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Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**  
**Glan Afan Comprehensive School**  
**Station Road**  
**Port Talbot**  
**SA13 1LZ**

**Date of inspection: 15 February 2011**

**by**

**Mr Gwyn Thomas**

**Under Contract for**  
**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**  
**and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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## Context

Glan Afan is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school maintained by Neath Port Talbot Unitary Authority. The school is located in the centre of Port Talbot and serves the communities of Baglan, Sandfields West and Port Talbot. There is a mixture of urban and rural areas as well as areas which are economically disadvantaged. Pupils of all abilities are received by the school.

The school has 470 pupils on roll. During the previous inspection in March 2005, there were 706 pupils on roll. Since that time, the school's population has decreased by one third.

There are 30 full-time equivalent teaching staff and an additional nine-point five full-time equivalent administrative staff.

In 2009-2010, 16.86% of pupils were eligible for free school meals. This figure is slightly below the national average of 17.1%. In 2010, 7.6% of 15 year old pupils were on the special educational needs' register.

Currently, 1.9% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs and a further 26.6% require additional support. The percentage of compulsory age pupils on the special educational needs' register is 28.5% which is above the 2010 national average of 20.9%.

Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language. Only 2% of pupils speak Welsh.

The headteacher was appointed permanently to the post in September 2005. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in personnel in the school at both senior and middle management level. The deputy headteacher (who had been an assistant headteacher since 2005) and an assistant headteacher took on their duties in September 2010. There are also several experienced members of staff who are new to middle management.

The school's aims are to create a well disciplined learning environment where pupils can maximise their potential and develop skills for lifelong learning and become valued members of the community.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Glan Afan Comprehensive School is £4378 which compares with a maximum of £5613 and a minimum of £3747 for secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot. The school has the fourth highest budget per pupil out of the 11 secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

Overall, Glan Afan Comprehensive School is a good school. Standards in key stage 4 are good or better. However, inspectors judged overall standards as adequate because important areas, especially in nearly all the non-core subjects in key stage 3, require significant improvement.

### Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are judged to be good because of the:

- vision and high expectations of the headteacher;
- cohesion and quality of the senior management team;
- improved quality of the majority of middle managers;
- continuous improvement of standards in key stage 4;
- excellent quality of care, support and guidance given to pupils; and
- progress made since the last inspection in developing robust self-evaluation procedures.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and governors of Glan Afan Comprehensive School need to:

- R1 raise and continue to raise consistently standards in the core subjects and nearly all the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum in key stage 3;
- R2 improve the standards and provision of Welsh throughout the school;
- R3 ensure that all pupils are entered to gain qualifications in Welsh at key stage 4;
- R4 accredit all key skills at the appropriate level to support pupils' progression;
- R5 continue to develop the processes of self-evaluation and planning for improvement with a very few middle managers;
- R6 ensure clarity and consistency in the assessment of pupils' work; and
- R7 continue to work with the Local Education Authority to address accommodation issues.

### ***What happens next?***

*The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Local Education Authority.*

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Standards: Adequate**

In 2010 in key stage 3, the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) was in the top 25% when compared with similar schools in terms of the free school meal benchmark. English and mathematics were in the top 50% and science was in the bottom 50%. This was an improvement on the previous two years when nearly all of the indicators were either in the bottom 25% or 50% when compared with similar schools in terms of the free school meal benchmark.

In 2010, results in English, mathematics and the core subject indicator placed the school above the family averages (groups of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in deprived areas, having special educational needs and learning English as an additional language). Science was slightly below.

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During 2008-2010, pupils' achievement above level 5 and level 6 in the core subjects was below the family and national averages in 2009. Science was consistently below for the three years. Pupils underachieved and made lower than expected progress based on their attainment at the end of key stage 2.

On many occasions over a three-year period, pupils' achievement at level 5 and above in the non-core subjects, excluding art, was barely adequate. Results in eight of the non-core subjects were below the family and national averages in 2008 and 2009 and placed the school in the bottom 25% or 50% when compared with similar schools in terms of the free school meal benchmark. Three subjects had been in the bottom 25% for three consecutive years.

