

Monmouthshire County Council

Scrutiny Report:	National School Categorisation 2016-17
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Purpose of report:	To inform Scrutiny members of the new national school categorisation system and Monmouthshire school categorisations.

National School Categorisation

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.

Both secondary school banding and the commitment to introduce primary school banding have now been superseded by the National School Categorisation System.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.

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.

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:

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.

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**

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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>).

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

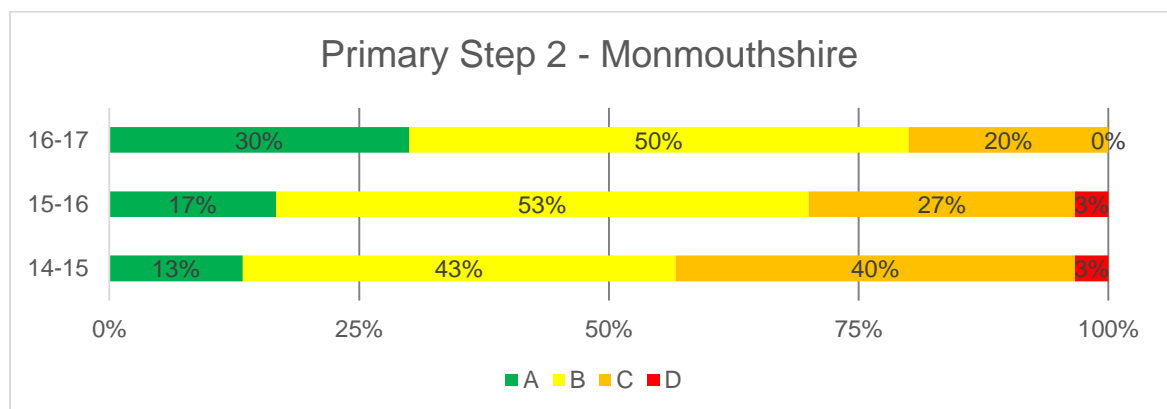
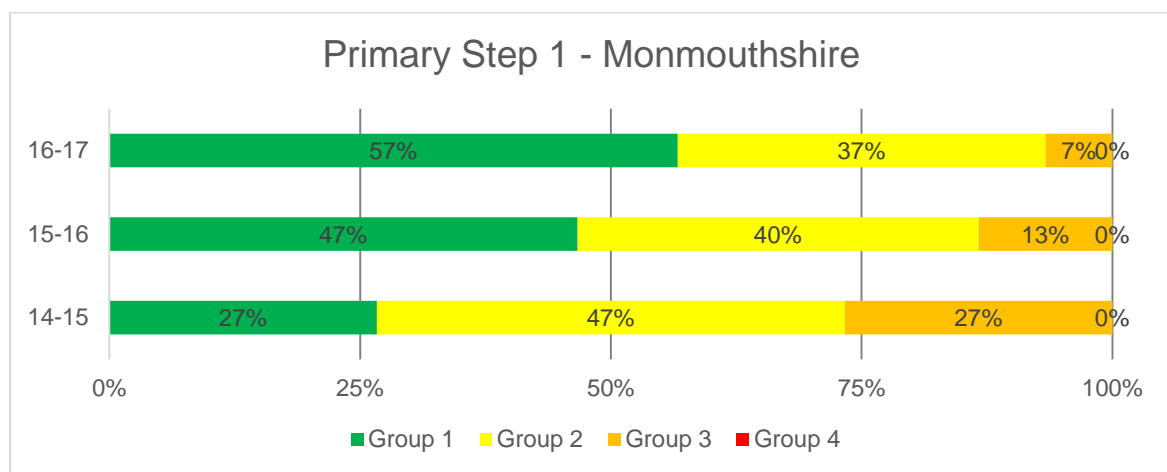
Since 2015, there has been a consistent approach across Wales to regional moderation, and this takes place during the Autumn term. This is followed by a national verification process early in the Spring, prior to publication of all school categorisations on My Local School at the end of January. A further 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.

