

# Glossopdale Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112957
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311069
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Matharu HMI

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1603
6th form	316
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Ryan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Hart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Talbot Road Glossop Derbyshire SK13 7DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01457 862336
<b>Fax number</b>	01457 852811

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<b>Age group</b>	11-18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Glossopdale Community College is a larger than average sized comprehensive college for students aged 11 to 18. It has a split site with the two main college sites being almost two miles apart. Years 7 and 8 are on one site with years 9, 10 and 11 on another. There is also a separate post 16 centre. The college serves the towns of Glossop and Hadfield, and surrounding villages. There is also an Enhanced Resource provision at the college, with places available for 44 students with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The vast majority of students are of White British origin. Their socio-economic circumstances are comparable to the national average.

The college is part of the 'Peak 11' federation, which includes all of the secondary schools of the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales. The college gained Performing Arts specialist status in September 2005. It holds the Artsmark Gold and Investors In People awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Glossopdale Community College provides a satisfactory education overall for its students. Value for money is satisfactory. Students' attainment on entry to the college is variable, but broadly average. Whilst standards at Key Stage 3 and 4 have been consistently lower than national averages in recent years, these are improving. In 2007, there were promising improvements at Key Stage 3 to equal national averages in English, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 4, results in 2007 were the college's best yet and moved closer to national performance. In particular, the number gaining a pass at grade C or above in English and mathematics was in line with the national average. Overall, progress in the main college is satisfactory, with good progress achieved in the sixth form.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. The majority enjoy college and display enthusiasm for college activities. When lessons are suitably engaging and challenging, students' behaviour is appropriate for learning. Although attendance overall is slowly improving, a number of students are failing to respond to the college's efforts in this and therefore it continues to be a challenge for the college.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good and outstanding features. When teaching is good, teachers have high expectations; learning tasks are varied and relevant and students' interest is captured. In these lessons, students work well and make better progress. Marking is sometimes detailed and helpful but not consistently so across the curriculum. The curriculum is sound and provides learners with increasingly varied opportunities. At Key Stage 3, imaginative curriculum development is promoting increased enjoyment of learning and developing students' study skills well. Insufficient vocational options are available at Key Stage 4 for all students, although there are plans to introduce the new 14–19 diplomas in two areas from 2009, subject to approval from the organising body. Extra-curricular provision is a strength of the college and enhances the experience of many students, particularly in sport and the performing arts. In line with the college's specialist status, the arts curriculum is extensive, with improved facilities and this enables many students to achieve well in performing arts.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with strengths in pastoral care and support for all students, including those who are most vulnerable, for whom support is particularly effective. Academic guidance is less effective and this has prompted only modest improvements in achievement and standards over time. This is partly because the college is not rigorous enough in evaluating the impact of its various improvement activities in order to establish which are most successful.

Leadership and management of the college are satisfactory overall, with some good features. The principal has engaged the support and commitment of the wider staff team in driving forward improvement priorities. There have been some thoughtful innovations to improve learning and a range of strategies implemented to raise achievement.

However, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and subsequent improvement plan is not yet rigorous enough to improve this to a consistently good level across the college. There is insufficient evaluation overall of the impact of various curriculum reorganisations and pastoral changes on students' learning.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

This is an effective and improving sixth form where students achieve well. Standards are broadly in line with national averages and students make good progress. The curriculum provides extensive opportunities for a wide variety of courses: consequently, many of the teaching groups are small. Teaching is consistently good and students appreciate their positive relationships with teachers. Many of them speak warmly of the guidance and support provided to enable them to succeed. Sixth formers contribute very well to the life of the college in a number of ways, including mentoring younger students and supporting in lessons. The personal development of post-16 students is good. They demonstrate their maturity through their Charity Committee and their Charity Action Team. The sixth form is well led and managed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement through improving the quality of teaching and learning to a consistently good level across the college.
- Ensure that monitoring activities focus sharply on learning and outcomes for students.
- Evaluate the impact of the new curriculum and pastoral initiatives on raising achievement

A small proportion of the colleges where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

#### Grade for sixth form: 2

Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that standards and achievement are satisfactory. In recent years, standards at Key Stage 3 have been below national averages. However, in 2007 standards in English, mathematics and science improved to be in line with those found nationally. The percentage of students achieving the higher Level 6 or above in mathematics was better than found nationally. In English, girls performed better at both Level 5 and Level 6+ than girls nationally and the gap between girls and boys' performances was greater than that found nationally.

