

Forest Park School

Ringwood Road, Totton, Southampton, SO40 8DZ

Inspection dates

5–6 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Pupils achieve well during their time at Forest Park. Achievement in English, mathematics, science and personal development is good.
- Excellent provision in the sixth form results in pupils making outstanding progress in their work-related qualifications, preparing them well for their futures.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning.
- Teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. When teaching is most effective pupils make rapid and sustained progress because of high levels of challenge. The teaching of pupils' speaking and reading is good.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. Effective support for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties ensures that their individual needs are well met.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Older pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.
- Parents are pleased with the school. The vast majority say that their children make good progress and enjoy attending school.
- Improvement in the range of topics and subjects promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is enriched through after-school clubs and visits.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the future of the school. Along with other leaders and governors, she has improved the achievement of pupils by setting challenging targets for teachers. Effective training and monitoring have helped to improve the quality of teaching.
- The governing body has a wide range of good skills and uses these to manage the budget well and to form an accurate view of the school's work. Governors ensure that eligible pupils benefit from additional funding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The management of teaching assistants is not always effective to ensure that they provide the necessary support to help all pupils achieve their best.
- Planned tasks to meet the abilities and needs of the most able pupils are not evident in all lessons. This limits the amount of progress these pupils make.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, almost all jointly with senior leaders. In addition, they made a few short visits to observe pupils learning and playing, and listened to a few pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and some pupils.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information about pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information, the sports premium action plan and some pupils’ books.
- The inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the online survey (Parent View) to provide a helpful picture of parents’ views of the school. Inspectors also took account of the school’s own recent survey of staff views.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robert Arnold	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties. About half have additional needs, including visual impairment, hearing impairment, and those with a diagnosis of autism, and a very few with severe and challenging behaviour associated with their autism.
- Pupils come from across south Hampshire, with a few from adjacent authorities. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for their learning difficulties.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, with few speaking English as an additional language. There are more than twice as many boys as girls.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding provided by the government in this school, who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is average. A very few pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding.
- The school has a sixth form catering for nine students. These students undertake extended learning opportunities at Totton College. There is no training at places away from school.
- All students study the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN), but no students are entered early for their examinations

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that challenging tasks are available in every lesson to fully extend the skills of the most able pupils so that make even better progress.
- Improve the management of teaching assistants by teachers and leaders so that they know exactly what is expected of them by:
 - providing training to improve their skills so that they know what is expected of them
 - monitoring lessons to ensure that support meets the needs of every pupil.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When they enter the school, pupils' attainment is usually well below average because of their moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties and/or other disabilities. The vast majority quickly start to catch up and overcome some of their past problems because of the good quality of support and help they receive. As a result, they achieve well during their time at the school.
- Pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and in their personal development is good. All pupils, including those with additional sensory needs, autistic spectrum disorders, and/or challenging behaviours and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils supported through additional funding, including the few pupils in Year 7 who receive additional catch-up funding, benefit from extra support, resources and tasks that fully meet their needs, enabling them make the same progress as their classmates in English and mathematics.
- The most able pupils achieve well, but there are times when tasks are not specifically provided to further challenge their abilities. At these times they do not all extend their skills as well as they might to make even better progress.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children quickly learn about the sounds letters make. Pupils across the school regularly discuss stories, answer questions about different aspects and take their reading books home. Those who find it difficult to read words benefit from the use of symbol stories as well as pictures.
- Pupils' writing is developing well because of the way that it is promoted through many other subjects. Outstanding progress in Years 5 and 6 was evident as pupils with moderate learning difficulties and/or autism wrote sentences about Victorian miners during a history lesson. Consistently positive feedback and the use of symbols and new technologies were used effectively to promote pupils' investigation and writing skills.
- Excellent achievement in mathematics was evident in some outstanding learning in the sixth form. Very effective use of vocabulary, signs, symbols and resources ensured that all three pupils in the lesson achieved equally well and fully understood number sequences.
- Younger pupils benefit from the extra sports funding and this has enabled them to have access to additional pony riding and after-school sports. This is going to be sustained when the funding stops through fundraising activities by pupils and staff.
- The few pupils with additional challenging behaviour, associated with their autism are educated individually for most of their day. They make the progress expected of them during their time at the school.
- Students in the sixth form make good or better progress in their ASDAN qualifications, most achieving at least five modules by the time they leave. Effective links with the local college and with local businesses provide highly positive opportunities for them to learn about the world of work.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because the most able pupils are not always challenged well enough to make even better progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils' strong progress is a result of teaching that is almost always good, and some that is outstanding, helping them to achieve well and make the progress expected of them from their individual starting points.
- Teaching typically engages pupils well, challenges them to find answers for themselves and supports their very individual needs so that they all have a means of communicating and responding to questions. As a result, almost all pupils are fully engaged in learning.
- Teachers plan tasks well for individual pupils. However, they do not always plan well enough the

kind of support that they want teaching assistants to provide. As a result, teaching assistants are sometimes unclear as to what is expected of them, so that pupils are not supported as well as they might be, reducing progress in these lessons.

