

DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS  
**Consultation Document**  
– **School Information**

**Consultation on the proposal to transform special education in the Vale by establishing a specialist resource base at Whitmore High School from September 2021.**



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# Introduction

## Background

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils within the Vale have every opportunity to attain the best possible outcomes. In order to achieve this ambition it is essential that we ensure schools remain sustainable, reflect the needs of our local communities, and are equipped with the best possible learning environments.

The Council is committed to ensuring that consultations are meaningful, relevant and appropriate for the communities that are involved, and the Council has a duty of care to ensure that proposals are clear, transparent, and reflective of those affected. This is a vision that can only be realised by working in partnership with schools, governors, parents and the wider communities we all serve.

Consultation on the proposal to transform special education in the Vale by establishing a Specialist Resource Base at Whitmore High School from September 2021.

This proposal is considered under section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code (2018) and the Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Management Committees etc.) (Wales) Regulations 2014.

## Purpose of this document

To provide an overview of the schools affected by this proposal, including:

- background information about the school/s;
- the most recent assessments of the school/s' buildings and facilities; and
- the most recent assessments of the school/s' educational performance.

The information is divided by school and has been used to inform the "Implications of the proposal" section of the consultation document (from page 13).

## School buildings and facilities assessment

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has a vision to provide the best possible facilities for children and young people in the Vale to support their learning. One of the methods used to judge school buildings and facilities is a condition survey. A condition survey involves a visual assessment of all exposed parts of the buildings to identify significant defects and items of disrepair.

The Council surveys and categorises its school buildings on a 4-point scale from good to bad.

### Table 1 – Condition Grading System

Grade	Description
Good	Performing as intended and operating efficiently.
Satisfactory	Performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration.
Poor	Exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended.
Bad	Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure.

The Council also regularly monitors accrued backlog maintenance noting recommendations from the latest condition survey and accounting for building works which have subsequently been carried out.

## Educational performance assessment

The Vale of Glamorgan Council works closely with the governing bodies of schools to ensure that standards are robust, that teaching and learning is of a high quality, and that leadership and governance is strong. Performance is monitored using two systems; the Estyn report from inspections and Welsh Government's categorisation of schools.

The Council works with two organisations in order to monitor the performance of schools and to support school improvement;

- Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It is a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992. Estyn is independent of the National Assembly for Wales but receives its funding from the Welsh Government under section 104 of the Government Wales Act 1998. Estyn inspects quality and standards in education and training providers in Wales.
- The Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) was established in September 2012. The Local Authority works with the Consortium to support and challenge all schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Schools are inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of an inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils.

### Estyn Report

In September 2017 a new Estyn School Common Inspection Framework was introduced for all schools across Wales. Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using the following four-point judgement scale:

Table 2 – Estyn Inspection Criteria		
Judgement	What the judgement means prior to September 2017	What the judgement means post-September 2017

Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very strong, sustained performance and practice</li> <li>• Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very strong, sustained performance and practice</li> </ul>
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement</li> <li>• Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement</li> </ul>
Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement</li> <li>• Strengths outweigh areas for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement</li> </ul>
Unsatisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important weaknesses outweigh strengths</li> <li>• Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important weaknesses outweigh strengths</li> </ul>

### **Welsh Government categorisation of schools**

In 2014, Welsh Government introduced a new categorisation system for schools; this was revised in September 2017. Categorisation considers each school's standards alongside the school's capacity to improve in order to determine the level of support required. Organisations such as the CSCJES and the school improvement service then work with schools' leaders to identify provide and/or broker any support required for further improvement.

The categorisation system is described below:

<b>Table 3 – Welsh Government Criteria</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>What the category means</b>
Green	A highly effective school which is well run has strong leadership and is clear about its priorities for improvement.
Yellow	An effective school which is already doing well and knows the areas it needs to improve.
Amber	A school in need of improvement which needs help to identify the steps to improve or to make change happen more quickly.
Red	A school in need of greatest improvement and will receive immediate, intensive support.