Standards at Key Stage 4 have also been below national averages over recent years. However, these are consistently improving and closing the gap with national figures. Although the GCSE results of 2007 were the college's best yet, these did not quite reach the reasonable targets it set for itself.

The number of students gaining five or more GCSEs at A\*-C grade, including English and mathematics is at the national average. The number gaining five or more A\*-G grades is consistently around the national average. In lessons seen the progress at both key stages was judged at least satisfactory and on occasions it was good, particularly at Key Stage 4. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress due to the provision and effective support they receive. Overall, the progress students make from Year 7 to 11 is satisfactory.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. Students mostly respond well to college activities and value the help and support received from their teachers. They willingly offer ideas about many aspects of college life using a range of formal and informal channels.

Students feel safe because of clearly reinforced strategies on anti-bullying and racism. A significant number of parental questionnaires expressed concern about poor behaviour. During the inspection students' behaviour in lessons was judged satisfactory and conducive to effective learning. However, there is a considerable amount of boisterous behaviour around the site, which the college is tackling. Students' attitudes to learning are mostly positive. It is clear from lessons and discussion with students that, when offered, they enjoy opportunities to learn independently.

Attendance is satisfactory but improving. There are good systems for tracking attendance, with good attendance being recognised and rewarded. However, not all first day absences are reported to parents, as college policy requires. Despite the considerable efforts made to improve attendance, the principal reason for this not being better than satisfactory is that many families continue to take holidays during term time.

Students are well prepared for their future working lives by such activities as Year 9 Enterprise Day, Life Skills courses and the 'XL' club linked to the Princes Trust. However, the lack of work experience for all students is a weakness in the provision. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and personal, social and citizenship education promote students' personal development and well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the main college and good in the sixth form. There are a number of examples of good and occasionally outstanding teaching. No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and many have high expectations of students. Relationships between adults and students are good and result in a high level of enjoyment. Lessons are usually well planned with resources that capture the interest of students, especially in music and performing arts.

Work is mostly well matched to the range of abilities found in classes. Questioning is occasionally challenging but is underdeveloped in some lessons. Progress in learning is not as good as it could be when the pace is too slow and where the learning activities do not engage students' interest. When this occurs, levels of participation are lower than in the more successful lessons. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently across the curriculum to support both teaching and learning. However, some excellent pieces of work using a range of communication technologies were observed following the new competence based curriculum

in Key Stage 3 and the use of ICT is good in the sixth form and for students with learning difficulties.

The quality of marking and assessment is variable. Whilst there is some exemplary practice, as seen in a history class and the competences based curriculum, not all teachers mark work regularly enough and students are not always sufficiently clear about what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed and provide effective support for students, although not all teachers plan their deployment sufficiently thoroughly to ensure maximum benefit for students.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory, in both the main college and the sixth form. It meets all statutory requirements. Following recent revisions, it is becoming increasingly capable of matching the capabilities and fulfilling the aspirations of students of different abilities at all stages. The imaginative initiative to develop learning and enquiry skills in Years 7 and 8 has had a positive impact in improving students' attitudes to learning, and the quality and regularity of homework submitted. However, continuity of these practices into Year 9 and beyond has not yet been established. The college is currently developing a wider choice of vocational studies in Key Stage 4, including a modern apprenticeship in sports studies. Lower achieving students in Year 11 follow a modified curriculum and pursue work-related courses at local Further Education colleges. The college intends to extend this into Year 10.

The diversity and quality of enrichment activities, particularly in performing arts, is outstanding, providing high challenge for more able students, as do summer colleges and links with universities. The college has strong links with various community arts projects. There is a well co-ordinated learning support programme for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Careers education and guidance is well organised for all students. There is an outstanding range of international links. In addition, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and a variety of trips and visits make a significant contribution to students' personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall with some good features. The college has a strongly inclusive approach and demonstrates commitment to care for students' welfare and well-being. There is a strong commitment to keep students safe. Child protection procedures are firmly in place, and all staff receive regular training. Risk assessments are completed wherever appropriate. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in class and make good progress as a result. Support for those experiencing other difficulties with their learning is good.

