

The Forge Secondary Short Stay School

215 Easemore Road, Redditch, B98 8HF

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The majority of students achieve well during their time at The Forge, from low starting points. Students' achievement in English, mathematics, science and in their personal development is good.
- Students acquire good quality accreditation such as GCSEs and Entry Levels by the time they leave in Year 11.
- Teaching is good. In the best teaching clear explanations and challenging tasks fully meet students' needs enabling them to make outstanding progress.
- Students behave well because they understand and value the effective behaviour management system.
- Students say they feel safe. They say they feel well looked after and enjoy the range of outdoor and work-related experiences.
- Subjects meet students' needs and abilities well and good work-related experiences prepare students well for their futures.
- Effective working relationships with the local 'fair access' panel, which offers students a place at The Forge and checks their outcomes, means that students' abilities are well monitored and provided for.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and managers evaluate the schools' effectiveness accurately. They place a high focus on raising achievement and improving the performance of staff through regular monitoring and high levels of training.
- The local authority and the management committee manage the budget well and have an accurate view of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally students do not do enough work in lessons due to a lack of challenge and as a result they do not achieve as well as they do in other lessons.
- A few students are persistently absent and as a result attendance is not improving at a fast enough rate.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 9 lessons jointly with the headteacher or senior leaders. In addition, the inspector made a few short visits to check students' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, the chair of the 'fair access' panel, a representative from the local authority and some students. Telephone conversations were held with the headteachers of two local feeder schools and with the Chair of the Management Committee.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and some students' books.
- There were too few responses to the online survey Parent View to give a helpful picture of parents' views of the school. However, the inspector took into account the school's own recent parental survey and spoke to two parents during the inspection. The inspector also took account of 12 responses to the inspection questionnaire from staff.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Forge caters for secondary-aged pupils from across north-east Worcestershire and a few from surrounding areas. All students have challenging behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- A few students have autistic-spectrum disorders.
- Most students are dual registered with both The Forge and a mainstream secondary school. These are known as 'NEW Chances' students who spend part of their time in each establishment. Up to eight pupils at any one time are part of two 'Re-Focus' groups spending an intensive five weeks at the Forge.
- Students who are permanently excluded from their mainstream school, usually in Key Stage 4, stay at the Forge until they leave school. Key Stage 3 students who are permanently excluded are offered a longer stay at the Forge, and often a managed move to a mainstream or special school where appropriate.
- Almost all pupils are White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language. There are far more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is very high.
- The headteacher was appointed to the role six months ago having worked in the school for two years previously.
- The school has a close working partnership with local secondary schools and with the Beacon Short Stay Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching enables students to make even better progress in their lessons by:
 - planning tasks that meet each students' individual abilities
 - making sure that all teachers challenge students to complete as much work as possible in each lesson.
- Improve the attendance of students who are persistently absent by working closely with students and their parents to ensure they come to school more often.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment on entry to The Forge is usually below or well below average for their age because of their behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and sometimes because of additional autism-spectrum disorders. Most students settle quickly and begin to catch up because of the effective support and well-planned, appropriate tasks that they are given. As a result, most achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave.
- All the different groups of students achieve well. These include the 'NEW Chances' students, the 'Re-focus' groups and those permanently excluded from their mainstream schools. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Discussions by the inspector with two senior leaders from local feeder schools confirmed this. They reported that students who attend The Forge make better progress and often exceed their expected GCSE grades because the placement meets their needs better.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium, and those eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium make similar progress to their classmates in English, mathematics, and science and are provided with additional opportunities in the community to build their self-esteem.
- Most students achieve well in English because individual plans enable them to work at their own level. Creative approaches in the study of Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men' for example, helped Year 10 students to improve their understanding of the text and develop their enquiry and research skills.
- Many lessons are planned to improve students' communication and literacy skills. This was evident in food technology for example, where Year 11 students negotiated with each other and staff as they tested 'shepherds' pies' to find the tastiest and healthiest one.
- Achievement in mathematics is good because targets are specific to each individual student. In Year 11 for example, students were preparing for their GCSEs by practising their multiplication tables. Because of the fast pace of questions, they had to think quickly and enjoyed being the first to answer, achieving well.
- Students do particularly well in their work-related courses, preparing them well for further training and employment. For example one student was observed at 'The Wheels' where he was learning about workshop safety and hazards in the workplace. His behaviour was exemplary and he responded exceptionally well to instructions. All students who have left The Forge in the past three years have gone straight into training, employment or education.
- Occasionally students do not make quite as much progress because lessons lack challenge and tasks are not planned well enough to meet their individual needs and abilities. At these times they do not complete their work or do enough in the time allowed. As a result they are less successful than in other lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use the school's behaviour management approach consistently, resulting in settled lessons where pupils know and understand what is expected. Relationships are strong and pupils

are confident that there is always an adult they can talk to and someone to help them with their work. 'Teachers are always around and that makes me feel safe' reported one pupil. This contributes to their increasingly positive attitudes to learning.

