

Glenburn Sports College

Yewdale, Southway, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6JB

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not yet good. Too few students make more than expected progress from their starting points or reach the higher grades at GCSE, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. The needs of groups of differing ability are not always sufficiently taken into account in teachers' planning so that, on occasions, students find tasks too easy or too difficult.
- Students are not always given the written guidance they need to know precisely how they can improve their work.
- Procedures for checking the quality of teaching and for driving improvement in the quality of teaching are not sufficiently focused on how well students are learning. The good practice in the school is not spread rapidly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour is good. Students have positive attitudes towards learning. They say they feel safe and both parents and students are confident that the school deals effectively with any instances of poor behaviour.
- The school's own evaluation of its performance is accurate and based firmly on the frequent and rigorous analysis of students' progress.
- Teaching in physical education, the school's specialism, is consistently good or better.
- In the relatively short time the headteacher has been in post, he has acted decisively, strongly supported by senior and middle leaders, to raise standards, increase the progress students make and improve behaviour. The actions taken by the school in these areas have proved successful and show the school is well capable of continuing to make improvements.
- Governors are very well informed and are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures. They provide a good level of support and challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. Inspectors carried out three lesson observations and some short visits to lessons with senior leaders.
- Two groups of students met with inspectors. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 28 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors read a range of documents. These included information on the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, school improvement plans, students' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector
Fiona Burke-Jackson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Glenburn Sports College is a smaller than average sized secondary school. It is a specialist school for physical education and sport.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority and children of service families) is higher than average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The majority of students are of White, British heritage. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for a small number of its students at Acorns, Shaftesbury House, NTAS and ACERS.
- The school enters a small number of students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics.
- The headteacher has been in post since April 2011. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment and accelerate students' progress further, particularly in English and mathematics, and improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers' planning always takes full account of the needs of groups of differing ability within classes so that activities more precisely meet their needs
 - making sure students always receive high quality written feedback so they know how to improve their work to progress to the next level.
- Improve systems to identify and spread best practice in teaching and learning in order to drive improvement more rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Many students enter the school with standards that are low compared with others nationally. Over the last three years, attainment has been significantly below average and students have not achieved as well as they should from their starting points in a range of subjects.
- In 2012, although attainment and progress improved to nearer national figures in some subjects, the percentage of students attaining five A*- C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, was low compared to the national average with the majority of students not making the progress expected of them.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved, with most students now making at least expected progress and the proportion of students now exceeding expected progress comparing favourably with national figures. Achievement in English is not as strong as in mathematics, with few students making more than expected progress from their starting points.
- The school's actions to raise standards and remedy previous underachievement are proving successful. Students are making up for lost ground, but too few students gain the higher grades in either English or mathematics. Students with special educational needs are making the same expected progress as their peers as a result of the extra help they are given.
- The progress of students who are eligible for free school meals is in line with others in this group nationally. Although their attainment is well below average, the extra support that the school is providing with the pupil premium funding enables these students to reach their targets and to make the same expected progress as their peers. Students attending alternative provision are also on track to reach their targets and this provision is having a positive impact upon both their achievement and their attitudes towards learning. Gaps between the performance of different groups, particularly between girls and boys are closing.
- The school actively encourages reading for pleasure in the new Year 7 curriculum. Reading takes place regularly during tutor time and in English lessons. Although spelling has improved for these students, it is too early to measure the impact this is having upon their reading skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time is too variable across the school. Teaching observed during the inspection was judged to require improvement. Although outstanding practice was observed the quality of teaching is not consistently good or better within subject areas, with the exception of physical education. Evidence from both the school's own observations and joint observations, made by inspectors and school leaders, shows that judgements about teaching match closely.
- In many lessons, effective questioning is used to probe and develop understanding, often learning from other students. This was particularly evident in a Year 10 English lesson where the teacher's skilful questioning style encouraged the active participation of all students and enabled them to empathise with and describe the situation of a soldier at war in their writing.
- In some lessons, students' progress is too slow because planning does not take their needs sufficiently into account. When this is the case, students lose time either waiting for the teacher to help them because the task was too difficult or, if they have completed the work set, waiting to be told what to do next.
- In the best lessons, teachers provide opportunities for students to work independently or collaboratively. Students respond to these opportunities with enthusiasm, especially when tasks involve problem solving or an element of competition. For instance in a Year 7 French lesson, students worked enthusiastically in small groups to work out the meaning of new language from a jigsaw puzzle and in a Year 8 history lesson students gathered information about the wives of Henry VIII. This is not always the case and a few lessons are too dominated by the teacher, preventing students thinking for themselves and taking the initiative.
- Students' work is marked regularly and usually, thoroughly. However, it does not always give

