

Glyn School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136534
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	395671
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2012
Lead inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1667
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denis Ward
Headteacher	Jon Chaloner (Executive) Jack Mayhew (Associate)
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2009
School address	The Kingsway Ewell Epsom KT17 1NB
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Age group	11–19
Inspection date(s)	15–16 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Helen Hutchings Additional inspector

Howard Jones Additional inspector

Cyndi Millband Additional inspector

Nardeep Sharma Additional inspector

Ann Sydney Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed different aspects of the school's work including substantial parts of 45 lessons involving 44 teachers and tutorial sessions. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, and looked at documents including those relating to safeguarding, students' assessment information and students' work. They held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and groups of students, and analysed questionnaires from 220 parents and carers, as well as those completed by a sample of staff and students.

Information about the school

Glyn School is an oversubscribed, larger than average, boys' comprehensive school with girls in the sixth form. It acquired academy status in April 2011, changing its name from Glyn Technology School. It retains its specialism in technology and is a national support school. The school is led by an executive headteacher and an associate headteacher who share responsibility for strategic leadership. The executive headteacher is a national leader of education and works in partnership with a nearby junior school.

Most pupils are of White British heritage and a below average proportion of students speak English as an additional language. The school serves an area of relative social advantage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportions of students on the school action plus programme or with a statement of special educational needs are below the national average. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The school holds Leading Edge status, and British Council International and Investor in People awards.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. A sense of pride and ambition permeates all aspects of the school's work, and underpins its determination to improve further. The school has achieved significant improvements in students' achievement since its last inspection when it was judged as outstanding overall. As one parent commented, 'It is absolutely brilliant. It brims with positivity.' The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Students' achievement is outstanding across a broad, challenging curriculum which caters for the needs of individuals and groups of students. The GCSE results have improved since the last inspection and are well above the national average in almost all subjects. While still significantly above the national average, boys do better in English literature and mathematics than in English language.
- The sixth form is good and improving quickly. Students' attainment in academic, vocational and applied courses is rising and their good achievements ensure that students are successful in progressing into further education or training of their choice.
- The key to the school's success lies in outstanding teaching which enthuses and motivates students. Teachers use a variety of active teaching approaches which suit boys and take their learning forward rapidly. The excellent rapport between students and teachers ensures that students are able to question and explore ideas in depth within an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the site is outstanding. Students willingly subscribe to the school's code of 'Respect'. Attendance is well above average.
- Leaders and managers have established a powerful school ethos that promotes high aspirations and a shared sense of purpose. Self-evaluation is rigorous, challenging and accurate. Arrangements for enhancing staff's professional skills are very effective in introducing and sharing best practice which has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and thus on students' learning and attainment.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' attainment in English language to the level of mathematics and English literature by implementing a more strategic approach to promoting literacy skills across the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the progress students make, and students generally agree. Inspection findings fully concur with these views. When they join Glyn School in Year 7, students' attainment is above average. During their time in the main school students make excellent progress and their overall attainment at the end of Year 11 is considerably higher than the national average, including the proportion gaining the highest A* and A grades in GCSE. This is a further improvement on previously high attainment. In the sixth form, students are on course to meet the challenging targets set to ensure good progress on the courses they follow. Students have high aspirations for themselves. Those students currently in Key Stage 4 are rising to the 'Glyn 90' challenge to try to be the first year group to have 90% of students achieving five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics. The school's data show that students are working at higher levels than in recent years and are rapidly closing the gap towards this aspirational figure. Groups of students, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, progress at similarly fast rates as others as a result of well-targeted provision. Students do not make quite as good progress in English language as in most of their other subjects, although it is still above that of boys nationally. Students have strong reading skills which support their learning across their curriculum. However, the school is reviewing its strategic approach to promoting students' writing skills and their overall attainment in English by ensuring that their literacy skills are developed systematically in other subjects.

Students understand and fulfil the school slogan 'enjoying learning; achieving success'. They learn very well from one another in lessons, so that learning moves forward quickly. Not a moment is lost in group discussions and practical activities when students use their initiative and organise themselves quickly so that work is productive. For example, Year 7 students refreshed their memory of the African music they had been studying in the previous lesson as they listened to it in the background while they set up instruments for their own compositions. Students use their outstanding social skills of diplomacy and tact to evaluate the work of others and to reflect on the opinions and feedback provided. This is reflected in their strong understanding of their targets and the criteria for different levels and grades, so that students know exactly what they have to do to improve.

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Quality of teaching

There is much inspirational and outstanding teaching in the school, with the remainder never less than good. Teaching is consistent across the school, making a strong contribution to the increased GCSE and sixth form attainment. Teachers have a real passion for their subjects and have highly effective skills in imparting knowledge and understanding to students at all levels. This was seen in a Year 11 revision lesson in science where the teacher used a range of tactics such as mime and mnemonics to underpin learning. Teachers' questioning signals their high expectations and keeps students alert, probing their understanding and requiring individuals to give clear, detailed explanations. Learning is shared in a way which ensures that students understand the key objectives of each lesson and are able to chart their way towards new knowledge and skills by undertaking a variety of focused and well-sequenced activities. Teachers know their students very well as individuals, and plan activities which are closely matched to individual strengths while addressing weaknesses in existing learning. As skilled practitioners, teachers very effectively adjust their lesson plans to give a little more time for greater consolidation when needed or speeding up thinking by setting an additional challenge. Consequently, teaching meets the needs of students of all abilities and needs, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Students are eager to learn because lessons are exceptionally well organised. Teachers use high quality resources and information sheets. Lessons get off to a fast pace, usually with something new to think about. In a very few lessons, starter activities and those summarising learning at the end did not link sufficiently closely to the main activities.