The inclusion suites on both college sites are a model of good practice in their strong and effective support for vulnerable students. Evaluation of impact indicates good outcomes for such students who might otherwise be disengaged from college. There is good liaison with, and effective use of a wide range of external agencies to support students. Such profitable links are increasing, largely through the work of the Family Resource worker based in the

college. Students are offered sound careers advice with guidance on future pathways and option choices.

The college has recently introduced a House system which is having a positive impact on student relationships and the sense of community. However, the impact on raising achievement has yet to be realised. Likewise, although procedures for academic guidance are developing securely, these vary in their effectiveness as demonstrated in below average examination and test results over recent years. There have been a number of interventions to improve progress, such as booster classes, mentoring and individual strategies with individual students, with varying degrees of success, but there is insufficient evaluation of the impact of these. Academic guidance within subjects is inconsistent in some areas because not all students are sure how to improve their work. The setting and monitoring of students' targets remains variable.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management, and the college's ability to judge its own performance, are satisfactory overall. The principal holds a clear vision for the college which is shared by the senior team. Senior staff know the college well and are realistic and accurate in their appraisal of its strengths and areas for improvement. There is an appropriate focus on the importance of raising achievement and standards and recognition that the means to achieve this is through improving teaching and learning to a consistently good level across all subjects.

The relatively large senior team is an appropriate size, given the complexities of operating effectively over three sites and the college's current improvement agenda. There are emerging strengths in the leadership team and examples of imaginative responses to the issues and challenges facing the college. For example, there have been significant changes to the curriculum at Key Stage 3 to better meet students' needs, and reorganisation of the year groups attached to the various sites, in order to improve the climate for learning. Some of the innovations are bringing about improvements. However, the senior team have, in some cases, not communicated their improvement priorities and actions sufficiently clearly to a minority of parents, some of whom expressed concerns about various issues during inspection.

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is becoming more rigorous. However, the desired impact of sustaining consistently good teaching across the college has not yet been achieved, and remains an ongoing priority. There are opportunities to share best practice but these are not widespread across all departments. Subject leadership is developing securely, with examples of careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses and clear plans for improvement. However, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of various improvement strategies within all subjects is not always rigorous. Further the setting and monitoring of appropriately challenging targets for students is not consistent across all subjects.

Governance is good. Governors fulfil the role of critical friend well and increasingly hold the college to account. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. In view of the innovation evident in the college, and the strategies in place to raise achievement, there is good capacity to improve.



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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Glossopdale Community College, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 7DR

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your college recently. The inspection team enjoyed meeting you and talking with some of you about your work.

Many of you indicated how much you enjoy being at Glossopdale and appreciate the wide range of opportunities provided by the college. We found that overall your college is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. Several aspects are improving, including the curriculum arrangements and the level of challenge provided in lessons to stretch your abilities more fully. Mr Hart and his staff team are determined to find ways to help you to achieve more highly. A number of important changes have been made recently, including the reorganisation of the two main college sites and the restructuring into a House system. Both of these seem to be working well.

Your teachers clearly want you to succeed and the staff are putting considerable efforts into improving the standard of lessons across the college. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some that is good or outstanding. We saw some good work in a range of lessons, demonstrating that many of you are making improved progress this year. However, some of you do not attend as often as you might and this is affecting those students' progress. We also felt that some of you do not behave as well around the site as you do in lessons, and this needs to improve with your cooperation.

We think your college can improve further. We have asked Mr Hart and your teachers to:

- Raise standards higher by making sure that all of your lessons are as good as the best ones we saw during the inspection.
- Ensure that when lessons are being monitored, the focus is on how well you are learning and the progress you are making.
- Find ways of measuring how well the changes to the curriculum in Years 7 and 8, and the new House system are helping you to achieve highly

We feel sure that your college has the potential to continue to improve and we look forward to hearing of your progress in future.

Best wishes,

Judith Matharu

Her Majesty's Inspector