

Glenburn Sports College

Yewdale, Southway, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6JB

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate and standards are too low. Too few students make the progress expected of them, especially in mathematics and science.
- Teaching overall is inadequate. Too much teaching results in students making progress which requires improvement or is inadequate. Not enough teaching is consistently good or better.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the students. Students' poorly presented and missing work is not always dealt with. Marking does not always guide students on how to improve.
- The behaviour of students requires improvement. A small minority of students do not behave well in lessons and are too ready to chatter off task. This happens when teaching is weak.
- Leaders and managers have not brought about urgently needed improvements quickly enough. They have not been strict enough in checking the impact of strategies to raise achievement in some key areas; consequently the school has declined since the last inspection.
- Leaders have not done enough to improve the quality of teaching. They have not been rigorous enough in their checking on the quality of teaching students receive and the resulting progress they make.
- Not all subject leaders have the necessary expertise to hold the teachers in their areas to account for the progress that students make.
- There has not been sufficient impact of the work of the governors to raise students' achievement in key areas such as mathematics and science.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are well looked after and they feel safe. Most behave sensibly around the school.
- The curriculum gives students many opportunities to excel at sports and this helps them to develop personally.
- The quality of teaching in English, modern foreign languages and physical education, the college's specialism, is stronger than in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 teachers, over half of the teaching staff, in 21 lessons. Three of the observations were undertaken with senior staff.
- Inspectors examined information on students' performance in recent years as well as students' current learning and progress. Inspectors also looked at work in students' books.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, students and members of the governing body. There was also a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors also took into account the 17 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and to 50 staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at the range of documents, including whole school evaluation, departmental plans and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Records relating to attendance and behaviour were also scrutinised along with information about the quality of teaching and the performance of staff relating to pay.
- The headteacher was not present during the inspection.

Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila Kaye	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Glenburn is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students who are supported at school action is much higher than average. The proportion of students who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, students in local authority care and those whose parents are in the armed forces. The school has students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and a small number of looked-after students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has specialist status in sport.
- A small number of students are educated off site at Acorns Shaftesbury House, NTAS and ACERS.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise standards, especially in mathematics and science, and ensure that all groups of students make at least good progress in all subjects by teachers:
 - setting work that is appropriate to the different abilities of students in each lesson and ensuring that this results in students behaving well in all lessons
 - always ensuring that students are stretched and made to think deeply, especially the most able
 - raising their expectations of the students and insisting that all students' work is completed and presented well, particularly in mathematics and science
 - ensuring they mark work regularly with specific comments on how to improve it and giving students opportunities to respond to these comments.
- Urgently improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels are actively involved in checking the impact of any strategies to improve students' achievement
 - developing the expertise of subject leaders so all can hold the teachers in their departments effectively to account for the progress their students make
 - always having a clear focus on the progress students make when evaluating the quality of teaching and deciding the pay that teachers receive
 - governors holding the school to account more effectively for all its work.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students enter the school in Year 7 with standards generally slightly below average. When they leave at the end of Year 11 standards are significantly below average in many subjects. Consequently students show inadequate achievement; too few make the progress they are capable of, especially in mathematics and science.
- The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, improved slightly in 2013, but remains significantly below that found nationally and below the school's own target.
- The GCSE results in the summer of 2013 were well short of the school's predictions, casting doubt on the accuracy of some of the school's assessment of how well the students are doing. The school now feels that its assessments are more accurate, but this was not the view of the inspection team in all subject areas.
- Many students do not achieve well because expectations are too low and the school has not enabled or stretched them well enough to succeed. This is particularly true of the most-able students, whose attainment and progress is well below those of similar students nationally.
- The school has received additional funding for students entitled to support through the pupil premium. However, the money has not always been targeted precisely enough to meet the needs of the students for whom it was intended. As a result, there has been little impact on the progress made by this group of students, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in mathematics. In 2013, for example, the gap in attainment was one grade lower in English and also one grade lower in mathematics for students known to be entitled to free school meals when compared with those who are not. The school's data indicate that the gap is due to narrow in English, but not in mathematics. Equality of opportunity is inadequate, because compared to students nationally, these students make inadequate progress.
- The progress made by students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is also inadequate. This is because the work they are set is sometimes not appropriate or they are not given enough help to access it.
- In 2013 students were entered early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. This generally restricted the number of grades achieved at A* and A, as students were content with gaining a C grade and lacked motivation to improve upon their grade. The school no longer enters students early.
- Progress in English is improving and school's data indicate that the current Year 11 are close to achieving their targets.
- Year 7 catch-up money, the extra funding to help those who join the school in Year 7 with lower-than-average reading ages, is being increasingly well spent, especially in literacy. Initiatives to help pupils in Years 7 and 8 to improve the quality of their writing are being used effectively.
- Students who are educated off site enjoy the experience and there are improvements in their personal development.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching over time, students make inadequate progress. Not enough teaching is consistently good or better and too much either requires improvement or is inadequate.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons with activities matched well enough to the abilities of all their students. Consequently the work tends to be the same for all students, thus often limiting the progress that some students can make.
- Some teachers have expectations of students that are too low. Poor presentation of work is

accepted, along with work that is incomplete or missing. This is especially so in mathematics and science. The work set is sometimes too easy and does not make students think or extend their knowledge and understanding well enough. This is particularly so of the most-able students. Some teachers are too quick to give answers rather than help students to arrive at an understanding themselves and so they do not make enough progress.

