

Glebelands School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125259
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328326
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	827
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Stella Halloran
Headteacher	Mrs Nikki Knight
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
School address	Parsonage Road Cranleigh GU6 7AN
Telephone number	01483 542 400
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Glebelands is a slightly smaller than average community comprehensive school serving a semi-rural community. Students are predominantly White British, with 5% from a range of other ethnic groups. Very few students have English as their additional language. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is higher than the national average. Most of these students have specific learning difficulties and increasing numbers have behavioural, emotional and social needs. The school was awarded specialist status in science and mathematics in 2004 and is part of a federated 14-19 network with three other secondary schools, a special school and two colleges. The school has a number of external awards including Healthy School status and Investors in Careers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Glebelands is a good and improving school. The headteacher and staff are committed to providing the best for the students in all aspects of their education. They work hard to inspire and challenge students of all abilities to achieve their full potential. A student, having recently arrived in the country, commented 'I love learning and I love school'. A large proportion of the parents who responded to the parental questionnaire submitted written comments. Although these contained a wide range of views, the common feature was the desire to make sure that their children received the best education possible at Glebelands. Inspectors took account of the concerns raised by a very small minority of parents.

Students enter the school with above-average levels of attainment. They achieve standards that are above the national average, and in some cases well above the national average, by the time they leave school. This represents good progress. The percentage of students attaining the highest grades at GCSE is above the national average in most subjects because teachers plan challenging tasks and activities. Students who have additional needs receive good support and make progress that is equal to their peers. Boys achieve slightly less well than girls do although the gap is narrowing as teachers take boys' learning styles into account when planning lessons. The school is working hard to improve the achievement of a minority of students who do not reach their full potential by ensuring that teaching and learning, support and the curriculum match students' individual interests and learning needs. Staff are also taking action to improve the motivation of the small number of students who are reluctant to learn.

Students' personal development and well-being are good because of the broad and balanced curriculum on offer and the high quality of care and support. The school encourages all students to take pride in their learning and aspire to achieve their best. Students mostly enjoy school and report that they feel secure and comfortable with each other and with their teachers. There is a growing awareness of the need to appreciate and tolerate the views of different groups in the school community and the wider society. Anti-social behaviour is dealt with rapidly, including any bullying or racist incidents. Attendance overall is near to national averages although the numbers of students who are persistently absent remains high. The school is making good progress towards the targets set to tackle this issue.

The curriculum is broad and flexible and meets the needs and interests of the learners well at both key stages. Students reported how much they value and enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities on offer. The school uses its specialist status well to support subjects across the curriculum and to raise the profile of science and mathematics within its confederated primary and federated secondary schools. The school has a clear understanding of the needs of the semi-rural community in which it is located and is developing strong and productive links to enable students to engage fully with a range of community partners.

Teaching and learning are good. Learners make good progress because teachers and staff who support learning encourage students to hold high expectations of their achievement. As a result most students are well motivated, eager to participate and enjoy learning. There are rigorous whole-school tracking systems to set targets and to monitor students' progress. Various assessments, homework and independent learning tasks are set across subjects. The quality, quantity and frequency of feedback that students receive on these tasks vary across subject areas. In addition, the marking and assessment of classwork is inconsistent. As a result, not all

students are aware of how well they are progressing towards their targets and how to improve further.

Leadership and management are good overall. The strong and effective leadership of the headteacher and her team have led to significant improvements since the last inspection. Challenging targets, including those for specialist status, are raising standards across the school and narrowing gaps in attainment between groups of students. The governing body are well informed and supportive. Strong links with the strategic leadership team and with individual subjects ensure that they provide a good level of challenge. There is a shared understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear direction is set for improvement. This underpins the school's good capacity to improve further. There are effective systems for monitoring and self-evaluation at all levels. However, the rigour and quality of self-evaluation is not yet consistent across the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that attendance targets are met.
- Improve the consistency, rigour and quality of self-evaluation at all levels and across all areas of the school's work.
- Ensure that all students are aware of how well they are progressing towards their targets by providing frequent and regular feedback on how to improve their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On entry to the school, students' attainment is above average. They make good progress during their time in the school, achieving examination results that are above the national average and in some cases well above. There has been a general trend of improvement since the last inspection in the number of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE and in the percentage of students attaining the highest A*/A grades. Standards are well above the national average in science and there has been a significant improvement in the number of students attaining good GCSE grades in mathematics. There is a similar pattern of improvement in Key Stage 3. The school has rigorous and robust systems to track students' progress and set realistic and challenging targets. In some subjects, these are used well to drive up standards and improve achievement of different groups, for example in focusing on raising the achievement of boys. However, not all teachers give sufficiently regular or detailed guidance to students about what they need to do to gain the next level or grade. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good levels of individual support and consequently their achievements match those of their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students make good progress in their personal development. They demonstrate good social and moral skills and their understanding of spiritual awareness and cultural diversity is developing well. There is a growing awareness of discrimination and the harm that it can do. The school works hard to eliminate all forms of prejudice. The majority of students enjoy their time in school, and behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. Relationships between students and with adults are good, reflecting the positive attitudes of the majority of students and the value that they, and their parents, place on their achievement. Attendance is satisfactory overall but students in Years 10 and 11 are absent too often. Reducing the number of students

who are persistently absent is an urgent focus for the school and it is working hard to meet targets agreed with the local authority. Recent figures indicate that the school is making good progress towards meeting their targets.