The strong learning ethos incorporates many opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, students learn tolerance and respect for others. The school's technology specialism provides valuable opportunities to link with local business and industry to add everyday relevance to learning in school. Students rate their teachers highly, describing their enthusiasm and valuing the support they receive from them. Almost all parental responses were positive, with some praising the extra help given at examination times and including comments such as, 'Teachers do everything to support his needs.' Boys make a smooth transition into this large school and, as one parent or carer commented, the 'depth of lessons' makes learning interesting.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection evidence fully supports the view expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire that the school is a safe place. There is a very strong sense of school identity and of being a Glyn student. Students' outstanding behaviour contributes significantly to their achievement in lessons and to their social development. Students appreciate that they learn within a society where they can explore their own thinking because all views are listened to and valued. Female students are integrated very well into sixth form life.

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Students arrive punctually to lessons and are keen not to miss a moment, so that learning gets off to a prompt start. Because students are motivated to give of their best throughout the lesson, learning is taken forward quickly. Students are known as individuals and consequently show high levels of consideration towards others. They are comfortable in social situations, showing courtesy to visitors and consideration for one another. They are clear about the boundaries of unacceptable behaviour and are very positive in their response that behaviour in the school is good. Bullying of any kind or the use of racist or homophobic language is rare and is dealt with robustly. The school is aware that there may be a few instances where students do not report incidents of unacceptable behaviour, and plans have been drawn up, such as a new approach to awards, to strengthen relationships further. Some parents raised concerns about disruption in lessons. The inspection team saw no disruption in lessons or around the school and the school's records show notable improvements in behaviour over time. Fixed-term exclusions are rare and there has not been a need for any permanent exclusion for the last two years. Similarly, attendance is considerably higher than the national average so that students' learning is not disrupted by absence.

Leadership and management

The executive and associate headteachers are relentless in their pursuit of excellence, and have developed a strong culture and excitement for learning amongst students and staff alike. The school has a comprehensive and ongoing programme of staff development and support. Its effectiveness is seen in the improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Systems to monitor the school's work and that of individuals are rigorous, so that leaders' views of the strengths and areas for development of its teachers are crystal clear. The curriculum has evolved very well since the last inspection and ensures that students have choices of courses to meet their needs and interests, such as more recently introduced vocational courses and provision for food technology. There is extensive provision for the arts, drama and sport and a very wide range of enrichment activities promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development alongside their academic achievement.

There is a breadth of experience and complementary mix of skills across the governing body, which are used very effectively to hold the school to account, with the key aim of ensuring that the school continues to improve. Parents and carers are exceptionally satisfied with the school's provision. Its track record shows its capacity to extend its work in supporting others through its training specialism. The school is outward looking and partnership arrangements with other schools are broadening teachers' expertise and ensuring a smooth transition in students' learning when students join in Year 7. Ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination lies at the heart of the school's vision and, because it evaluates its work accurately, leaders are able to take action promptly if any minor differences begin to emerge. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and fully meet statutory requirements.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



17 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Glyn School, Ewell, KT17 1NB

Thank you for talking to my colleagues and me when we visited your school recently. I am writing to let you know the outcomes of the inspection.

We agree with you that Glyn is an outstanding school. Since the last inspection in 2009 when students' attainment was already high, GCSE results have improved further. We are impressed that students in Key Stage 4 have taken on the 'Glyn 90' challenge. This shows your commitment to doing as well as you possibly can and the effort you put into your work. Sixth form students make good progress in their chosen studies. Part of your success can be attributed to senior leaders' clear view about how to help teachers to develop their skills. This means that teachers are constantly finding new ways to make sure that you enjoy challenging and interesting lessons, and have the help you need to do very well in examinations.

You told us that bullying is not a problem and that you know what to do if it does occur, and that the school deals robustly with unacceptable behaviour. Your excellent behaviour and attendance help to make sure that lessons run smoothly and that you can concentrate on your work and have few gaps in your learning. You get on very well together and this makes group work in lessons and extra-curricular activities enjoyable and productive.

Although the school is outstanding, there are always ways that aspects could be refined and improved upon. The school is very clear about the things that need to happen to ensure that your achievement remains high. At this stage, the inspection team has left one area of particular importance. We have asked the school to give you as many opportunities as possible to develop your literacy skills in other subjects so that your attainment in English language improves to the level of mathematics and English literature.

Best wishes for the future and good luck to those of you who are taking external examinations this year.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings
Lead inspector

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