To determine the support category as explained in the table above, schools are placed in one of four groups for ability to bring about improvement (A-D) with A being the highest for improvement capacity. The revised categorisation system introduced in September 2017 does not use a standards grade.

Of the 45 primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan, 31 are categorised as green, 20 as yellow, 4 amber and 1 red.

Of the 8 secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan, 3 are categorised as green, 4 as yellow, and 1 amber.

**PRUs do not form part of the statutory categorisation process.**

For further information about the categorisation scheme, please see Welsh Government's parents' guide to the National School Categorisation System:  
<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150119-parents-guide-en.pdf>



# Whitmore High School



## Background information

Whitmore High School was previously a boys' 11-18 school, Barry Comprehensive, and opened in 1966. Barry Comprehensive School operated in partnership with Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School as the Barry Sixth Form in to provide English medium post-16 education.

The school became a co-educational school under the new name, Whitmore High School, in 2018. The school has its own sixth-form.

In 2019, the school had a budget per pupil of £4,764.

**Table 1 – Whitmore High School information**

School name	Type	Language	Age range	Capacity
Whitmore High School	Community	English	11 – 19	1,110

## School buildings and facilities

The school is located in Barry and the site is adjacent to the Vale's Welsh medium high school, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg.

The building was identified by the Council's condition survey undertaken in 2019 as "Poor" in both condition and suitability.

The current school building is set to be replaced with a new three-storey building with room for 1,100 pupils. This will include spaces suitable for use with ASD pupils.

## Educational performance

### Estyn Report (March 2013)



- leaders provide a clear sense of direction and have established high expectations;
- all staff understand their role and responsibilities and there are clear lines of communication;
- leaders have a precise and specific understanding of the areas of the school's work that need to improve;
- the school's self-evaluation activities are comprehensive and robust; and
- there is a track record of making improvements, for example at key stage 4, in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection, and the recent progress in improving Welsh second language and attendance

**Recommendations:**

- R1 Improve standards in Welsh second language and at key stage 3
- R2 Improve attendance and punctuality
- R3 Ensure that all pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning
- R4 Address the shortcomings in teaching
- R5 Increase the consistency of the marking of pupils' work and fully implement the system for tracking and supporting all pupils' progress
- R6 Provide a daily act of collective worship