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.

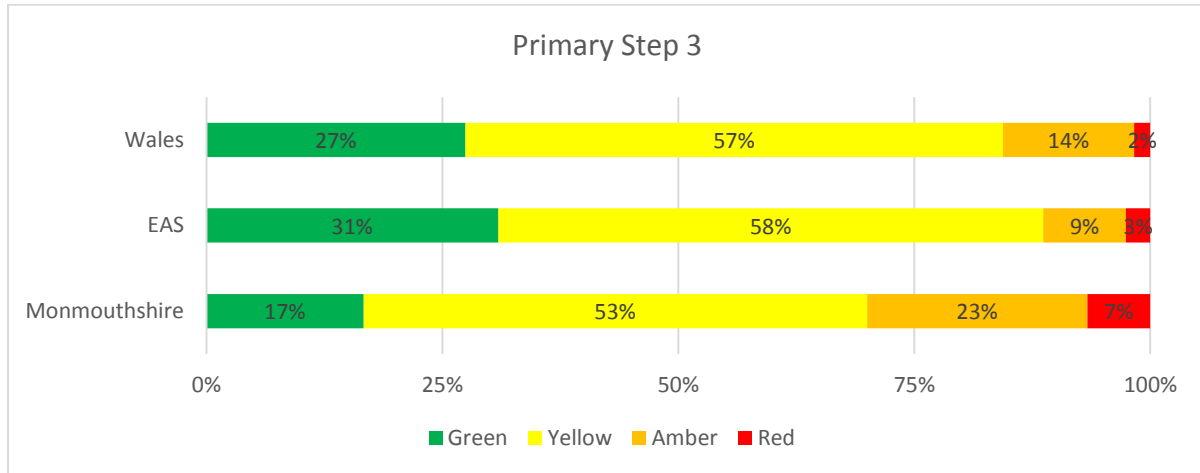
Primary School Categories 2016/17

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 57% for Step 1 and 30% for Step 2.

Primary	Green		Yellow		Amber		Red	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Step 1	17	57%	11	37%	2	7%	0	0%
Step 2	9	30%	15	50%	6	20%	0	0%
Step 3	9	30%	14	47%	6	20%	1	3%



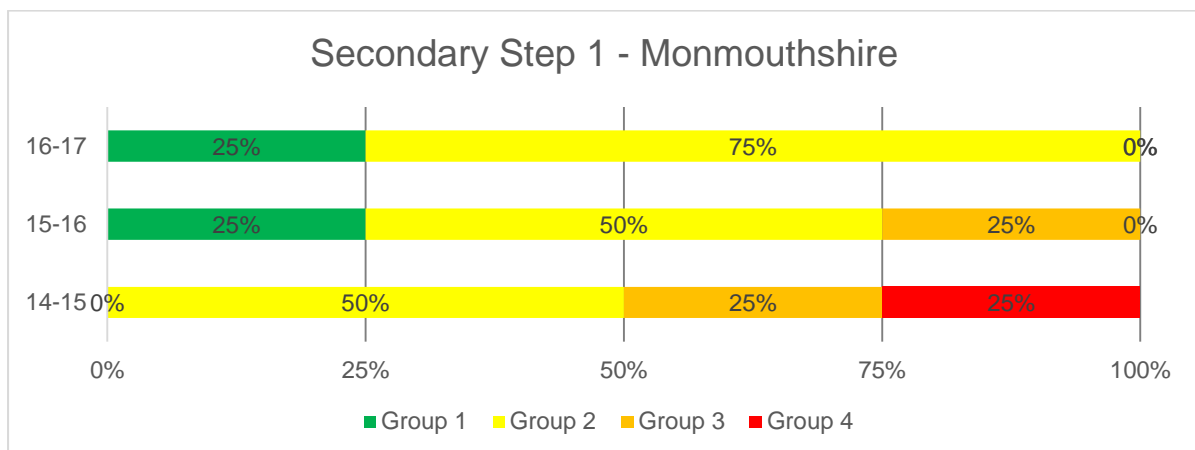
At Step 3, the proportion of schools in the green category is below both the regional and the national average, and the proportion in the red category is higher than the regional and national averages, although this only relates to one school.

