

# Glenburn Sports College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119758
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339527
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Vincent Ashworth 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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	686
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Waterhouse
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hilary Torpey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Yewdale Southway Skelmersdale WN8 6JB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 724381
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 33 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence. This included assessment information, students' work, key policies and practices, including those on safeguarding and health and safety, records of monitoring the quality of teaching, school improvement plans and arrangements to support vulnerable learners. In addition, 115 parental questionnaires, 77 student questionnaires and 47 staff questionnaires were reviewed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which students' progress and attainment is improving securely and quickly in both key stages
- how effectively teachers use assessment to secure the progress of all groups of students
- the extent to which students know how to improve their work in order to achieve targets that stretch and challenge them
- how well managers at all levels use information about performance to improve outcomes for students.

## Information about the school

Glenburn Sports College is a smaller than average school. The number of students eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. Almost all students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. Around 5% of students have a statement of special educational needs, which is well above that found nationally. There are currently six young people who are in public care. The school has been a specialist sports college since September 2004. It has secured a number of awards including Investors in People, Foundation International School, Sportsmark Gold, Artsmark Silver, Green Flag Eco-school and Basic Skills. The school receives support from the National Challenge initiative. At its previous inspection in September 2008 the school was given a notice to improve.

**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: how good is the school?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Glenburn Sports College is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Due to the good leadership and ambition of the headteacher and her committed senior leadership team, outcomes for students have improved since the last inspection. Some features of the school are now good. For example the inclusive curriculum, the good quality care, guidance and support which help students stay on track, and the wealth of ways in which students contribute positively to their own and other communities. There are examples of excellent teaching in English, modern foreign languages, drama and physical education. Students with social and emotional difficulties and young people who are in public care are supported extremely well. The jewel in the school's crown is the outstanding contribution made by its specialist sports status to students' enjoyment of school as well as their well-being, health and self-esteem. This aspect of the school is managed with flair and vision; challenging specialist college targets are regularly exceeded.

Inspectors saw significant improvement in both the quality of teaching and students' progress in English lessons. Improvements are also taking place in mathematics, but at a slower pace, because of difficulties in recruiting mathematics teachers. Students themselves actively contribute their own views and suggestions on how to improve teaching and learning and the school takes these on board. Despite learners of differing ability being highlighted on lesson plans, tasks are not always matched to the full range of students' needs. In some subjects too little attention is given to how lesson activities can support the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills. Marking is inconsistent between and within departments. There are examples of good practice, but marking sometimes lacks the detail to help students to identify their strengths and know how to improve. Nevertheless, students are very clear about the level they are working at and have ambitions to stretch themselves to achieve their targets.

Overall, students make satisfactory progress. Within this picture of improvement there remains variation in the performance of different subjects and the rates of progress made by some groups of students, for example, boys and higher ability girls do not make as much progress as they might. In a few subjects, for example mathematics, GCSE pass rates are stubbornly low, because too many students get stuck on the grade C/D borderline. The quality and rigour of self-evaluation is inconsistent between subjects. Exclusion rates are high because a very small minority of boys ignore school rules.

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The school's capacity to improve is good. This is because of the good progress that has been made in all of the areas identified for action at the last inspection and some key areas of provision, such as teaching and learning. Planning has improved at whole school level and is informed by insightful self-evaluation. Inspection evidence identified that the improvements made by the school are having a significant impact on improving attainment in both Key Stages. Senior leaders are not resting on their laurels and know they need to build on current good practice in the school to ensure all students are challenged more effectively to achieve better results, especially in core subjects.