students the precise guidance they require to progress to the next level. In some subjects, students are able to track their progress against assessment criteria but these are not always written in language which is easy for students, especially those who struggle with reading, to understand.

- Students with special educational needs are given good one-to-one support in lessons as well as extra help with English and mathematics, which enables them to participate fully in activities.
- The impact of teaching on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is variable. Where students are given the opportunity to work together to solve problems or explore their ideas, they do so sensibly, reflect on and respect one another's views but they are not always given the opportunity to do this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour around the school site and in lessons is usually good. Students feel safe. Many speak of the recent improvements they have seen in behaviour and they value the good relationships they now have with their teachers and with each other.
- Students have positive attitudes towards their learning and are keen to do well. When given the chance, they work together sensibly and organise themselves well.
- Students have a clear understanding and awareness of different types of bullying. They say those incidences of bullying are now rare and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively by the school. They know how to report it and feel that all adults in school will support them.
- Attendance is below the national average but improving.
- Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and value the opportunities to participate in sports and other extra-curricular activities.
- Students play an active role in decision making through the school council and take the responsibilities they have, for instance as sports leaders, seriously.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Systems for checking on the quality of teaching lack rigour. Although teaching is reviewed frequently and teachers' performance management is linked to their advancement on the pay scale, the information gathered from lesson observations is not used as effectively as it might be to drive improvement in teaching and learning and spread best practice across the school. Systems to check the quality of teaching do not place enough emphasis upon the progress students make in lessons. As a consequence, the most effective practice is not identified clearly enough so that improvement is too slow and inconsistencies remain.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. He provides very clear direction based on an accurate analysis of students' progress. He has acted swiftly and decisively to address the issues raised in the last inspection, despite a period of considerable turbulence in staffing. Since he has been in post, budgetary difficulties have been resolved and there have been significant changes in the management structure of the school.
- Students' progress in English and mathematics across the school is improving slowly as staff are supported to develop their skills. Most students are now on track to reach their targets. However, in the past too much reliance has been placed upon extra help beyond the classroom to make up for gaps in learning and to enable students to achieve as they should.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet government guidelines.
- There are good links with local primary schools, as well as with the local college, which help students to make smooth transition from one stage to the next. There is alternative provision for some students at local providers and at the local college where they can follow courses such as engineering, construction and photography. The school checks their attendance and progress through close liaison with these providers and this is having a positive impact both on their personal development and on their academic achievement. These arrangements, together with

early entry to GCSE examinations in mathematics for some students, to better meet students' needs and aspirations are having a positive impact, not only upon students' achievement but also upon their attitudes towards learning.

- The curriculum is improving. A new Year 7 curriculum to provide extra help with literacy is improving students' spelling but the impact on reading and writing skills is yet to be measured. Some opportunities are missed to promote students' writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Lessons are enriched by a variety of activities, such as themed days, as well as a range of clubs, sporting activities, visits, including a residential visit, and visitors.
- The local authority has provided effective support, particularly for the teaching of mathematics which has improved the quality of teaching in this subject.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a very good understanding of how the school is doing and are clear about what it needs to do to improve further. They are very well informed and have engaged in various forms of training, including interpreting data, safer recruitment and safeguarding. Governors understand how pupil premium funding is meant to be used and have made sure that some of this has been used to pay for extra staffing to improve students' achievement in English and mathematics. They are fully involved in the performance management of the headteacher and in controlling the budget. They play an active role in school self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. The governors have provided strong support through a period of considerable change and continue to do so. They regularly challenge the school to improve further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119758
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401872

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Littlewood
Headteacher	James Harris
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2009
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