At key stage 4 in 2010, pupils' performance in many indicators was very good and was above pupils' performance in 2009. Many key indicators were in the top 25% when compared with similar schools in terms of the free school meal benchmark in 2010. Compared with its family of schools, the school was placed nearly always above the family averages. Over a three-year period, pupils' performance was generally above the family averages even though results varied in nearly all indicators.

During 2008-2010, pupils' performance in English level 2 (GCSE grades A\*-C) had fallen. The threshold level 2 (a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSE's at grades A\*-C) including English or Welsh first language and mathematics had risen marginally during this time. Overall, pupils had made good or better progress based on their attainment at the end of key stage 3 and good progress from key stage 2.

At the end of Year 11 during 2008-2010, nearly all pupils left school with a recognised qualification. This was better than the national average for this period. Most pupils continued their full-time education in school, further education or in work-based training. Of those Year 11 pupils who left school in summer 2010, 6% are not in education, training or employment. Overall, these are good features.

Contrary to national trends, during 2008-2010, boys outperform girls on very few occasions in key stage 3 and on a few occasions in key stage 4. The gap between the performance of boys and girls narrowed in a few instances. More able boys perform better than more able girls in key stage 4.

Specific groups of pupils, including those entitled to free school meals, additional learning needs and the very few looked after children, make sound progress relative to their ability.

In most of the lessons observed, most pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. They listen well, speak clearly and many express their views confidently.

Currently, in Years 7 and 8, the majority of pupils demonstrate good reading and writing skills. However, a minority of pupils have limited reading skills which affect their progress. The standards of pupils' numeracy and communications skills are sound. Information and communications technology skills are good and are clearly evident in many subjects. In key stage 4, these skills are developed well across the curriculum and have impacted very positively on pupils' outcomes.

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In Welsh second language, pupils' achievement in key stage 3 improved in 2010. The percentage of pupils gaining a level 5 was 72%. This was above the family and national averages for the first time in four years. In key stage 4, very few pupils follow the full GCSE course. In the short course, 68% of entries gained a level 2 or better, but nearly 27% of the year group did not sit the examination. Pupils' reading and writing skills are adequate and their bilingual skills are limited. Pupils do not make sufficient use of incidental Welsh.

**Wellbeing: Excellent**

Nearly all pupils feel very safe in school and receive very good personal support. The school is an inclusive community. The very few incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Most pupils are considerate, courteous and behave very well. Over the last three years, fixed term exclusions have been substantially reduced and permanent exclusions virtually eliminated. These are very good features.

Many pupils have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and have positive attitudes towards exercise and diet. The percentage of pupils participating in fitness, sporting and related extra-curricular activities is good.

Pupils' attendance levels have been good and above the median for two of the last three years. In 2010, pupils' attendance was marginally lower than expected and placed the school slightly below the median when compared with similar schools.

In most lessons observed, pupils work well with each other and make good progress. They concentrate well, show respect for others and possess good attitudes to learning.

An outstanding feature of the school's life is the wide range of opportunities available for pupils to participate in the community of the school. The school council, Eco-group and others make very purposeful contributions to the decision-making processes in the school. Pupils have contributed positively towards several aspects of school life including improving the quality of teaching and learning. Members of the school council attend governing body meetings.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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**Learning experiences: Good**

While inspectors judged outcomes to be adequate, they judged provision to be good because of the features indicated below.

The school provides an effective curriculum which meets the needs of pupils. It provides adequate time to cover National Curriculum and religious education requirements.

In key stage 3 the collaboration with partner primary schools to ensure consistency in transition in curricular provision is good. The grouping arrangements within the school allow all pupils to achieve their potential.