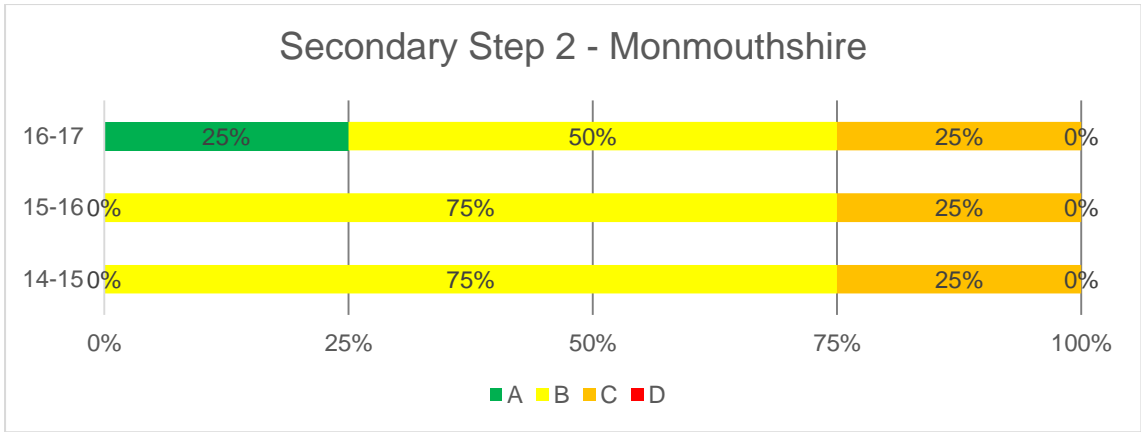


Secondary School Categories 2016/17

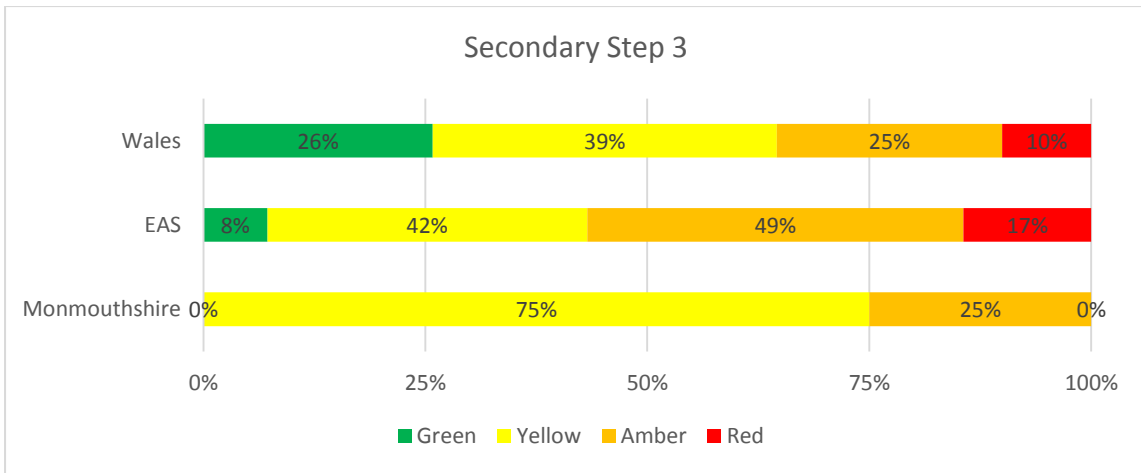
The charts below show that during the past three years, the proportion of schools in the green category has increased for both both Step 1 and Step 2. As there are only 4 secondary schools in Monmouthshire, this increase relates to one school. No schools were affected by the FSM threshold applied to Step 1 data.

