

Glossopdale Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112957
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357235
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Nada Trikic HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1530
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Soboljew
Headteacher	Stephen Playford (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
School address	Talbot Road Glossop SK13 7DR
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 46 lessons and 46 teachers, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including improvement plans, the analysis and tracking of students' progress, records of classroom observation, attendance and exclusion data and monitoring information. They analysed 135 student, 41 staff and 170 parents and carers questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effective are the arrangements for assessing, monitoring and analysing progress to keep students on track to meet challenging targets?
- How effective are the systems for checking on the quality of teaching, and the use of outcomes to support improvement and consistency?
- What is the impact of senior and middle leaders in driving improvement through quality assurance activities and robust action planning?
- How well does provision in the sixth form meet the academic and personal development needs of students?

Information about the school

Glossopdale is a larger than average secondary school; it is on three sites. It serves the towns of Glossop and Hadfield, and the surrounding villages. Years 7 and 8 are located on the Hadfield site, two miles from the site for Years 9 to 11 and the post-16 centre. The school population is predominantly White British with very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of students identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these students have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Specialist status for the arts was gained in 2005, and the International Schools Award in July 2010. The school is a member of the Peak 11 Learning Federation.

In recent years there has been significant change in the school's senior leadership team. The Principal was appointed in March 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising standards, increasing rates of progress, particularly in mathematics, and students' behaviour.

The school has not made the improvement expected since the previous inspection because the focus on raising standards has been inconsistent. Students' progress is too slow and by the end of Year 11, standards are too low. Until recently targets have not been sufficiently challenging or used well enough to close the attainment gap with national averages. The Principal has taken decisive action to tackle this trend and through the drive and determination of the leadership team, systems to monitor the progress of students are now secure. Improvements have been supported by curriculum changes. In 2010, the proportion of students who gained five or more A*-C grade passes improved by 11 percentage points to 66%, a school record. The proportion to achieve this benchmark but also including English and mathematics rose to 49%; leaders recognise that this remains below the national average. Disruption to teaching and leadership in mathematics has affected continuity in students' learning for many years. Staffing has stabilised and collaboration between the English and mathematics departments is under way. The specialist subjects of dance, drama and music contribute well to students' achievement. The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory; sixth form students say they enjoy the friendly atmosphere in the centre.

Leaders recognise that standards remain too variable across subjects and groups of learners. This is explained by a wide variation in the use of assessment to inform lesson planning, and variable teaching quality. On occasions students' learning and progress are affected by low-level disruption and lateness to lessons. Expectations are not always high enough in class and lesson plans do not consistently provide interest and challenge. Effective steps have been taken by leaders to analyse assessment information. As a result, the school is beginning to target groups and individuals more successfully to narrow the attainment gap. This is supported by an increasing range of intervention strategies, including mentor sessions and one-to-one tuition. Success is shown in the improved outcomes for boys in GCSE examinations.

Students have an increasing say on how the school is run; they assist with the recruitment of staff and provide feedback on learning experiences through subject reviews, although sixth formers have limited opportunities to take responsibility and to influence developments in the rest of the school. Attendance has improved and incidences of exclusion have declined. Students say they feel safe and that bullying is rare. However,

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behaviour around the site and in corridors shows a lack of respect and consideration at times by a small minority of students. Corridor areas are not always adequately supervised. Application of the behaviour policy is inconsistent. Partnerships with outside support agencies and links to extend the curriculum are expanding. Leaders have correctly identified the need to strengthen these links to tackle barriers to learning for students and their families. Weaknesses in mathematics, limited opportunities for older students to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and gaps in the provision of work experience, and information, advice and guidance mean that students are not adequately prepared for the future.

Leaders have a broadly accurate view of strengths and areas for improvement from a wide range of sources. Evaluation of lessons by senior leaders is inclined to be overgenerous in some cases. Improvement plans have appropriate priorities although arrangements for checking on progress are not routinely supported by detailed, measurable success criteria. Leaders demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve through robust tracking procedures, increasingly effective intervention, an improving profile of performance supported by curriculum change, and the high priority placed on classroom practice and training.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- 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 judgements 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.