- Good teaching of English results in effective progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Tasks usually engage pupils well and match pupils' abilities. Just occasionally, different and more challenging tasks for the most able pupils are not evident and, as a result, the achievement of pupils in such lessons is not as strong as in other lessons.
- Communication aids, to help support pupils who find speaking difficult, are very well planned for and are prevalent in all classrooms, particularly the use of symbols. This makes sure that all groups of pupils have a means to express themselves. As a result, the vast majority of pupils can make themselves understood and make good progress in speaking. This is further supported by regular speech therapy sessions.
- Effective teaching of phonics ensures that those pupils who are able to read make good progress. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 are starting to identify sounds and words from an early age. Those who use symbols learn to read simple sentences or recognise pictures and photographs accurately so that they can respond to questions, make choices or follow stories.
- The checking of pupils' progress has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now regular and rigorous. It is typically helpful; pupils understand it and enjoy their stickers and stamps, understanding what they mean. These are particularly evident in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is outstanding, because the approaches used by staff are extremely relevant to students' abilities and needs, enabling students to make outstanding progress and preparing them exceptionally well for their futures.
- Teaching across the school is not outstanding because challenging tasks for the most able are not always available. In a few lessons teaching assistants are not managed well enough to provide the support that some other pupils need.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite and kind, regularly helping or reminding each other about the things they should be doing. Their enjoyment of school is evident in their consistently good attendance and the few exclusions over the past two years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Older pupils told the inspectors that they enjoy lessons, feel really safe and that there is good behaviour in the playground. The most able pupils know the importance of staying safe on the internet and in the community.
- Older pupils understand what bullying is and say there is none at the school. Observations of school records and of pupils' playing and working showed this to be true. Their good behaviour is promoted well by the wide range of different activities, the after-school clubs and the different trips that the school provides.
- The behaviour of the few pupils with very challenging behaviour, linked to their autism very rarely affects the learning of others. They all receive one-to-one support at all times and any disruptions or behaviour incidents are well dealt with by staff through the effective behaviour management and support systems.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Through a wide range of additional activities, including regular swimming, pony riding, assemblies, visits and visitors, pupils have an accurate view of life outside their school. Together with this and their good qualifications and work-related learning opportunities, pupils are all well prepared for their lives after leaving the school.
- Students in the sixth form show good personal skills, benefiting from their own classrooms. Through their work-related learning they have effective opportunities to learn about cooking, working in shops and taking care of their own personal care.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because the behaviour of a very few pupils is not

quite as good as the behaviour of the vast majority of others.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher has successfully built on the good outcomes from the previous inspection to further improve all aspects of the school. The leadership team has been strengthened so that the members have extended their capacity to drive improvement forward. The headteacher is ably supported by other leaders, staff and governors.
- Leaders make effective use of the national standards for teaching to improve teachers' skills. There are several examples of staff at all levels undertaking additional qualifications and training so that they can seek promotion and progress up the pay scales because they help their pupils make even better progress.
- The governing body is fully involved in checking how well pupils are doing and leaders are aware of which teachers deserve promotion.
- Leaders check pupils' progress regularly to make sure that they are making the progress expected of them. This enables them to increase the rate of learning of any pupil falling behind.
- Information about pupils' progress over the past three years shows that the school is closing the gaps in achievement by successfully supporting those pupils who find learning difficult. As a result, the vast majority are on track to meet their targets.
- The school provides regular training for staff, in aspects such as behaviour management and safeguarding, ensuring consistent practice across the school.
- The local authority provides effective light touch support to the school, helping the school leaders to improve provision and outcomes.
- There are some good links with local schools, colleges and businesses, helping to develop pupils' academic and personal skills and providing experiences that will benefit the pupils in the future.
- The range of subjects and topics taught meets pupils needs very well. For example, additional speech and physical therapies support the personal and language needs of any pupil who requires it, particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Leaders promote good relationships with parents who are very pleased with the school. All of those who responded to the online questionnaire said that their child enjoys school and that the school keeps them safe.
- Through what they provide, leaders successfully eliminate discrimination and promote good relationships which make sure that all pupils have equal access to the experiences on offer.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding because it promotes students' learning and personal development well and provides high quality academic and work-related opportunities.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- Leadership and management of the school are not yet outstanding because leaders have not ensured that the most able pupils achieve as well as they should.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive, providing good quality challenge to leaders. Governors are fully involved in checking what the school offers pupils. Governors have received training to help them understand information about pupils' progress and how it compares with similar schools. Through their regular visits to classrooms, and through termly reports from the headteacher, members have an accurate view of what is working well and what needs improving, including a good knowledge of the quality of teaching. Governors have a good range of skills which they use to benefit the school. Effective management of finances means that funding is well spent to maximise pupils' learning, including the sports, Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium. Governors are fully involved in managing the performance of staff by setting targets for teachers. They work to ensure that the best teachers and staff are rewarded through promotion. They rigorously tackle any underperformance.

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	135823
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	432058

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Smith
Headteacher	Nicky Dando
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2011
Telephone number	02380 864949
Fax number	02380 722949
Email address	n.dando@forestpark.hants.sch.uk

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