

Serco Inspections
Cedar House
21 William Street
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 1LH

Ofsted
T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Serco
Direct T 0121 683 3888



23 June 2011

Mr S Playford
Headteacher
Glossopdale Community College
Talbot Road
Glossop
SK13 7DR

Dear Mr Playford

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Glossopdale Community College

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave to me and to Steve McKenna, additional inspector, when we inspected your school on 22 June 2011. Thank you also for the information which you provided during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and students who took the time to talk to us.

The leadership of the specialist arts college status has been strengthened through two new appointments for September. A further three teachers have been appointed to take up post in September and plans to appoint two teachers to mathematics are well underway. Since the last inspection, five members of staff are on long-term absence.

As a result of the inspection on 24 November 2010, the college was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the college is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the students' achievement.

There are clear signs of improvement. The college's data indicates that the large majority of Year 11 are on track to gain five A* to C grades at GCSE, with the majority set to gain five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Within this picture, there remains some unevenness. Improvements in mathematics have been more modest. The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals is improving, especially for younger students. However, the gap between the progress

they make and that of other students' remains marked, particularly for those identified by the college as needing extra help from class teachers. The college is acutely aware of the need to sharply accelerate progress in mathematics and for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Senior leaders have recently implemented robust plans to improve attainment and provision in mathematics but it is too soon to evaluate their impact.

Students' behaviour and punctuality to lessons have improved. Students wear their uniforms with pride. Both staff and students have noticed a marked reduction in the amount of low-level disruption to lessons. Students say they have been involved in reviewing the behaviour policy and that teachers apply it consistently. Consequently, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the college and in lessons. The relationships between staff and students are good. Students respond very well to the increasing opportunities for them to demonstrate independence and self-discipline. Supervision in and around the college is well-planned so that students feel safe and there is always an adult on hand. Students are regularly awarded for their achievements.

The reason for the improvement in progress is because the quality of teaching is improving. The college has been successful in largely eradicating inadequate teaching and ensuring an increasing number of lessons is good or better. Teachers have adopted practical approaches to lessons and students are finding learning more interesting and fun. For example, in a good technology lesson, Year 9 students demonstrated independence and resilience in learning to make good quality finger joints. The college have made sound use of its specialist status in arts to give teachers, in all subjects, practical ways of using music and drama to engage students.

Students respond particularly well when they are given opportunities to work together and solve problems in groups or pairs. These opportunities are now more consistent across the college. Teachers use good quality assessment data to identify students who need extra support or challenge but they do not always plan how they will meet those needs. In many lessons, students of differing abilities are set the same work and given the same amount of time in which to complete it. Consequently, the more able are not always sufficiently challenged while less-able students struggle with their work. Teachers have improved the quality of marking and there are examples of helpful comments which highlight what students have done well and the next steps they need to take to improve their work. This is not consistent, however. Where marking is less thorough, the presentation of students' work is variable.

The college have improved students' access to information and communication technology (ICT) with the addition of two new computer suites. The impact of this and the use of interactive whiteboards on the quality of students' learning have yet to be fully evaluated.

The school make effective use of outside agencies to support students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Consequently, they are able to concentrate on their learning. For example the Summer School has helped to engage students and families during the holiday period.

Improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching have been brought about by the rigorous work of senior and middle leaders. The college has made good use of external support in ensuring leaders are accurate in their evaluation of lessons. Leaders check the quality of lessons regularly and use the information effectively to plan training and support for teachers to improve their practice. Senior leaders also rigorously monitor the work of the college against specific targets and their effective feedback promotes further improvement.

The college has done some good work in ensuring schemes of work make consistent use of students' prior attainment. This has not been fully embedded and so it is too early to evaluate the impact of this work in meeting students' needs. Faculty leaders are developing their leadership skills well and there is a secure system of moderating students' work. Consequently, teachers' assessments are generally accurate. This is further supported by the accurate and rigorous tracking system. This enables senior and middle leaders to swiftly identify underachievement and arrange effective interventions.

Leaders have taken sensible actions to increase the involvement of sixth form students in taking responsibility, both within the college and in the wider community. For example, a group of students have piloted the new V50 scheme in which students commit to undertaking 50 hours of voluntary work with local groups and charities.

The support offered by the local authority, the National Challenge adviser and other partners has been effective. The statement of action prepared by the local authority meets requirements.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2010

- Raise standards and improve rates of progress, particularly in mathematics, through:
 - consistent use of prior attainment data to plan schemes of work that fully meet students' needs
 - regular moderation of students' work to secure consistent assessment practices
 - rigorous progress tracking and timely intervention for individuals and groups of learners
 - regular checks on standards and progress against explicit milestones
 - more effective use of partners to remove barriers to learning for students and families.

- Improve behaviour and punctuality by:
 - consistent, decisive and effective use of the behaviour policy to tackle low-level disruption, and through rewards
 - reviewing and evaluating the impact of the behaviour policy
 - involving students and staff in the review process and future developments
 - reviewing arrangements for supervision in and around the site.

- Achieve consistency and improvement in teaching quality through:
 - further training for senior and middle managers to secure consistency in lesson observation judgments and feedback
 - personalised training and support for teachers linked to observation feedback to embed good practice
 - further training for teachers on the use of assessment information to enable students to achieve their challenging targets.

- Increase the proportion of good lessons by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons and tasks that take account of students' prior learning, assessment information and individual learning needs

PROTECT-INSPECTION



- use teaching methods that provide interest, variety and challenge for all abilities so that all students are fully engaged
 - check students' learning regularly during lessons so plans can be adjusted to meet their needs
 - set high expectations for the presentation of students' work and provide feedback on how students can improve
 - incorporate additional opportunities for students to use and apply their ICT skills.
-
- Improve students' personal development in the sixth form by increasing opportunities for them to take responsibility within the school and wider community.