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

- Raise attainment and achievement of all students, and in particular boys and higher ability girls by:
  - focusing on strategies to help more students move from a grade D to grade C, particularly in GCSE mathematics
  - ensuring that teachers make more effective use of information on students' literacy and numeracy skills to support individual students' learning and progress in all lessons
  - ensuring that marking consistently provides students with the detailed information and guidance that helps them to complete and improve their work.
- Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions by continuing to improve behaviour, particularly amongst the very small minority of disaffected boys.
- Build on best practice already in the school, and improve the consistency of quality and rigour of self-evaluation at subject level.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students say they learn the most when lessons are fun, the teachers are fair and they are actively involved. They particularly appreciate the opportunities to evaluate their own learning, as well as that of other students in their group. This helps to consolidate and deepen their learning. Students' enthusiasm for learning decreases when they are asked to complete photocopied worksheets or copy notes. Students feel that the quality of their learning has increased over the last year because teachers use a wider range of teaching methods and vary the range of lesson activities. The great majority of students work productively in lessons and respond particularly well to lively, enthusiastic teaching. In an English lesson, students were keen to respond to the teacher's challenge to extend their writing skills. The atmosphere was electric as students pored through dictionaries to broaden their vocabulary and find more articulate ways of describing things. Inspectors observed good learning and progress in well over half the lessons seen.

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Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. Their progress in Key Stage 3 is much improved and is now satisfactory. Consequently, standards in core subjects at the end of Year 9, especially in English and science, have improved considerably from a low base. After a period of decline, overall GCSE examination results improved to 68% of students attaining 5A\*-C grades in 2009.. However, the proportion of students who attained five or more GCSE grades, including mathematics and English was much lower. Too many students get stuck on grade D borderlines, particularly in mathematics. Strategies to raise achievement and attainment in mathematics and English have had a greater impact on students currently in Years 10 and 11. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other groups of students. In some subjects, the progress made by a small minority of disaffected boys and higher ability girls is slower than that of other groups of students.

Students report that they enjoy school and they feel very safe and secure. As a result of the very clear systems of rewards and consequences that have been put in place behaviour is improving quickly. However, fixed term exclusion rates are high, because a very small minority of boys persistently choose to ignore school rules. Students are rightly proud that there are very few incidents of bullying or racist abuse and when they do occur they are dealt with appropriately. They eat healthily when at school and participate fully in physical activities. Students speak enthusiastically about the impact of the specialist sports college, not just on their health and fitness, but also on their increased levels of confidence and their ability to work collaboratively in teams. Students have a strong sense of pride in their school and develop as confident individuals who contribute in a positive way to both the school and wider community. The school council is effective in voicing students' views to senior managers, but less so to governors. Students develop good workplace skills. The school is acutely aware of the need to strengthen students' literacy and numeracy skills in order to improve their economic well-being. The school makes strenuous efforts to improve attendance and the number of persistent absentees has declined significantly over the last three years. Nevertheless, not all students attend as regularly as they should and overall attendance rates are average.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>3</b>
	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

There are pockets of excellent teaching in English, modern foreign languages, drama and physical education. In the best lessons students are highly focused and fully engaged in active learning. These lessons are well planned and structured. Clear learning outcomes linked to assessment criteria are shared with the students; this helps them to understand the purpose of the lesson and creates a meaningful context for the challenging tasks they are given. Activities are well sequenced so that students build very effectively on previous learning. The ends of lessons are used effectively to consolidate learning and promote a sense of achievement. Students invariably leave such lessons buzzing with enthusiasm and brimming with confidence and self-belief. In less effective lessons, teachers' expectations are too low and tasks fail to provide stretch and challenge. Lesson objectives lack the precision to be able to measure and evaluate students' progress and tasks are not tailored to different levels of ability within the class. Students' literacy and numeracy skills are developed in some lessons, but this is insufficiently well embedded across all subjects. The quality of marking is uneven. There are examples of good practice, for example, in English, but marking too frequently lacks the detail to help students to improve. In some subjects students' poor quality handwriting and presentation go unchallenged.

The school continually reviews and amends its curriculum to meet the needs of the students. The range of options and vocational courses available in Years 10 and 11 is well suited to students' very diverse needs, interests and aspirations. Strong collaboration between the school and other local providers of education and training ensures students' smooth transition into post-16 provision. Opportunities for work-related learning are good. Almost all students leave school and progress onto further education, training or employment. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are popular and well attended.