- The quality of marking is inconsistent. Some marking gives students helpful advice on how to improve, but sometimes marking is very superficial and does not guide students on how to get better. There are few opportunities for students to respond to any comments by the teacher.
- In some lessons students are encouraged to work together and to reflect on how well they are learning. This experience impacts well on their social development. However, in too many lessons these opportunities are missed.
- Some teaching results in students making good progress. This was evident during the inspection through lesson observations and in the scrutiny of students' work in areas such as modern foreign languages, physical education and in some English lessons. Here teachers did challenge students to think deeply by asking them to explain their answers. In addition, work was marked with supportive comments that made it clear to students what they needed to do to improve their work. In a Year 8 French lesson, the teacher spoke French most of the time and stretched the students well, so they made outstanding progress in their speaking skills and knowledge of French cities.
- There is an increasingly stronger focus in literacy in lessons and students were observed making good progress with their reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because some students' attitudes to learning are not what they should be. For example, some are easily distracted, too keen to chat and do not have enough pride in their work. This tends to occur when teaching is weak. The majority of students, however, are keen to get on with their work and lessons are not disrupted to any large extent.
- The school has recently introduced a new system to promote good behaviour and there is evidence that this is having a positive effect. Students say that behaviour is getting better, but also say that there are a few students whose poor behaviour is difficult to change.
- Students generally move around school sensibly at breaks and lunchtimes and in between lessons. They are polite and get on well with each other and with adults. They wear uniform and are neatly presented. Students behave well around school, at breaks and at lunchtimes. There is very little litter about the school, but a few of the photographs of students in the corridors have been defaced.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students feel very safe in school; for example, they have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using computers and the Internet. Students were seen to be working very safely during practical lessons observed during the inspection. Parents and staff agree strongly that the school keeps its students safe.
- Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. They say that when people fall out it is because of disagreements that start out of the school. Students say that the school deals with any issues promptly and that there are plenty of adults who support them well.
- Attendance is approaching the national average. The attendance of different groups, such as students with special educational needs and those students supported by the pupil premium funding, has improved strongly. The numbers of pupils excluded from the school because of poor behaviour have reduced significantly. This is due to improved behaviour management strategies in lessons and increased support from senior leaders.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not brought about urgently needed improvements quickly enough, especially in mathematics and science. Consequently, the overall effectiveness of the school has declined since the previous inspection.
- Checks by leaders on the quality of teaching have not been rigorous enough and have not linked the quality of teaching well enough to the progress that students make. Consequently, some teachers have had an inflated impression of the quality of their teaching and advice on how to improve their practice has not been precise enough. Poor performance by some teachers has sometimes been unjustly rewarded with pay increases. This has added to the view that teaching is better than it really is.
- The vast majority of staff are very positive about all aspects of the school, including the extent to which students are kept safe. Almost all staff agree with the statement that leaders do all they can to improve teaching. This indicates they, too, are not linking the quality of their teaching well enough to the progress their students make.
- Subject leadership is variable in quality. Not all subject leaders have the expertise or skills to hold the members of their department well enough to account for the progress their students make. Work scrutiny undertaken by some subject leaders has not considered the progress shown in the students' books, nor has it made reference to missing or incomplete work or to poor presentation.
- The curriculum is appropriate for the range of needs the students have. However, some older students, when asked what the school could do better, said they did not like the fact that on some days, three out of the five lessons they had were in the same subject.
- Students appreciate the opportunities on offer, such as the many sporting facilities and visits. These impact well on the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One student told the inspectors it was great to meet her pen pal on a visit to a school in France and to see how different school life is there.
- Safeguarding meets requirements. The school is vigilant in ensuring the safety of all of its students, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those who are educated off site.
- The local authority has stepped up its support this academic year because of the decline in the GCSE results in 2013. However, the impact of this increased support has not been fully realised at this point in time.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors acknowledge that the impact of their work has not been as rapid as they would wish. While they have questioned the mismatch between the school's grading of the quality of teaching and student progress, they have not been fully involved in checking that teachers' pay is linked well enough to the progress that students make.
 - The school's website is out of date regarding how the pupil premium funding is used and there is no review of the impact this funding is having. Governors' questioning of the school on the progress students make has been stepped up following the GCSE results last summer and they are now starting to hold not only senior leaders, but also subject leaders more to account; however, it is too early for the impact of this to be seen.

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	432119

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Littlewood
Headteacher	James Harris
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2013
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