

Schools Challenge Cymru: where we are and where we are going.

February 2016



Schools Challenge Cymru

Schools Challenge Cymru is a government programme to accelerate progress across the Welsh education system, focusing in particular on improving outcomes for young people from low-income families. Broadly stated, its aims are:

- To bring about rapid improvements in the performance of schools serving the more disadvantaged communities; and
- To use lessons from these developments to strengthen the capacity of the education system to improve itself.

Schools Challenge Cymru:

40 challenging schools serving the more disadvantaged communities

	L1 13	L1 14	L1 15	L2 13	L2 14	L2 15	L2+ 13	L2+ 14	L2+ 15	L2+ eFSM 13	L2+ eFSM 14	L2+ eFSM 15
Pontypridd High School	93.5	90.5	98.4	59.7	78.6	92.9	45.7	52.4	53.3	9.7	30.3	11.5
Hawthorn High School	93.8	95.1	96.6	83.1	92.6	93.8	34.3	40.5	49.3	19.0	16.1	29.3
Tonyprefail Comprehensive	90.8	98.8	98.2	77.3	86.5	86.5	35.1	52.1	47.2	7.5	23.7	18.8
Porth County Community	90.4	91.4	99.4	62.9	62.6	96.3	42.6	47.2	47.5	20.5	27.9	30.3
Afon Taf High School	95.7	97.6	99.4	71.9	84.1	89.3	39.0	51.2	48.2	11.9	24.2	16.1
Pen-Y-Dre High School	91.7	95.9	99.1	75.2	77.7	78.3	33.1	33.9	39.1	8.1	8.3	24.4
Cantonian High School	91.0	95.3	92.5	89.2	93.4	87.5	31.5	35.8	45.0	25.0	14.3	30.0
Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen	91.8	93.7	94.0	60.3	63.0	59.2	29.2	39.9	44.0	11.9	12.8	34.0
Barry Comprehensive School	88.7	92.1	97.0	55.9	82.1	90.5	30.3	37.4	50.0	15.0	18.9	22.6
Tonypandy Community College	92.0	96.1	97.7	80.3	90.3	85.2	29.2	30.5	49.2	25.7	5.9	24.1
Glyn Derw High School	86.7	85.5	79.5	80.5	67.5	63.6	27.3	25.6	23.9	18.6	18.6	14.7
Michaelston Community College	81.4	84.3	89.3	61.9	53.7	68.0	26.7	22.4	25.2	16.7	8.6	14.7
Eastern High School	78.1	79.8	64.7	45.3	43.9	43.8	25.4	21.5	14.9	14.5	9.7	10.8
St Illtyd's Catholic High School	93.2	96.0	97.0	55.1	70.3	85.6	38.8	45.7	46.1	16.2	44.0	27.9
Bishop Hedley High School	99.0	100.0	100.0	74.3	88.7	87.0	36.2	60.4	64.0	13.6	40.9	54.2
Willows High School	81.6	83.0	83.6	62.5	74.8	78.9	36.8	49.7	46.9	20.9	37.7	32.3

Schools Challenge Cymru: what's working well

- The high quality and experience of the team of SCCAs and their impact in supporting senior leadership at their allocated schools.
- The networking of the SCCA team; solving problems together and sharing of expertise across the group.
- The increasingly close working relationships between the team of SCCAs and the supporting teams at CSC and WG.
- The increasingly broad range of high quality support available from CSC hubs and specialist schools.
- The increasing pace of school based improvement work, driven by highly focused school development plans, particularly in year 2.

What's working well

- The evidence for strong progress being robustly tested at the monthly meetings of an Accelerated Improvement Board (AIB) in order to force rapid change.
- The effective use of the significant extra SCC resource, both financial and for SCCA contact, made available by WG.
- The developing connections between schools and other partners sharing knowledge across the region.
- Innovative practice around classrooms and leadership
- The regional and national learning that is taking place in relation to effective school improvement practices, tactics and approaches.



Schools Challenge Cymru: Key Challenges

- In the short term the poor quality of senior leadership and classroom practice in a small number of schools has slowed the pace of change.
- There is evidence across the region that in Year 2 there is likely to be better outcomes achieved in these schools.



Next steps

- Greater differentiation of input into SCC schools who are at different points on their improvement journeys.
- A stronger focus on regional capacity building that promotes a truly self-improving system, particularly in relation to school to school working and partnership development.



Schools Challenge Cymru: even better if there was

- Even closer co-operation and improved communications between the team of SCCAs, WG and CSC/LAs; especially for the brokerage of support from other schools.
- Yet clearer lines of strategic responsibility and accountability for refining the work of the SCCA team between WG, the Champions group and CSC/LAs
- Greater clarity over the extent and scope of funding for future years and where needed a clear exit strategy.