<b>Table 3 - Estyn areas of inspection results for Ysgol Y Deri</b>		
<b>Estyn Area of Inspection</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
Standards	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's performance at key stage 4 in those indicators that include English and mathematics has fluctuated over the last five years, but it rose sharply in 2012 and is now better than that for similar schools. Performance has largely been around the family average for boys.</li> <li>• Very few pupils left the school without a qualification, although the proportion rose slightly in 2012.</li> <li>• At key stage 3, performance in English and mathematics is below that of similar schools and pupils' progress from the previous key stage is below expectations.</li> <li>• Pupils eligible to free school meals achieve as expected. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve as expected.</li> <li>• In many lessons, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills.</li> </ul>
Wellbeing	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many pupils are safe in school, but a minority do not feel that the school deals well with bullying. Many take part in regular opportunities for exercise and a majority understand what it is to be healthy.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most pupils behave well, particularly around the school at break and lunch times, and between lessons. In many lessons, pupils show a positive attitude to work, have a keen interest in what they are doing, and maintain high levels of concentration.</li> <li>• The School Parliament is a strong and successful feature of the school. This allows pupils to influence a wide range of aspects of school life and work.</li> <li>• Pupils participate in a wide variety of community activities that help to develop their social and life skills.</li> </ul>
Learning experiences	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school effectively meets the needs of learners, and the key stage 3 and key stage 4 curriculum meet requirements.</li> <li>• The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities which benefit pupils' learning. Pupils actively participate in clubs, societies, sports and charity activities.</li> <li>• The school has successfully improved pupils' speaking skills and its current priority of improving extended writing has enhanced provision in a minority of subjects, but has yet to have a full impact in all subjects.</li> <li>• Overall, the school develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Welsh language and the culture of Wales appropriately.</li> <li>• Arrangements for developing pupils' understanding of education for sustainable development and global citizenship are strong.</li> </ul>
Teaching	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most teachers have a secure subject knowledge, and many plan lessons well and communicate clear learning objectives. Many lessons have activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and include strategies that gauge the progress that pupils have made.</li> <li>• In a few lessons, pupils do not make enough progress. This is because the pace of the lesson is often too slow, and learning activities are not challenging enough and not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs.</li> <li>• A minority of teachers give pupils constructive and helpful written feedback on their performance and this ensures that pupils clearly understand their progress and what they need to do to improve their work.</li> <li>• The school collects and analyses a wide range of performance data thoroughly. It uses a comprehensive tracking system that effectively monitors pupil progress.</li> <li>• Parents receive clear and informative reports on the achievement and progress of their children.</li> </ul>
Care, support and guidance	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school provides valued support in a caring environment and effectively guides pupils' personal development and wellbeing, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff work well with the partner primary schools to ensure that the pupils settle quickly and remove any barriers to learning. Pupils and parents receive comprehensive information and guidance as they make choices for key stage 4 and post-16 courses.</li> <li>• The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.</li> <li>• Pupils with additional learning needs receive thorough and effective support. The special educational needs co-ordinator identifies clearly pupils' needs through a comprehensive mapping of provision. Interventions have a positive impact on their learning. Multi-agency working and the involvement of specialist services contribute to the success of the provisions for additional learning needs.</li> </ul>
Learning environment	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barry Comprehensive School is an inclusive school that offers its pupils equal access to everything it provides.</li> <li>• Across the school the accommodation meets the needs of pupils well with the learning resource centre, catering facilities, and music and drama suites being particularly effective. The buildings are well-maintained, but the quality of the internal decoration varies. The main school roof is in a poor state of repair and the external fabric of the art block is not fit for purpose.</li> <li>• Learning resources meet the needs of pupils well with particularly good provision for information and communication technology.</li> </ul>
Leadership	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The headteacher has a clear strategic vision for the development of the school that is well understood by staff and pupils.</li> <li>• All members of staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for which they are held to account.</li> <li>• Most meetings are purposeful with a focus on improving standards. Their consistency and quality have improved as a result of more regular and formalised agendas.</li> <li>• Data has been used successfully in many departmental reviews to challenge performance.</li> <li>• The school has a strong and experienced governing body which is led effectively by the chair and vice chair of governors.</li> </ul>
Improving quality	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has wide-ranging self-evaluation procedures that are well-planned and coherent. Leaders and managers pay increasing attention to the analysis of performance data and draw well on first-hand evidence of teaching and learning.</li> <li>• Senior leaders and managers produce a comprehensive and useful self-evaluation report for the whole school. However, while it is detailed and evaluative, it does not sufficiently address shortcomings in a few individual subjects and in aspects of teaching.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject development plans devised by middle leaders state appropriately how their teams will contribute to the whole-school objectives.</li> <li>• Professional development activities are based on identified needs and there is a wide-ranging programme to meet them. Nearly all staff are involved in groups that focus on the school's key development priorities such as teaching, learning and assessment. Links with other schools have been used to good effect to improve standards and provision.</li> </ul>
Partnership working	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has developed effective relationships with a wide range of partners. This successfully widens learners' options and helps them to respond well to the challenge and support they receive.</li> <li>• The school works productively with partner primary schools to moderate pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2.</li> <li>• There is strong and well-established collaboration with Bryn Hafren School, and Cardiff and the Vale College. These partnerships extend the range of courses beneficially in key stage 4 and the sixth form and increase the efficiency of resources.</li> <li>• The school works very successfully with a wide range of local businesses, community organisations and other agencies.</li> </ul>
Resource management	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is appropriately staffed with suitably qualified teachers to deliver the curriculum.</li> <li>• Leaders have worked effectively together and have addressed the budget deficit successfully. Expenditure is well planned to meet school priorities and is monitored regularly by the headteacher, finance officer, assistant headteacher and the governing body's sub-committee.</li> <li>• The school works very effectively within the sixth-form consortium to access wider resource and enhance provision.</li> </ul>