Secondary	Green		Yellow		Amber		Red	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Step 1	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%	0	0%
Step 1 inc FSM threshold	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%	0	0%
Step 2	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%	0	0%
Step 3	0	0%	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%





For Step 3, there are no secondary schools in the green category, but equally there are no schools in the red category. Three schools are yellow and one is amber.



Annex 1 – Monmouthshire School Categorisation 2016/17 Academic Year

National categorisation – All Schools

2016-17 Categorisation

School name	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Archbishop Rowan Williams CIW School	2	B	Yellow
Cantref Primary School	1	A	Green
Castle Park Primary School	2	C	Amber
Cross Ash C.P. School	2	B	Yellow
Deri View Primary School	1	A	Green
Dewstow Primary School	2	B	Yellow
Durand Primary School	1	B	Yellow
Gilwern C.P. School	1	A	Green
Goytre Fawr Primary School	1	A	Green
Kymin View Primary	1	B	Yellow
Llandogo C.P. School	2	B	Yellow
Llanfihangel Crucorney C.P. School	1	A	Green
Llanfoist Fawr Primary School	1	B	Yellow
Llantilio Pertholey CIW Primary School	2	C	Amber
Magor V.A. Primary School	1	C	Red
Osbaston CIW Primary School	1	B	Yellow
Our Lady & St Michael's School	3	C	Amber
Overmonnow C.P. School	2	C	Amber
Pembroke Primary School	1	B	Yellow
Raglan V.C. Primary School	1	C	Amber
Rogiet C.P. School	2	B	Yellow
Shirenewton Primary School	1	A	Green
St Mary's R.C. Primary School	2	B	Yellow
The Dell Primary School	1	A	Green
Thornwell Primary School	1	B	Yellow
Trellech C.P. School	1	A	Green
Undy C.P. School	2	B	Yellow
Usk CIW Primary School	1	A	Green
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni	2	B	Yellow
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin	3	B	Amber
Caldicot School	2	A	Yellow
Chepstow Comprehensive School	2	B	Yellow
King Henry VIII Comprehensive	1	B	Yellow
Monmouth Comprehensive School	2	C	Amber
Mounton House	N/A	C	Amber
Monmouth PRU	N/A	B	Yellow

Annex 2

Welsh Government Supplementary Guidance 2015 / 2016

Introduction

This supplementary guidance provides schools, consortia and challenge advisers with advice concerning how the judgement relating to the improvement capacity and the decision relating to the support category should be applied in cases where contextual and other factors may need to be considered.

The list of factors highlighted is not necessarily exhaustive. This guidance may be updated and further developed as implementation of the national categorisation system evolves.

The guidance will be supplemented by annexes dealing with:

- the lines of enquiry that should be used when considering potential rare exceptions; and
- other risk factors that may affect a school's improvement capacity and support category.

1. Use of terminology

The following terminology should be used to describe the outcomes of each step of the categorisation process:

Step 1: the outcome will be a **standards group** for each school (1-4)

Step 2: the outcome will be a judgement about a school's **improvement capacity** (A-D)

Step 3: this will lead to a **support category** for each school (green, yellow, amber, red)

2. Potential rare exceptions

In the vast majority of cases the national school categorisation matrix will allow for an accurate identification of a school's support category.

However, in a few cases designated as "rare exceptions" contextual factors may require further consideration to be given to establishing the most appropriate support category. Consideration will be given to the factors outlined below in determining the schools support category.

For Primary / Infant / Junior schools:

- Schools where 50% or more of pupils over the last 3 years are in receipt of free school meals.
- Schools with an average cohort of five or less pupils in an individual key stage or both key stages (in the case of a primary school) over the last three years.
- Schools with a registered learning resource base where a deeper analysis of data over a three-year period indicates performance is in FSM Benchmark group quarter 1 or 2 (Estyn guidance for the inspection of primary schools September 2014 – Annexe 7).
- Schools where at least 15% of pupils whose stage of English language acquisition is judged to be A, B or C on the agreed National Language Acquisition Model.