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- 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
 - 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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Outcomes for individuals and groups of learners, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are inadequate because the low standards reached at the end of Key Stage 4 represent inadequate progress from students' broadly average starting points in Year 7. Despite an improvement in outcomes this year, standards have not risen quickly enough. The analysis of assessment information for groups of learners is now routine, and staff have access to a wide range of assessment information to evaluate students' progress against targets. Leaders have identified middle-ability students, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and groups of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities as doing less well than their peers because of limitations in the use of progress data in lesson planning.

Students' learning during the inspection was of variable quality. Many students display positive attitudes to learning and enjoy good relationships with teachers and support staff. However, a few lessons are affected by low-level disruption which affects the pace of learning. When given the opportunity students benefit from working in pairs and small groups to discuss their learning. They particularly enjoy practical and varied tasks. Students are often too dependent on the teacher because learning tasks are not well matched to their learning needs. This means that some students struggle while others are not challenged to extend their learning. Assessment is not used well enough in lessons to check on progress so that plans can be adjusted as required. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the support and guidance of support staff in class, but where support staff are not available teachers' plans do not consistently take account of their needs and this has an adverse impact on their progress. Although most students know their targets, they are less well informed about how they can improve their work.

Positive features of student outcomes include:

- students' cultural awareness is enriched through the specialist subjects. Participation in productions and musical groups promotes a sense of belonging and pride in the school
- links with a school in Sri Lanka broaden students' awareness and respect for diversity. This is a particularly strong feature for young students

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- the new uniform has strengthened the school's identity and profile within the local community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving. Teachers share learning objectives with students and use a common structure for lessons. Where teaching is good, effective planning, a positive learning environment and a good variety of activities enable students to work effectively in groups or independently. In too many satisfactory lessons, the same task is set for the whole class and on occasions teachers' expectations for behaviour and achievement are not high enough to get the best out of the students. In these lessons, plans do not take enough account of assessment information and prior learning to devise a sequence of tasks to meet students' diverse learning needs.

A wider range of courses, notably in science and in the arts specialism, provide greater choice for students and more coherent pathways for learners from Years 9 to 13. Work-related learning is developing through the necessary introduction of work experience following a pilot project last year. Provision for personal, social and health education is delivered through subjects, 'form time' and 'super learning days'. Leaders recognise that this aspect of the curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned to ensure coherence and progression across the age range. Students' learning opportunities have been enhanced by a number of partnerships, including with vocational providers. Links with other agencies

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enable flexible provision for students at risk of exclusion, and to support students whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable. A wide range of popular enrichment activities are available, mainly in sport and the arts; levels of participation are high.

A concerted effort to improve the support systems for students has been underpinned by a range of initiatives to support their personal and emotional development, but as yet not all students or their parents and carers feel confident in the school's ability to provide a package of care. New structures to promote improved behaviour include better use of data to direct support where it is most needed. However, this has had limited time to make a significant difference to the quality of behaviour in classes. Attendance monitoring has a high profile. Current recording systems do not allow punctuality to be rigorously monitored.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The Principal has been highly influential in raising expectations; crucial steps have been taken through recruitment and changes to management systems to deliver improvement. Middle leaders have a greater understanding of their responsibilities; lines of accountability for students' progress are strengthening, supported by training. Leaders recognise that they have not yet done enough to maximise the quality and consistency of teaching, although observation evidence confirms that training has improved the structure of lessons and the use of learning objectives. Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place.

The governing body shares the ambition of the school's leadership and is closely involved with developments. Links with departments are developing so governors can gather first-hand evidence of the school's work. Training has strengthened the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for areas of underperformance.

The commitment to equality of opportunity is demonstrated in the high priority given to narrowing the attainment gap between groups of learners and national levels. Although this work is yet to demonstrate widespread impact, target groups are effectively identified to boost confidence and self-esteem, to tackle specific skills such as literacy, and to clarify the needs of specific groups, for example, those known to be eligible for free school meals.