### Welsh Government categorisation of schools

The categorisation for Whitmore High School can be found at:

<https://mylocalschool.gov.wales/School/6734068?lang=en>

Publication Date	Standards Grade	Improvement Capacity	Overall Category
January 2020	N/A	B	Yellow
January 2019	N/A	B	Yellow

January 2018	N/A	B	Yellow
January 2017	N/A	N/A	N/A

## January 2020 National Categorisation Report

Summary of key points raised in the national categorisation report

Table 5 – National Categorisation School Report for Whitmore High School (2019-2020)	
Area of Inspection	Key Points
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards in key stage 3 (KS3) are overall good. For example, performance at level 5 or above (L5+) for English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator (CSI) is 93.9%, 97.0%, 97.7% and 92.4% respectively. These results are above the Wales averages. For L5+, English is the lowest performing core subject. Pupils' writing skills are been weaker than their oracy and reading skills.</li> <li>At level 6+ (6+), performance for English, mathematics and science is 60.6%, 69.7% and 67.4% respectively. The result for mathematics is in line with the average for Wales. The results for English and science are both in line with the respective average for Wales. At level 7+ (L7+), performance for English, mathematics and science is 26.5%, 29.5% and 28.0%. The result for English is above the Wales average. The results for mathematics and science are in line with the Wales averages.</li> <li>For English, mathematics and science, most pupils make at least one level of progress. For English, mathematics and science, around half of pupils make two or more levels of progress.</li> <li>In key stage 3, most eFSM make at least one level of progress across the key stage. For English, half of eFSM pupils make two or more levels of progress, while for mathematics and science a minority make two or more levels of progress. For mathematics and science, all eFSM pupils achieve at least L5+, of which a majority achieve L6+ or higher for mathematics and half achieve L6+ or higher for science. For English, nearly all eFSM pupils achieve at least L5+, of which a majority achieve L6+ or higher.</li> <li>At L5+, the performance for all non-core subjects is above the respective Wales average. At L6+, outcomes for many non-core subjects are above the Wales averages. At L7+, results for just over half of non-core subjects is below the Wales averages.</li> <li>For key stage 4, in 2018-2019, the new capped nine score is 342.9. The average points score for the best literacy is 36.8 and the best numeracy is 38.9. The average points score for science is 36.0. Performance for the skills challenge certificate points score is 33.8.</li> <li>Pupils make very good progress and achieve well in very few subjects. For example, in music. However, for around half of subjects, value added measures are relatively weak.</li> <li>For the measures above, the difference in performance of eFSM pupils is similar to non-eFSM pupils.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, for the last three years, standards for post sixteen are improving. In 2018-2019, performance for level 3 threshold is 98.6%. Performance for three A*-A is 21.6% and for three A*-C is 58.1%. These results are above the respective averages for Wales.</li> <li>• For art (craft), mathematics, physics, as well as the advanced skills challenge certificate, pupils make good progress and performance is strong. However, performance is relatively weak for a number of other subjects.</li> <li>• The retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13 has improved from 52.7% in 2017-2018 to 78.9% in 2018-2019. The retention rate from Year 11 to Year 12 is 43.0% and is similar to 2017-2018.</li> <li>• Attendance in 2018-2019 is 93.9%. The school's attendance places the school in the top 25% of similar schools.</li> </ul>
Improvement Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitmore High is a new co-educational school, which opened in September 2018. The school is under the leadership of an executive headteacher and head of school. The commentary below evaluates the first year of work undertaken since opening the school.</li> <li>• The school's leaders have established the school's vision and strategic objectives. They communicate them through the school's motto 'Journey to Excellence'. The school shares effectively shares its vision and objectives with governors, staff, associate primary schools, pupils and parents. At the heart of this vision, is the school's ambition to communicate high expectations, high levels of support and high levels of challenge. In order to achieve this key leaders engage with its community with increasing impact. For example, leaders work well with the school's primary cluster to agree a detailed transition programme.</li> <li>• The new governing body has a good range of relevant experiences. Governors are familiar with the priorities with school's improvement plan. With increasing effect, they operate as an effective team to hold leaders to account. In developing their role as critical friends, the governing body has engaged well with high quality training provided by an external consultant. This has led to the governing body building its capacity to support and challenge the school's performance. For example, the governing body has established a monitoring group to monitor the progress of target departments requiring improvement.</li> <li>• Leaders have clear plans and implement change from which the school's ethos is emerging. For example, the new logo, uniform, staffing structure and its suite of policies contribute to establishing a shared set of values across the school community. Leaders enable staff and other partners to participate well in the change process, through questionnaires and other engagement activities.</li> <li>• Leaders continue to develop and refine the school's approach to self- evaluation. Current processes are systematic and in the main accurate. The school bases its approach on a range of first-hand evidence, including learning walks, book reviews, questionnaires, and listening to learners. Currently, lesson observations, are limited to performance management procedures only. However, leaders continue to engage with unions to agree a framework for lesson observations for next year that contribute to the development of staff. Leaders also draw upon first-hand evidence about the quality of learning and teaching, and pupils' work. As a result, of monitoring activities, leaders know the school's strengths and areas of weakness. For example, most departmental</li> </ul>