The school values its students enormously. Overall support for students is good and that for vulnerable students and their families is exemplary. Following the last inspection, academic support has improved by leaps and bounds because teachers and managers now have very helpful and accurate information that tells them how well students are

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progressing. As a result underachievement is systematically identified and appropriate action taken to address it. Students feel very well informed about courses when making GCSE choices. They receive good careers advice and guidance, which helps them to make informed decisions about their post-16 options. Arrangements to help students make a smooth transition from primary to secondary school are very effective because of the strong links with local primary schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that staff feel part of the process of improving the school and morale is high. All those who work in the school share her vision to break through barriers to learning and ensure that all students get the best possible start in adult life. Difficult decisions have been taken to ensure that very little teaching is now inadequate. The school recognises that there remains variation between subjects and has secure plans to ensure that best practice is applied more consistently. Middle leaders have been made accountable for their students' progress. They undertake their work with enthusiasm and conviction. Because of improvements in the management of school data, middle leaders have developed their skills in using data to pinpoint and support students who underachieve. However, self-evaluation is not consistently rigorous and incisive across the school. As a consequence, some departmental action plans contain targets that are insufficiently clear and measurable and not all groups of students make equally good progress.

The governing body is beginning to hold the school to account for its academic standards. Governors are passionate about the school and committed to its continuous improvement. The school provides many opportunities to welcome parents in to school, but attendance at many meetings is low. Equality of opportunity is promoted through the school's inclusive curriculum. Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet government requirements. Senior managers are highly visible around the school; this instils a sense of order and discipline, particularly during break times. The school effectively monitors and evaluates the extent of its contribution to its own and other communities. The specialist sports college initiatives are particularly effective in promoting community cohesion.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and are happy with the quality of education the school provides for their children. Most parents feel that the school provides well for their children's safety and that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. Few parents made negative comments. A very small minority of parents feel that the school could do more to tackle unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors noted that the school is working hard to address this concern and a new 'behaviour for learning' policy is having a positive impact.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Glenburn Sports College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 686 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	31	61	53	16	14	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	47	41	58	50	6	5	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	43	53	46	12	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	37	59	51	9	8	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	37	32	62	54	10	9	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	30	58	50	11	10	5	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	18	78	68	8	7	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	30	64	56	8	7	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	30	66	57	10	9	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	34	52	45	16	14	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	26	67	58	8	7	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	35	30	62	54	9	8	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	37	58	50	10	9	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



11 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Glenburn Sports College, Skelmersdale WN8 6JB

Thank you for the warm welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. Many of you told us about changes for the better and how much improved your school is since it was last inspected. We agree with you. We judged that your school is satisfactory and that some aspects, for example, the pastoral care and the curriculum are now good. You told us that you felt particularly confident in Mrs Torpey and her senior management team. You also said that staff at the school care about you, which makes you feel safe. I wasn't surprised by how many of you feel well-prepared for when you move on to college, work or training. I saw first-hand your good teamwork skills and how much you grow in self-confidence through your involvement in specialist sports college initiatives. I was disappointed however to see that not all of you do your very best to attend school as regularly as you could. I saw the pride on the faces of Year 9 students in the awards ceremony when improvements in their behaviour were being acknowledged. The 'Behaviour for Learning' policy works really well, but what a pity that a very small minority of boys choose to ignore it. This is unfortunate as it means they miss out on so many opportunities your school has to offer. Examination results are on the increase and many more of you are making better progress. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement, particularly in your GCSE mathematics results. Your headteacher and all the staff have high aspirations for the future development of your school. In order to help you do even better and reach higher standards, I have asked them to concentrate on some key things:

- to ensure that comments on your work give you enough guidance on what to do in order to improve and achieve your challenging targets
- to ensure that all teachers plan lessons that are suited to your different needs so that you can all make good progress in your learning
- to help a small number of boys improve their behaviour so they spend less time out of lessons.

You have an important part to play by continuing to attend school regularly and doing your very best at all times. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Vincent Ashworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

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