their school. Schools make more use of locally purchased FFT analyses. However, the ways in which many schools use analyses to set probable or challenging targets for individual pupils and the whole school, are not consistent within local authorities or across Wales. So, targets cannot be meaningfully compared across Wales.

[4] Key Stage 3 is the three years of schooling normally known as Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9, when pupils are aged between 11 and 14. Key Stage 4 is the last two years of compulsory schooling normally known as Year 10 and Year 11, when pupils are aged between 14 and 16.

42 The majority of local authorities do not use the Welsh Examination Database (WED) GCSE and A-level analyses[5]. Many schools use this data well to review the work of individual departments.

43 Chart 3, below, shows how useful local authorities and schools found national data and analyses, based on the responses of schools and local authorities visited during this remit.



44 Nearly all schools have enough data to identify the learning needs of individual pupils and to set targets and plan work to help pupils improve. In a few areas, schools and local authorities buy different data sets which tell them similar information. As a result, schools only make limited use of some of the range of information available. When local authorities and schools purchase data analyses that are not fully used this is not good value for money.

45 The most widely used data analyses are FFT and Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs), but often individual secondary schools also purchase the Middle Years Information System (Mid-YIS), the Year 11 Information System (YELLIS), or the A-level Information System (ALIS) from the University of Durham. Many primary schools use National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) tests in maths, writing and non-verbal reasoning and a minority of local authorities support their use across all schools. (All the tests referred to in this paragraph are explained in the glossary).

46 Most local authorities create an individual profile for each school. The best examples of school profiles include; performance data and analyses, minutes of link advisor meetings, and other key documents such as the school development plan or a recent Estyn inspection report.

47 Local authorities are starting to use web-based software or local authority-school intranets to share data and good practice. In a minority of local authorities, both officers and school staff access a school's profile via a web-based package or

[5] The Welsh Joint Education Committee's Welsh Examination Database provides local authorities with value-added analyses for GCSE and A-level performance and analysis of relative performance in subjects at GCSE.

intranet. This develops a common understanding of how data should be used, alongside other information, to analyse performance.

48 Between 2002 and 2007, many schools improved their information and communications technology (ICT) systems. As a result, data is more accessible to a wider number of staff. For example, many schools increased the access to computers by teachers so that teachers can monitor attendance electronically. Often this means that teachers make good use of ICT to collate and analyse assessment data regularly. In the best examples, most staff within schools frequently access a whole-school database which provides up-to-date data and analyses for individual pupils, classes or year groups. Teachers produce reports easily which are shared with pupils, parents or the senior leadership team.

Training and support in using data

49 Many local authorities support schools well in using performance data. They provide individual coaching and support to headteachers and general and specialist training for teachers. This support helps staff in schools to improve the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. However, local authorities often do not evaluate the impact of this training and support well enough. As a result, they do not know whether staff make better use of data to analyse performance and plan for improvement. In addition, training is often not targeted sufficiently at the areas where it is needed including improving how comparative performance data is used by governors, headteachers or heads of department.

Case study 5

Building the data analysis skills of heads of department

In one local authority there is very effective support for heads of subject departments in secondary schools to develop their skills in analysing and interpreting data and, subsequently, using this information in self-evaluation and planning. Heads of departments from all the authority's secondary schools meet annually with local authority officers (different meetings for different subjects). Data for each subject, including benchmarks, is analysed rigorously. The resulting analysis for each school is shared openly and transparently with the each subject group.

As a result, heads of departments identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning for the subject. They work together to plan training or curriculum developments to address shortcomings.

50 All the local authorities visited have a nominated officer or team of officers to collate and analyse school performance data. Generally, these specialist staff have good data analysis skills and provide effective support to other local authority officers and schools in their use of data. In two local authorities where these posts had recently been created, schools reported a significant improvement in the quality of data and support which they receive. In a few examples, headteachers are seconded to the local authority to support the development of particular initiatives such as using FFT

analyses across all schools. As a result, the headteachers develop their skills and their expertise is used to benefit many schools.

51 About half the local authorities visited have a steering group which develops the use of management data and comparative analysis to support school improvement. These groups comprise appropriate representatives from schools and local authority staff. As a result, school leaders with a responsibility for the use of data learn from each other and effectively influence the development of this aspect of work in the local authority.

Case study 6

Very effective support to improve data analysis skills

One local authority provides training and support to develop the skills of collating, analysing and interpreting data among staff in its schools. The authority recognises that all staff have an important role in using data for self-evaluation and to set targets. The training includes:

- ongoing support and on-the-spot training as part of link adviser visits;
- modules on using data for newly qualified teachers;
- modules on using data for new headteachers and senior managers;
- training for all staff on the use of new data packages;
- guidance on using data in school self-evaluation;
- using the experiences of school staff to share good practice as part of the training;
- seconding staff to deliver training or develop aspects of related work such as target-setting; and
- training administrative staff to collate data.

