

# Glenthorne High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	136914
<b>Local authority</b>	Sutton
<b>Inspection number</b>	397382
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sarah Hill

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1338
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	271
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Hume
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Sutton Common Road Sutton SM3 9PS
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<b>Fax number</b>	020 86418725
<b>Email address</b>	glenthorne@suttonlea.org

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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<b>Inspection number</b>	397382



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Hill	Additional Inspector
Desmond Dunne	Additional Inspector
David Gutmann	Additional Inspector
Helen Neal	Additional Inspector
Roger Parry	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 44 lessons taught by 43 teachers, five of which were joint observations with the school's senior leaders. Meetings were held with the school's senior and middle leaders, seven groups of students and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at current data on students' performance, planning documents and students' work. In addition, inspectors scrutinised the safeguarding, attendance and behaviour records. They analysed the 428 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Glenthorne High is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of students are White British. A smaller than average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Compared to the national average, a small minority of students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students or those with special educational needs, who are supported by school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is in line with the national average. The school has designated specialist provision for students with autistic spectrum disorder. The percentage of students entering and leaving the school at other than the conventional times is lower than seen nationally.

The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. Glenthorne High has specialist status in performing arts. It holds a number of awards including Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark, Investors in People Gold and the NACE Challenge Award. The school was a designated Training School until the programme ended in March 2012.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. It has improved significantly across all aspects of its work since its last inspection, including improving the quality of the sixth form which is good. Illustrative of the high regard with which parents and carers hold the school is the comment, 'We feel we could not have chosen a better school for his education, and also for the recreational and social opportunities it has given.'
- Students' achievement is outstanding. Students make exceptionally rapid and sustained progress, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Students join the school with attainment which is average and leave Year 11 with attainment that is well above average. Although students' skills in extended writing are not as strong as their other literacy skills, together with their excellent numeracy skills and high self-esteem, students achieve highly. Progress of students in the sixth form is good.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Both students and their parents and carers recognise this. It is continuously improving due to the school's robust management of teachers' performance underpinned by precisely tailored training that successfully improves teachers' teaching skills. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is exceptional.
- Students are exceptionally courteous, showing respect for each other and for adults. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Students say that they feel very safe, and their parents and carers agree. High attendance is a reflection of students' keen attitudes to their learning and enjoyment of school. Behaviour and safety at the school are outstanding.
- High expectations pervade the school, giving a clear message that only the best is good enough. The drive and ambitious leadership of the governing body and headteacher provide a strong and decisive vision for the standards expected of students and staff. The curriculum flexibly meets the specific needs of all students.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Incorporate into the school's effective actions to raise all students' literacy skills, the systematic development of students' extended writing to support their progression from Key Stage 3 to the highest levels of attainment in their A-level courses.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Students of all abilities make exceptional progress from joining the school with attainment which is broadly average. They are eager and resilient learners who participate enthusiastically in the many opportunities provided both in and beyond the classroom. Their attainment at the end of Year 11 is very high, exceptionally so in mathematics. Students' progress is outstanding. Questionnaire responses show that parents and carers strongly agree that their children make good or better progress.

The headteacher and senior leaders' forensic approach to tracking each student's attainment and progress ensures that no student is left behind. Informed interventions, tailored to students' particular needs, are robustly monitored. All groups represented in the school achieve exceptionally well with disabled students and those with special educational needs making equally strong progress. Students display outstanding standards of numeracy and good standards of literacy, including their reading in lessons. Nevertheless, opportunities for extended writing are under developed hindering some students' access to the highest A-level grades. Sixth form students attain well and their achievement is good overall. Progress for some is slower in the second, than first, year of study. This variation is appropriately the focus for further school improvement. As a result of the good quality guidance and education, students advance appropriately to work, apprenticeships and higher education.

Students recognise the high expectations set for their achievements and they have equally high expectations of themselves. All their time in lessons is focused on learning and progress, with students of all abilities confidently applying their skills and knowledge to new tasks. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, lower ability students explored their misconceptions with the teacher and each other. Students, equipped with whiteboards, willingly shared their explanations with the whole class who were keen to listen, recognising it assisted them in deepening their understanding of algebra. They proceeded with an assured self-reliance, airing any misconceptions with their partner. All students made exceptionally rapid progress in completing increasingly complex algebraic expressions.

Similarly, mature attitudes to learning led to outstanding progress in a Year 10 English lesson. Students selected a poem of their choice to compare with their

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current study of Romeo and Juliet, Act 3, Scene 5. Students used technically rich language in their discussion before sharing short, astutely detailed, rationales for their exacting comparisons. They showed an immense understanding of the texts when asking searching questions to secure even higher levels of insight.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching across the school is outstanding. Almost every parent and carer endorses this. 'I really can't praise the school enough for their excellent teaching providing wonderful opportunities both in and out of school.' This is a comment which summarises the views of many. Students hold a similarly high opinion.

All lessons progress at an appropriately brisk pace, with students highly engaged in their learning. Teachers share high expectations and use skilfully focused questioning to ensure students think deeply and develop self-assessment skills against carefully articulated criteria. The provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs is outstanding. Personalised intervention programmes for students of all abilities incorporate relevant actions to ensure all students can appropriately access the curriculum. Together with teaching which is highly effective, this ensures that standards for all students are high.