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At key stage 4, the school far exceeds the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure. It has made very good progress in implementing Learning Pathways 14-19. The school offers a good range of academic and vocational courses in key stage 4, including a range of formal and informal elements. The school's collaboration with Neath Port Talbot College and other 11-16 providers is good. Close co-operation with other providers ensures successful continuity and progression in a range of subjects. Innovative timetabling ensures that pupils are able to follow their chosen pathway.

A suitable curriculum is offered to vulnerable pupils, and more able and talented learners have opportunities to gain additional qualifications and to develop their specific talents. Through the sound preparatory work done in Year 9, the school is successful in ensuring that nearly all pupils follow their preferred choice of study at key stage 4.

The variety of extra-curricular activities is extensive. The school provides a range of experiences including drama, sporting and musical and artistic enrichment opportunities.

Through various strategies, notably the mentoring system and the paired reading scheme, very effective support exists for pupils to overcome barriers to learning.

The provision and co-ordination of key skills in key stages 3 and 4 is good. Literacy is targeted well, with schemes of work being adapted when pupils are working below the expected levels. Provision for information and communications technology is good, with lessons timetabled for all pupils from Years 7 to 11. Provision in numeracy is developing.

Welsh-language provision is adequate across the school. Many pupils are entered for the Welsh second language GCSE short course, with few following the full GCSE. The Welsh dimension is comprehensive with many departments contributing. Only a few teachers use incidental Welsh.

Curricular provision for sustainable development issues is very good. The Eco-committee makes a notable contribution. The school successfully promotes a good awareness of global citizenship through a range of learning activities.

### **Teaching: Good**

Within the lessons observed, most teachers deliver good lessons. They use their subject knowledge effectively. In many lessons a good range of teaching strategies is employed. Aims and objectives of lessons are clearly outlined, lessons have good pace and challenge, and are interesting. In the few outstanding lessons seen, teachers fully engage pupils with challenging tasks, and ensure that the teaching has a positive impact on learning. In the few adequate lessons observed pupils do not make sufficient progress because of lack of challenge in lessons and over direction by teachers.

Working relationships between pupils and teachers are good.



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Work provided for pupils with additional learning needs is appropriate to their needs. In some subjects the more able and talented pupils are entered early to gain qualifications.

The quality of marking varies between departments. In the best examples, books are marked regularly with informative and diagnostic comments given to pupils on how to improve. In a minority of the books sampled, marking is superficial.

Assessment for learning is a strong feature within some departments, with pupils setting their own success criteria effectively, and assessing their peers' work. However, it is not consistently applied.

The senior management team analyses a wealth of data effectively and supports teachers well as they look at their pupils' attainment.

Pupils are well informed about their progress. There is a consistent tracking system which ensures that underachievement is identified early and that strategies to remedy the situation are implemented. Pupils clearly understand the levels at which they are working. The mentoring system at key stage 4 has a very positive effect on pupils' attitude to learning and the standards they achieve.

Overall, reports to parents are good. The interim and end-of-year reports provide clear information on pupils' progress, effort and the target grade to which they are aspiring. The targets set by some teachers on the end of year reports lack rigour. There is good opportunity for parental and pupils' comments.

**Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

All pupils receive excellent guidance and support. This underpins the school's principles and ethos of inclusion.

Clear and balanced information is given to pupils and parents when making choices for key stage 4 and post-16.

A wide range of external agencies provide support of a high standard. Aspects of this work are outstanding. Pupils utilise these services effectively.

Learning coach support provides valuable guidance on academic progress and personal support for some very vulnerable pupils.

Pupils' wellbeing and healthy development is successfully promoted. Pupils are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The canteen provides a range of healthy meals and pupils participate in a wide range of sporting, cultural and community activities.

The personal and social education programme is comprehensive. External agencies contribute exceptionally to developing pupils' personal responsibility and community involvement. This is an outstanding feature.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good.

There are clear and robust procedures for dealing with bullying. The excellent “Bullies-Out” project and nurture room are highly valued by pupils and parents.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding pupils.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is outstanding. Identification procedures for these pupils are comprehensive. Well co-ordinated strategies are firmly embedded to meet individual needs.