Leaders understand the particular features of the local community very well, but plans for promoting community cohesion do not reflect the national or global context. Provision for younger students promotes an awareness of their place in multicultural Britain; they see

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themselves as global citizens. Displays of students' work provide evidence of the value of initiatives such as projects on 'my community' as well as the link with Sri Lanka.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Sixth form

Students enjoy the informal 'family' feel of the sixth form. They make satisfactory progress from broadly average attainment on entry. Students develop sensible attitudes towards their well-being and that of others. Some students serve the community well through sports leadership and volunteering. However, opportunities for taking responsibility more widely or to express views to influence the school are underdeveloped. Students benefit from the high degree of personal attention they receive in small tutor groups. Formal provision for promoting personal development is more limited. Teaching is satisfactory with some that is good. In the best lessons teachers use questioning well, and plan a good variety of tasks that incorporate visual resources that motivate students to learn. Leaders have identified appropriate priorities for improvement in extending the curriculum and reducing the variation between subjects.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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Views of parents and carers

The number of responses from parents and carers was below average for a secondary school. Most feel that the school keeps their children safe. This was also the view of students involved in discussions with inspectors, and those who completed a questionnaire. Students' behaviour was the area of most concern from questionnaire analysis and written comments. Leaders acknowledge that the behaviour policy is not yet consistently used by staff. A small minority of parents and carers indicated that the school does not help them to support learning or take account of their suggestions or concerns. Inspectors feel that the school is beginning to improve this aspect through the parents' forum. Parents and carers were well consulted on the new uniform and have influenced arrangements for parents' evenings and school reports. This demonstrates a commitment to forge closer links with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Glossopdale Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 170 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1530 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	30	99	58	13	8	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	34	20	117	69	10	6	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	18	101	59	28	16	6	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	19	98	58	23	14	9	5
The teaching is good at this school	22	13	101	59	30	18	8	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	15	92	54	34	20	7	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	10	105	62	29	17	6	4
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	24	82	48	23	14	5	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	16	110	65	19	11	6	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	16	65	38	38	22	28	16
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	12	90	53	34	20	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	29	17	98	58	22	13	10	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	22	95	56	22	13	6	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Glossopdale Community College, Glossop, SK13 7DR

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our discussions with you and seeing you at work. You looked very smart in your uniforms. You told us that you feel safe in school and have a greater say about your lessons and how the school is run. You were positive about opportunities in dance, drama and music and the chance to take part in productions. Many of you also enjoy a range of sporting activities. The curriculum is beginning to provide additional courses to motivate you and meet your interests. Sixth form students told us that they enjoyed the friendly atmosphere in the centre. They make satisfactory progress and enjoy positive relationships with their teachers, however there should be more opportunities for sixth formers to take responsibility in the school and wider community.

In recent years standards have been too low in Year 11 and students have not made enough progress, especially in mathematics. Although there has been an improvement this year the school's leaders and governors agree that there is more to be done to raise standards. Steps have been taken to track your progress more carefully, and to take action when you fall behind. Lessons vary a great deal. We would like more lessons to be good or better. We could see that you prefer lessons where you have a variety of active tasks, and the chance to work together. Lessons are not always planned well enough to meet your needs, and teachers do not check on your progress enough during lessons. Some lessons are spoilt by disruptive behaviour and lateness and this interferes with learning. The new behaviour policy has been helpful but it is not yet used consistently.

The principal, senior leaders and staff are working very hard to make improvements, but after considering all the evidence we judged that the school is not yet effective enough and have given it a 'notice to improve'. Inspectors will visit again to report on the progress the school is making. Targets have already been raised to make sure that you can achieve your very best. We have asked leaders to set up training so that improvements to teaching can continue. To make improvements, it is important that the whole college community works closely together to build on recent progress, and you can play a part in this. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic

Her Majesty's Inspector

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