In half of the lessons observed, teaching was judged outstanding. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge was enthusiastically applied to well-structured lessons which met the specific needs and capabilities of all students. Year 10 students were observed learning to transform sine and cosine graphs. The teacher's use of progressive graphical activities, sensitively interspersed with judicious dialogue and opportunities to reflect on the creativity of the process, deepened students' understanding step by step. The balance of individual and paired work gave students the confidence to apply their skills and knowledge successfully to these higher-order mathematical concepts. A teacher's challenging questioning during a Year 8 physical education lesson led students to an unambiguous understanding of the assessment criteria. Students' use of video supported their accurate assessment of the standards reached and led to rapid understanding of the precise steps needed to progress further.

The school provides exceptional support for students' literacy development with the school's specialism used to develop students' speaking skills very effectively. Application of early literacy interventions, specific reading programmes and opportunities in lessons for all students to develop their reading and subject-specific language are routine.

Students appreciate teachers' marking and their precise subject-specific feedback. Where assessment is strongest, students value the opportunities to complete, or re-shape, tasks, with two-way dialogue between themselves and the teacher about their amendments. Homework is a strong feature of students' studies and makes an important contribution to enriching learning.

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## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

In this inclusive and harmonious community, students are supported outstandingly well. Students feel extremely safe. A Year 10 student typified the comments of many by saying, 'We feel very safe, there are always teachers watching over us, in a good way.' Their parents' and carers' responses endorse this very strongly. Students have a perceptive understanding of potential risks as well as different types of bullying such as homophobic, sexist and cyber bullying. Bullying is rare but when it does occur students are adamant that it is dealt with effectively.

Movement around the school is calm and well mannered and good relationships are evident. Staff supervision is unobtrusive including during lesson changeovers when students' punctuality to lessons is exemplary. Students manage their behaviour very well and are supportive in managing the behaviour of others. The school is a cohesive community where students' views are valued by other students and by staff. The formal communication channels such as the school council and head student roles add to the purposeful atmosphere.

The school has well established routines for managing behaviour, including a strong emphasis on rewarding students for their achievements. Exclusions have been reduced; internal exclusion from lessons is very rare. Attendance is high and lateness almost eradicated. Students, including sixth formers, enjoy school. They value the wide range of opportunities and feel very well supported by the staff. When speaking with students, inspectors probed the view expressed by a small minority of parents and carers that lessons are disturbed by bad behaviour. Students explained that low-level disruption is very rare and, if it occurs, it is more likely in lower year groups. In their view, teachers deal with it quickly and effectively and their learning is not disturbed. Inspectors observed exemplary behaviour in lessons. Inspection evidence confirms that behaviour is typically outstanding and this is a contributory factor to students' high attainment and their outstanding progress.

## **Leadership and management**

The governing body and headteacher are highly successful in their relentless drive for realising the highest academic standards for each student. The school's aim of 'achievement for all' is alive in the school's distinctly effective planning and actions. These have brought about Glenthorne's very inclusive environment, where success is conspicuous and valued by students, parents, carers and staff alike. Leaders' rigorous approach to underperformance results in rapid and effective interventions. This is sharply evident in the school's approach to promoting equality and tackling discrimination when successfully closing the slight attainment gap between boys and girls at Key Stage 4.

The governing body, headteacher and senior leaders act on their shared conviction that complacency has no place at Glenthorne. To ensure this is a reality, governors hold the school's senior leaders robustly to account and leaders at all levels skilfully monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's work. The dynamic system for staff

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performance management is focused on continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers value the personalised pathways for individuals to improve their teaching and wide range of activities to further develop the skills of emerging leaders.

The broad, balanced and vibrant curriculum is effectively refined annually. It meets the needs of differing groups within the school exceptionally well, providing varying progression paths to the sixth form and beyond. The innovative golf, football, music and drama sixth form academies, and local further education college partnership, provide appropriate specialist opportunities. Glenthorne's arts specialism drives students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with a rich balance of enrichment activities, community performances and opportunities for reflective discussion across all aspects of the curriculum. The annual Challenge Week supports these key aspects of students' development very effectively.

The school has an excellent capacity to keep its momentum of continuous improvement while maintaining its local prominence for training and development of the teaching profession. Inspectors found that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and they meet current 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



1 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Glenthorne High School, Sutton SM3 9PS**

Thank you for the courteous welcome you gave us when inspectors visited your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you, listening to your views and being part of your lessons.

We judged your school to be outstanding. Your headteacher and other leaders are continuously improving the school for you and effectively supporting you all to do exceptionally well since joining the school in Year 7. As a result, standards have risen year on year and you make swift and sustained progress. Your examination results at the end of Year 11 are much higher than most students nationally.

You told us that you thought the teaching in the school is usually very good and that you value the detailed marking and feedback you get from teachers. We agree with you and could see how the very high quality of teaching and your teachers' assessment make significant contributions to your rapid progress.

Those of you in the sixth form make good progress overall by the end of your studies, although your performance is stronger in your first year. The school has detailed plans to support you to make, at least, equally strong progress during your final year of sixth form study.

We have asked the headteacher and governors to make sure that teachers build on the exceptional support you have received to develop your levels of literacy by involving you all in the systematic development of your writing across the curriculum. This is to support you to attain the very highest standards in assessments and examinations when you are required to write extended responses, particularly in your A-level courses.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hill  
Lead inspector

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