Highly effective systems monitor the progress of pupils and ensure access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum.

Thorough individual education plans establish suitable targets for improvement. They are reviewed twice a year by teaching and support staff as well as pupils.

Parents of pupils with additional learning needs are kept fully informed and involved.

The school creates an environment where all pupils can achieve very positive outcomes. The very supportive ethos provides a stable, orderly environment.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The school is a very caring and inclusive community where staff and pupils demonstrate mutual respect and care. All pupils receive equal access to all areas of the school’s provision. Pupils are very supportive of each other and have confidence in the staff. There is a clear emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

Many resources are matched to pupils’ learning needs. There are very modern information and communications technology facilities readily accessible to all.

The school campus is restricted and congested in places. However, the teaching accommodation is generally used well. Displays in corridors and classrooms support learning and celebrate achievement effectively. Some areas are old and require refurbishment.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

While inspectors judged outcomes to be adequate they judged leadership and management to be good because of the features indicated below.

The headteacher, governing body and other members of the senior management team promote a clear mission statement to maximise pupils’ potential and develop skills for lifelong learning.

The high expectations and leadership of the headteacher with the support of her senior management team have now ensured that many subject and pastoral teams have a good sense of purpose. This has led to increased accountability across the school. An effective structure has been developed for self-evaluation and planning for

improvement. This has successfully involved managers in developing the strategic direction of the school.

The school has an effective review, monitoring and meeting structure. This has been successful in addressing many core issues and raising the performance of pupils in key stage 4. Currently, many leaders use data effectively to monitor performance, set targets and identify underachievement. A few middle managers are not fully confident in analysing data critically to inform strategies for improvement.

The school has appropriate arrangements for the performance management of all staff. Individual training needs are met in most cases through whole-school training days, the sharing of good practice within the school and visits to other schools in the family.

Governors are enthusiastic and very supportive of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's performance and are developing a more secure understanding of how data is analysed. Governors contribute positively in a number of committees. Although governors are not assigned to departments, they critically evaluate reports from departmental reviews. Governors meet legal and regulatory requirements.

The school has responded well by implementing many local and national priorities. Good progress has been made with the 14-19 Learning Pathways' programme, wellbeing initiatives, raising pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship and the literacy support programme. The school's response to the development of bilingualism is adequate. Plans are well developed for the accreditation of key skills, the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate at key stage 4 and extending the transition programme with partner primary schools.

### **Improving quality: Good**

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of self-evaluation and development planning since the last inspection. This has had a considerable impact on standards at key stage 4.

The school self-evaluation report provides a detailed analysis of strengths, key issues for development and a brief summary of action plans. Both the school and departmental self-evaluation reports successfully address all quality indicators in the three-key questions in the new Inspection Framework. Many departmental reports analyse data critically, identify strategies for improvement and link their findings to their plans for improvement. A few departmental reports lack sufficient detail in evaluating strengths and shortcomings.

The self-evaluation process has many good features. These include detailed analysis of performance data, the setting of targets and the comprehensive departmental reviews. They have been successful in identifying strengths and areas for development through careful analysis of first-hand evidence which includes pupils' performance, lesson observations, book scrutiny and pupils' responses. Further evidence is collected through pupils' trails, thematic surveys and the monitoring of books by the senior management team and within departments. Considerable progress has been made in developing quality assurance processes. However, the

lack of a regular formal meeting between line managers and heads of department reduces the overall effectiveness of the self-evaluation process.

The school regularly takes account of the views of pupils, parents and the school council. In a number of cases these opinions have resulted in changes to the school environment and procedures.

The school development plan contains clear and appropriate priorities which are focused on raising standards. The five main priorities give the school and departments a clear focus for improvement. All plans have specific targets, strategies for action, personnel with responsibility for monitoring progress, success criteria, resources needed and timescales. Many departmental development plans have a strong link with the school's priorities and the outcomes of self-evaluation. However, in a few departments, there is a lack of clarity in the targets set, in the identification of success criteria and focused strategies to raise outcomes further.