- In the very best teaching excellent strategies are used to build students' confidence. This was evident in science where targeted questioning and individual attention assured students that they could improve their grades by taking one step at a time. Students began to believe in themselves and went on to show very good understanding of the periodic table.
- Teaching in English enables students to gain confidence to write for themselves. Tasks are well prepared to engage their interests. In Years 8 and 9, for example, the use of short film clips showing features of different genres, helped students to make choices about their own writing. Reluctant writers are enabled to use laptop computers to encourage their writing skills.
- The quality of assessment is good. Teachers mark students work together with the student, pointing out ways in which they could improve and discussing their next steps in learning. There are close links with students' own feeder schools to make sure their attainment and learning needs are promptly identified when they join The Forge. This helps teachers to measure students' progress from where they start.
- Teachers use their teaching assistants well in almost all classes to promote learning and check achievements. They play a valuable role in developing students' confidence in learning new things and provide discrete support that ensures success taking every opportunity to hone students' skills further.
- Effective questioning is a key strength of most lessons, helping students to extend their knowledge and think for themselves. An excellent example of this was seen in mathematics in Year 11 where pupils improved their skills in multiplication because of specific questions that encouraged them to work answers out for themselves.
- In a very few cases, planned tasks do not challenge all students well enough because they are not matched closely enough to individual needs or abilities. This means that students do not all do enough work or make the progress expected in these lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Students are referred to The Forge because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, which have previously limited their learning and affected their relationships. Case studies show that students' behaviour improves quickly once they start because of the school's effective approaches. This means that a high proportion of students start to turn their lives around and many start to work hard to achieve their results.
- Students told the inspector that they feel safe at The Forge because it is small and adults are helpful. They say they understand the importance of keeping safe in the community, for example at their work-placements or in the town, and they know how to keep safe on-line.
- Students say that any bullying, teasing or racist incidents are rare and are quickly dealt with by teachers. There is good evidence in school records and case studies of individual behavioural incidents reducing over time.
- Students say that they like The Forge 'because it is small and you know everyone.' Most students

improve their attendance once they start at the school and attend regularly but, despite high levels of encouragement from staff, a few still do not attend often enough.

- The vast majority of students quickly begin to show positive attitudes to learning once they start at The Forge. They regularly try to please. This was evident at the end of assembly when students quickly replaced chairs and tables that had been stacked away to create space. They were eager to do their share without being asked.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because pupils do not always do their best in lessons and sometimes do not produce enough work, especially when this does not make sufficient demands on them.
- Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is effectively promoted through a range of work-related opportunities such as land management and working with animals, hair-dressing, mechanics, and construction. Trips and visits help students to learn about the world around them.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has developed a strong leadership team who are fully committed to improvement. They are ably supported by the management committee, the local authority, and the 'fair access' panel. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well.
- The leadership team are committed to improving teaching, and are making good use of national standards for teachers to develop and manage the performance of staff, enabling them to improve and progress up the pay scale. Senior leaders have a positive impact on supporting and improving the skills of staff. There are some good examples across the school of how staff at all levels have received promotion because of increased training that has improved performance.
- The consistent approach to managing and improving pupils' behaviour is a particular strength of leadership. Whole-school training clearly points out what works well. As a result, all staff use the same effective methods and students know and understand what is acceptable.
- The school's own survey of parental views, along with discussions with two parents, shows that parents feel that their children are safe at the school and achieve well.
- The school is well supported by the local authority. It has developed effective systems that enable The Forge to flourish through close links with their feeder schools and with the 'fair access' panel. There are clear lines of communication between the school, and other local schools. Strong partnerships with mainstream secondary schools, the Beacon Short Stay Primary and the local authority ensure successful placements. Local leaders value the work of The Forge staff, so there is a positive partnership in helping students to succeed.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through subjects and topics. Pupils have good opportunities to gain rewards for their work and behaviour, go on trips and visits and benefit from additional support from the on-site local authorities' support services. Links with local businesses and work-related education providers benefit older pupils very well in their preparation for their futures.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and are not subject to discrimination, as shown by the good policies and procedures and the good progress made by

pupils who receive additional support through the pupil premium. These pupils now progress at least as well in English and mathematics as the other pupils in the school.

- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The management committee is relatively new to its role but is already supportive, providing good quality challenge and advice to leaders. Its members know about the quality of teaching and the use of data through regular contact with the headteacher and through feedback from visiting members. They check the school's work and know how well students are achieving and what needs improving. They are fully committed to managing the performance of staff and provide high-quality training to improve teaching. They make sure that the best staff are rewarded for their efforts so that they can seek promotion. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. The committee has a good range of skills, including in leadership, which is used to benefit The Forge. The committee is well supported by the local authority, which works in close partnership with it and with the headteacher and the 'fair access' panel to make sure that the school continues to improve. Good management of finances means that, for example, pupil-premium funding is used to enrich opportunities and outcomes for the pupils for whom it is intended. It is used to provide additional experiences for these students so that they achieve as well as their classmates.

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	136161
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	426918

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Matt Whiteley
Headteacher	Sean Williams
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2011
Telephone number	01527 597936
Fax number	01527 597936
Email address	spw32@theforge.worcs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

