

Numeracy

In a majority of schools, the increased focus on developing pupils' numeracy is beginning to have a positive impact, although this is from a low baseline.

In the **Foundation Phase**, many pupils find it difficult to interpret problems expressed in words and to decide which operation they need to use to solve the problem. Where standards are good, pupils talk confidently about the mathematics they use and explain the reasons for their approach.

In **key stage 2**, in schools where numeracy is strong, most pupils use their skills to solve mathematical problems in a variety of contexts. They solve real-life problems that require applying a range of numeracy skills. For example, they plan the purchase of new furniture for their classroom and calculate the cost. In a minority of schools where there are shortcomings in numeracy, pupils do not use the skills they gain in mathematics lessons at the same level in other subjects.



ICT

Most pupils use ICT well to present information, and pupils at key stage 2 develop their skills in ICT to research information in different subjects. In the very few schools where ICT is excellent, most pupils use a range of ICT equipment confidently in the Foundation Phase. They build on this to master more complex skills. For example, they produce simple computer games using simulations and spreadsheets. In a minority of schools, pupils do not use a wide enough range of ICT skills such as data handling, modelling or writing simple coded programs.

Welsh

Standards in Welsh as a second language have not improved. In the **Foundation Phase**, most pupils continue to enjoy learning Welsh and respond to commands with understanding. Many ask and answer simple questions with confidence. This year, in a few schools, there has been an increase in daily, short practice sessions to keep pupils' skills in Welsh sharp. This often improves pupils' confidence when speaking on a range of topics and has enabled them to sustain a conversation for longer periods, particularly in **key stage 2**. In most schools, pupils do not use their Welsh oracy and writing skills beyond Welsh lessons. They lack confidence and are reluctant to participate in short exchanges about everyday subjects. Most pupils have reading skills that are less well developed than their speaking and writing skills and many find it difficult to discuss what they have read. Very few pupils have a Welsh reading book.

Provision: Primary schools

Provision is good or better overall in around 70% of schools. This proportion is lower than it was last year and reflects shortcomings in teaching. Over two-thirds of schools have at least one recommendation to improve aspects of teaching or assessment. In addition, the proportion of schools providing good or better learning experiences for pupils is lower than it was last year.

Learning experiences

In most schools, teachers provide learning experiences broadly in line with the principles of the Foundation Phase. However, even in good schools this year, there is a tendency for the **Foundation Phase** to become too formal too soon. For example, practitioners are using purchased schemes of work to deliver numeracy and literacy. This does not encourage the use of all areas of learning to strengthen pupils' skills or to make learning fun and motivating.

In **key stage 2**, there is an increase in the number of schools using a thematic approach to delivering the curriculum. A few schools allow flexibility in this planning to respond to pupils' interest and to take account of current events. A very few schools do not meet the Welsh Government's recommendation for the amount of teaching time at key stage 2 and do not allow enough time to cover the range of subjects required by the National Curriculum.

This year, the schools inspected are at varying stages of implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Framework and are adapting their planning to include increased opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Where this is most successful, schools build on pupils' previous learning and staff capture pupils' interest in lessons that have an imaginative and stimulating context. Schools where

planning is good or better offer innovative opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy, literacy, thinking and ICT skills in cross-curricular, thematic projects such as those that focus on education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC). In schools where there are shortcomings, the curriculum does not allow enough time for the full range of subjects or areas of learning; approaches to planning are inconsistent; and teachers do not adapt schemes of work or materials well enough to respond to learners' interests and needs.

A majority of schools make good use of educational visits and visitors to the school. In a few schools, teachers make creative use of the local community as a learning resource. They link these experiences with opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in a real life and imaginative context. For example, pupils assess and report on the risks of flooding in their area in response to national news items.

Provision for Welsh remains an important area for improvement in a significant minority of schools.

Making literacy and numeracy a priority

Eveswell Primary School has raised pupils' standards by implementing literacy and numeracy successfully across the curriculum.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)



Figure 2.3: Percentages of judgements awarded for Key Question 2: How good is provision?



Partnership working

Most schools have a good range of partnerships that impact positively on pupils' learning. For example, a few schools work with local sports groups to allow pupils to experience new sports and specialist coaching. Many schools have strong partnerships with parents, involve them in school activities and provide useful information to help them to support their child's learning at home. In a very few schools, partnerships are only adequate. In these schools, links with other schools are often limited to joint moderation and assessment activities.

Resource management

Around two-thirds of schools provide good or better value for money. This is fewer than was the case last year. Most schools have enough suitably qualified staff. Many schools deploy support staff well to raise standards of literacy and numeracy. However, many schools do not use the pupil deprivation grant specifically to support pupils eligible for free school meals. Instead, they use the funding to employ additional staff and to introduce programmes that support pupils with low attainment. As a result, these schools do not challenge or support more able pupils experiencing poverty. Most schools respond to staff training needs appropriately. However, many staff lack confidence in teaching Welsh as a second language and opportunities to improve these skills are often limited.

In most schools, there are suitable arrangements to set and monitor the school's budget and to address a significant budget surplus or deficit. However, the link between spending plans and the standards pupils achieve is often unclear and generally governors do not monitor plans well enough in this respect. In 2013-2014, there was an increase in the proportion of primary schools with a budget deficit to 11%, from 9% in the previous year.

Creating a learning culture

At **High Cross Primary School**, leaders have created a learning environment that helps staff to identify how best they can develop their own skills to improve pupils' learning. Teachers are encouraged by the school to seize opportunities for professional development and to contribute their ideas to the school development plan. As a result, pupil results have significantly improved.

For more information about this, please click on the [case study](#)