# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Patterns in reading and numeracy attainment, from 2018/19 to 2022/23** |
| **DATE**  | **23 November 2023** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language** |

The Welsh Government has today published a [statistical report](https://www.gov.wales/patterns-reading-and-numeracy-attainment-2018-19-2022-23) on patterns in attainment in reading and numeracy, using national-level data from personalised assessments.

Online personalised assessments are taken by all learners in Year 2 to Year 9. They provide schools with information on the reading and numeracy skills of individual pupils, including strengths and possible next steps, allowing teachers to support each learner.

The report shows clearly the negative impact of the pandemic on attainment in reading and numeracy, as well as the differential effects on learners relative to their age, adding to existing international evidence.

This is not unique to Wales. Evidence across the UK, indeed across the world, shows the negative impact the pandemic has had on education. Areas with higher levels of deprivation have been impacted worst.

The £500 million investment we made over the pandemic was designed specifically to support those most impacted by the pandemic. A recent evaluation showed the positive effect this investment had – but challenges remain.

Literacy and numeracy are foundational elements of learning. There is nothing more important and both must be seen as a national priority. The richness of our new Curriculum for Wales can best be accessed by those with good literacy and numeracy.

In March we published our Reading and Oracy Toolkit and now, to help schools to support pupils further, I will publish an updated toolkit later this term, to ensure clarity on the systematic and consistent teaching of phonics. This is the next step in the work we have undertaken over the last two years to raise reading standards.

Alongside this, promoting the importance of maths and a positive ‘can do’ mindset across schools, families and the wider community is crucial. To help achieve this, I will publish a Mathematics and Numeracy plan before the end of term. This will raise standards and provide every practitioner with the knowledge to support learners to apply their mathematical skills across the new Curriculum for Wales.

The Welsh Government remains clear that the purpose of personalised assessments is to support progression in learning, and that the assessment outcomes are not to be used for accountability purposes at any levels. Neither schools nor local authorities need to make any changes as a result of the publication of this national report.

The report takes advantage of the rich data generated on learners’ assessment outcomes to provide information on changes in attainment over time in reading and numeracy skills at a national level. Publication of the analysis of Wales-level anonymised data will allow this information to be used to inform policy-making and future research.

Henceforth, the analysis and understanding of patterns in attainment at a national level, by the Welsh Government and other partners, will be an important contributor to system-level evaluation and improvement, in line with the principles of our [School Improvement Guidance](https://hwb.gov.wales/evaluation-improvement-and-accountability/school-improvement-guidance-framework-for-evaluation-improvement-and-accountability/).

They will complement information from our broader programme of national, sample-based, monitoring assessments, which will cover the breadth of the Curriculum for Wales.

The effects of the pandemic are not over. The legacy of Covid coupled with the escalating cost of living have placed our schools at the frontline of a crisis beyond education – through no fault of their own. This government recognises the challenges facing our schools and we will continue to use every lever we have to support them.