The school has an effective system for identifying the continuing professional needs of all staff. Training needs are effectively managed through whole-school development days, visits to schools and external courses linked to examination requirements. Involvement in professional learning communities is developing through the sharing of excellent practice in teaching within the school and collaboration with other schools. Opportunities for teachers to observe peers within departments and outside their subject specialism are developing well.

The school has made generally good progress in addressing the recommendations identified in the previous inspection.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has formed good partnerships with other local providers to extend its curricular choices for pupils at key stage 4. Liaison, trust and communication between partners are good. The monitoring and evaluation of the experiences of its pupils on courses provided by partner providers are good.

Work with partner primary schools as part of the transition plan and moderation arrangements, has strengthened continuity in pupils' learning and wellbeing.

Pupils benefit from strong links with a range of multi-disciplinary agencies which help to meet their learning, behavioural, emotional and social needs.

The school has good links with parents with the Parent Teacher Association raising significant funds to support the school. There are also good links with local organisations and businesses and initial teacher training institutions.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

Staff resources are managed well to benefit pupils and to deliver priorities. The curriculum is predominantly delivered by subject specialists. Where teachers are required to teach outside their specialism, appropriate training and support are provided. The school meets the requirements regarding the workload agreement and allocates any additional capacity to supporting pupils with additional learning needs.

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The skills and experience of support members of staff make a significant contribution to the school and particularly to pupils with additional learning needs.

The allocation of resources supports priorities for improvement and generally resources for learning are good. Capitation is distributed in an open and fair manner. The senior management team and governing body monitor and manage the school's budget effectively.

The management of the physical-resource base is good. Maintenance and improvement is carried out in line with school priorities. Transport for outside sports' activities is managed well and curricular changes have been made to minimise the impact of journey times.

Health and Safety procedures are efficiently carried out in line with Unitary Authority policies. Risk assessments are thorough and appropriate.

Shared curricular provision at key stage 4 widens choice and meets the needs of pupils and improves the efficiency of the provision.

The school's outcomes are good at key stage 4. Overall, the value for money is adequate because of standards of attainment at key stage 3.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 120 responses to the parent questionnaires. Many gave positive responses to all questions.

Nearly all parents are satisfied with the school. They believe that members of staff have high expectations of pupils and that their children were helped to settle in well in the new school.

Most parents agree that their children like the school and are making good progress. Homework reinforces learning and appropriate support is readily available. The school helps their children to become more mature and responsible. Parents state that Glan Afan is a safe school; has good quality teaching and is run well.

Many parents are positive about receiving information on their children's progress and the school is easily approachable. Their children are well prepared for moving on to the next school or college.

Many parents maintain that pupils are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise.

A small minority of parents express concerns regarding pupils' behaviour and of the limited range of activities including trips or visits.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 122 pupils. All pupils state that they are doing well and nearly all feel safe in the school.

Most have enough resources and teachers support pupils to learn, make progress and work independently. Most pupils indicate that they are given good advice in choosing their courses at the end of key stage 3 and are well prepared for progression to further education or employment at the end of key stage 4.

Most pupils say the school deals well with any bullying and there is always someone there do deal with issues. It also helps them to understand and respect others well.

Most pupils believe that there are plenty of opportunities to undertake regular exercise and many appreciate how the school teaches them to keep healthy.

Many pupils say they are treated fairly and with respect by members of staff who give homework that is of relevance.

However, a minority of pupils, especially in key stage 4, express concern about behaviour in class. Furthermore, half the pupils in this key stage do not feel that the school listens sufficiently to pupils' views.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

William Gwyn Thomas	Reporting Inspector
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Bethan Whittall	Team Inspector
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Michael Fahy	Peer Inspector
Andrew Owen	School Nominee

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### Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11