Most students exhibit a mature and thoughtful approach to aspects such as staying safe and eating healthily. Most students show enthusiasm for taking roles of responsibility within the school and the local community. The work of the school council is a good example of how students' views can be influential. Another strong feature is the student leaders who serve as good role models for other students. They are very articulate, confident, and full of good ideas to promote and improve the school. Because of good guidance and the provision for work-related education, students make good progress in developing the personal qualities and abilities to meet their needs in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Students make good progress because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Relationships are good between staff and students and praise is a strong feature in most lessons. As a result, students are motivated, behave well and respond positively to the tasks set. A small minority of students do not work hard enough despite teachers' best efforts to engage them. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers to provide variety and challenge. Teachers have detailed knowledge within their subject areas and lessons are well planned. Clear learning objectives are set for students at the beginning of lessons which help them to focus on learning and provide clear direction for their work. In most lessons activities are matched effectively to the different abilities of students. This is most successful when students are given opportunities to explore their ideas and teachers challenge their understanding. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson students participated very well in a discussion about whether Lady Macbeth was responsible for the death of King Duncan using a card-sorting exercise. However, some lessons are overly teacher-directed and do not provide students with sufficient opportunities to develop their thinking or practise their skills. There are also inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking; as a result not all students are clear about the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and contributes to students' good achievement. 'Learning for Life' lessons are a strong feature of the curriculum and have a positive impact on students' personal development and enjoyment. In addition, 'Learning to Learn' lessons help students to develop independent learning and communication skills. 'Focus Days' such as 'Indian Theme Day' and 'Enterprise Day' help to develop students' cultural understanding and economic awareness and prepare students well for their future. The school also uses its specialist status very well to enhance the curriculum. The annual science challenge event, linked with mathematics, is highly valued by students and their parents. Regular monitoring and review of the curriculum ensures that courses meet statutory requirements yet remain flexible enough to meet the needs and interests of students and those of the locality. The school has played a pivotal role in steering a federation with four other secondary schools and two local colleges, allowing students to have a wide range of academic and vocational courses from which to choose at Key Stage 4. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities such as football,

netball, Latin and statistics is good and the school is currently working on plans to increase participation rates, especially of students who rely on fixed transport arrangements to travel home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. There is a genuine commitment of staff to the well-being of all students, particularly those that find school challenging. Many staff in key support roles know the students and their family backgrounds very well and this results in very good relationships and a secure and supportive environment in which students and parents feel able to express concerns. The school draws on the expertise of external agencies and seeks appropriate support. The 'Learning for Life' programme is effective in ensuring that all students are well equipped for and well informed about their future and the part they are required to play in the wider community. Assessment information is collected at designated times during the term to monitor students' progress and is reported to parents, although immediate and frequent feedback on work done in class is not readily available in all subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision for improvement. A committed senior leadership team and some enthusiastic and able middle managers provide her with good support. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor and track students' progress. A focus on developing a coherent and shared approach to monitoring progress and target-setting has improved standards in mathematics and raised the achievement of higher-attaining students. The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well and what is needed to bring about further improvement. The processes of self-evaluation have improved since the previous inspection and often lead to effective action and targeted intervention. However, outcomes are not monitored or reviewed consistently across all areas of the school's work and self-evaluation at some levels is not sufficiently evaluative. Governors are well informed and provide a good level of support and challenge. The school's strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is improving outcomes for students. There are strong and productive links with the local and wider community. These are based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the school's own community and learners' needs. Resources are managed effectively and staff are deployed well. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

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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
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Glebelands School, Cranleigh, GU6 7AN

Thank you all for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and visiting some of your lessons. We were impressed with your mature attitude, the ways in which you are helping to improve the school through the school council and the way that the student leaders are setting an excellent example.

Glebelands is a good and improving school. Your dedicated headteacher and senior staff, helped by the governors, lead your school well. You achieve very good results in examinations and make good progress by the time you leave school. Your personal development is good because of the good care and support you receive. Most of you are happy at school and feel secure. The school's specialist status for science and mathematics, and the federation, provide you with good opportunities to improve your education. You get on well with your teachers and they do their best to make lessons interesting. The best lessons are those that challenge you to think through, discuss, and debate your ideas. You make the most progress when teachers give you frequent and detailed feedback on your work and tell you how to improve. When we visited lessons, we saw most of you working hard and trying your best. We were disappointed to find out that a few students are not so keen to learn and do not attend school regularly.

In order to make your school even better we have asked for three things to happen:

- make sure that all students attend regularly
- improve the way the school checks on how well it is performing across all areas of its work
- make sure that all students are aware of how well they are progressing towards their targets by providing frequent and regular feedback on how to improve learning.

We wish you all at Glebelands a happy and successful future.

Yours faithfully

Anne Wellham

Her Majesty's Inspector