	<p>improvement plans, monitoring and evaluations are of consistently good quality. In the few cases, where the quality is below agreed standards, support has been provide to bring about improvement. However, this work is at an early stage of development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders and staff are clear about the priorities that they address in the school’s improvement plan. They communicate high expectations for staff and pupils and have clear emphases on achieving high standards for all learners. Central to this is the analysis and use of in-year performance data. This is a very strong feature of the school. The school gives good attention to national and local priorities. For example, the school plans well to develop pupils’ literacy, numeracy, and digital-competency skills, improve pupils’ wellbeing and attitudes to learning, and overcome the impact of poverty on pupils’ learning. In addition, the school is working well with the region and its local cluster to introduce the new ALN Act and to prepare for the implementation of the new curriculum for Wales.</li> <li>• All leaders and staff are clear in regards to their roles and responsibilities. Leaders ensure that staff have a shared understanding of the characteristics of what excellent teaching and learning looks like, and how to demonstrate these in classroom practice. Leaders have effective strategies to identify and share effective practice for improving learning and teaching across the school. Leaders invest well to develop high quality middle leaders with skills to drive towards improving standards, learning and teaching.</li> <li>• Leaders and staff take advantage of opportunities to work with its neighbouring school, Pencoedtre High. Collaboration between the two schools is developing well. For example, both schools use the same approach to tracking and analysing data. In addition, they work very well to provide a joint post 16 offer that provides a good range of choice for pupils, as well as financial savings. The collaborative working makes an important contribution to building its capacity for leadership and teaching and learning. For example, strong joint working has taken place between the data managers, senior leaders and a number of key departments, such as mathematics, religious studies and modern foreign languages. Leaders also plan effective professional development for learning support assistants and administrative staff from both schools.</li> <li>• Over the year, the school has improved its working arrangements with its new cluster of primary schools and its local communities. As a result, the school is building strong links with primary school leaders, parents and pupils. The headteacher, governors and school’s finance officer have worked successfully with local authority officers to agree the school’s budget and to secure strong financial management processes.</li> </ul>
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop specific behaviour and wellbeing intervention and curriculum offer to re-engage disaffected pupils, in order to impact on standards of achievement.</li> <li>• Improve the consistency of teaching across the school.</li> <li>• Improve performance of identified departments in KS4 and for identified subjects in the 6th form.</li> <li>• Develop post 16 recruitment strategies and curriculum offer, in order to increase retention from Year 11 into Year 12.</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement education reform, including the new curriculum for Wales and the ALN Act, including strategies to support pupils experiencing ACEs and trauma.</li></ul> |
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