For secondary schools:

- Schools with a registered learning resource base where a deeper analysis of data over a three-year period indicates performance is in FSM Benchmark group quarter 1 or 2 (Estyn guidance for the inspection of secondary schools September 2014 – Annexe 7).

- Schools where at least 8% of pupils whose stage of English language acquisition is judged to be A, B or C on the agreed National Language Acquisition Model.

Schools that receive consideration as potential rare exceptions will need to demonstrate that:

- Pupils, including those in the identified groups, make good progress;
- The school's capacity to secure further improvement is at least good.

The lines of enquiry provided in the additional guidance materials should be used by schools and challenge advisers to determine whether a school should be designated as a rare exception. Careful consideration will need to be given to the school's improvement capacity and in particular the quality and impact of learning and teaching.

Where a school meets the conditions necessary to be identified as a rare exception it will be possible within the matrix to override the outcome that would otherwise be established to ensure that the support category is the most appropriate.

3. Other Circumstances where the matrix may be overridden

As outlined in Annex 2 a range of other risks where they occur will need to be considered when making a judgement about a school's improvement capacity and a decision about their support category. These risks will need to be weighed carefully when making these judgements and may need to be applied irrespective of the standards group.

Any school considered as a potential rare exception or other circumstances that override the matrix will be considered through the Regional Moderation process.

4. Performance of e-FSM pupils

Where the proportion of e-FSM pupils achieving the L2+ threshold in a secondary school is below the agreed national floor target of 30% (for 2014/2015) the school cannot be treated as an exception to the matrix. However, this will ensure that an appropriate level of support is provided to meet the needs of the learners.

5. New and amalgamated Schools

For new and amalgamated schools the data would be produced for Step 1 but not published for the first year of a school's operation. Step 2 and Step 3 will be carried out by the Consortia using Step 1 to inform the process.

Step 2 and Step 3 will be published on My Local School Website.

6. Changes to a school's support category in year

The National School Categorisation process will be carried out on an annual basis. The outcomes will be communicated to the Welsh Government in December each year for Primary / Infant / Junior schools and mid January for Secondary schools for publication at the end of January. However, it will be possible for each region to review a school's categorisation at any point during the year in response to changes in circumstance. These changes will not be published nationally.

Circumstances that may necessitate a review include:

- Schools that are making very good progress.
- Schools that become subject to a higher degree of risk (see risk factors in annexe 2)

7. Schools in inspection follow up

The National School Categorisation system is not contingent on the outcomes of an individual school's inspection. Where school self-evaluation and monitoring of schools' performance are effective this should result in appropriate action that will support a school's self-improvement and avoid the need for inspection follow-up activity.

However, where a school requires follow-up as a result of inspection the associated degree of risk, and the need to provide evidence of a school's progress against its recommendations, will need to be weighed carefully when determining a judgement about a school's improvement capacity and making a decision about its support category.

8. Schools requiring significant improvement or special measures

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

9. Schools requiring Estyn or local authority monitoring

Local authorities and consortia will need to be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place to support schools requiring Estyn or local authority monitoring and to monitor and report their progress. When agreeing a school's improvement capacity and support category consideration should be given to the inspection's recommendations and degree of risk. Professional judgement should be applied when reviewing a school's support category taking account of evidence about a school's progress as it addresses the inspection's recommendations.

10. Nursery, special schools and pupil referral units

Nursery, special schools and pupil referral units will not be placed in a standards group. Nevertheless it will be important that challenge advisers discuss and agree with the school strengths and areas for improvement in relation to standards using the school's self-evaluation as the starting point.

The outcomes of steps 2 and 3 will not be published on My Local School.

11. Schools catering for pupils aged 3 to 16

In some instances a school may cater for an age range that spans the age ranges associated with both a primary and a secondary school.

In these cases, the school will be allocated two standards groups – one relating to its provision for pupils aged 3-11 and one relating to its provision for pupils aged 11-16. However, there will be only one judgement made about the school's improvement capacity and only one relating to its support category.