As a result, many schools have used data well to plan improvements to teaching and learning.

52 A minority of local authority managers do not always clearly identify and address variations in the performance of individual local authority officers. This means that training is not targeted appropriately enough at these officers to help them improve their skills and knowledge about the use of data in their role. However, in a minority of local authorities, officers are well supported to interpret data. For example, one local authority school improvement service holds an annual workshop with officers from other services to discuss performance data and prepare for meetings between school improvement officers and schools.

53 Overall, the majority of governors do not understand clearly how their school performs in comparison with other schools. Many schools have a sub-committee of governors which regularly discusses performance data. In the best practice, governors build their skills in interpreting data through regular training and support from officers and headteachers. Many local authorities rely on headteachers to provide data directly to their governors. As a result, a minority of governing bodies do

not receive an appropriate range of performance data to help them challenge underperformance in a school.

54 Most elected members do not use data and comparative analyses to make sure that they know how well the local authority and its schools are performing. This limits their ability to question how well the authority carries out its school improvement function. Most local authorities do not share data on the performance of individual schools with elected members. In addition, the data that elected members receive is often not detailed enough to allow effective scrutiny, nor are members given enough support by officers in how to interpret the data provided. As a result, elected members rarely know which schools are underperforming, the reasons for this underperformance or the actions being taken by the local authority and school to improve.

Appendix A

Schools Causing Concern

Schools causing concern are identified as requiring **significant improvement** or **special measures** under the revised legal provisions of the Education Act 2005.

Schools requiring significant improvement/with serious weaknesses

Prior to 1 September 2006 this category was known as serious weaknesses. It was schools requiring significant improvement after that date. A school requires significant improvement if, although not requiring special measures, it is performing significantly less well than it might, in all the circumstances, reasonably be expected to perform. Estyn monitors progress made by the school and if, after the monitoring visit, the school has made insufficient progress, consideration will be given to placing the school in special measures.

Type of school	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Primary	3	6	13
Secondary	1	1	1
Special	1	2	2
Pupil Referral Unit	0	0	0
Totals	**5**	**9**	**16**

Schools requiring special measures

A school is identified as requiring special measures when it fails to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing, or governing the school do not demonstrate the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Type of school	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Primary	1	1	2
Secondary	0	1	3
Special	0	0	1
Pupil Referral Unit	0	1	0
Totals	**1**	**3**	**6**

Glossary

ALIS A-Level Information System

Cynnal An organisation which provides school improvement services for the local authorities of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Conwy.

CATs CATs are the Cognitive Abilities Tests published by nferNelson and assess a pupil's ability for verbal, quantitative and non-verbal reasoning. They are designed to minimise the role of prior learning and can therefore provide an indication of potential.

ESIS The Education and School Improvement Service that serves Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil local education authorities and their schools.

FFT Fischer Family Trust provides analyses and data which help local authorities and schools to make more effective use of pupil performance data for self-evaluation and target-setting.

FSM Free school meals. These are available to children whose parents are in receipt of one or more of: income support; income-based Job Seeker's Allowance; support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or Child Tax Credit with an income of less than £14,495 and not receiving Working Tax Credit. However, parents must apply to receive free school meals leading to some children not receiving their entitlement.

Mid-YIS Middle Years Information System. ALIS, YELLIS and Mid-YIS are monitoring systems produced by the University of Durham. They use data from tests and questionnaires completed by students to provide an external comparative analysis of the data as well as data on pupil progress (value added).

NPD The National Pupil Database holds pupil data made available through the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), National Curriculum Assessment data and external examination data.

PLASC Schools are required to return a Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) to the Welsh Assembly Government in January each year. The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (Wales) Regulations 2003 set out the individual pupil level data required for inclusion in the PLASC return.

RE2 The RE2 form contains summary examination information, specific to each school, compiled by the WJEC on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. By adding data from all the main examination boards in England and Wales each year, a cumulative record of achievement of each pupil in Wales is created. These pupil level results are then aggregated to school level to provide the information on the attached form.

UPN A Unique Pupil Number is an identifier for use in the educational context during a child's school career only and subject to Data Protection restrictions.

WJEC The WJEC was formerly known as the Welsh Joint Education Committee. It provides examinations, assessment, professional development, educational resources, support for adults who wish to learn Welsh and access to youth arts activities.

YELLIS Year 11 Information System