

Forge Valley School

Wood Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S6 5HG

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017 and 6 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across subjects and year groups. Not all teachers share the same high expectations. This has resulted in some slow and inconsistent progress for too many pupils over time.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has improved but remains variable.
- A small minority of pupils cause low-level disruption in lessons. Some pupils become distracted and do not complete the tasks set by their teachers.
- Some pupils do not consistently take pride in their work and teachers do not do enough to encourage or expect them to do so.
- Pupils' writing skills are not developed well enough across the curriculum.
- Leaders' efforts to reduce the persistent absence of a substantial number of disadvantaged pupils have been unsuccessful.
- The actions of some leaders to strengthen teaching, learning and assessment have been less successful than the actions of others.

The school has the following strengths

- The ambitious and effective headteacher is ably supported by other senior leaders and leaders within the trust. They have brought about a number of improvements to the school since it became an academy.
- Leadership of the 16 to 19 provision is good. Study programmes are well suited to the needs of students, who make good progress from their starting points.
- Those pupils who enter school not having met the required standard in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 make good progress so they catch up.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, as do the few pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes, by:
 - ensuring teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve are consistently high across all subjects and year groups
 - making sure teachers use incisive questioning to check pupils' progress and to deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - ensuring teachers check pupils' learning more systematically in lessons
 - upholding the highest standards of presentation of work and of pupils' writing across all subjects.
- Iron out any remaining inconsistencies in leaders' skills, ensuring that checks on teaching, learning and assessment result in minimal variability.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - motivating pupils to take pride in their work
 - ensuring that all teachers manage any disruptive behaviour effectively
 - using pupil premium funding more effectively to reduce the absence of disadvantaged pupils
 - improving the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who attend alternative provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Under the determined and decisive leadership of the headteacher, and despite many difficult obstacles to overcome, the school has improved. However, teaching and outcomes require further improvement.
- Arrangements to monitor how well teachers perform are increasingly effective. Leaders identify weaknesses in teaching and challenge and support teachers to improve their practice. Although leaders check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of these checks, which is reflected in the variable quality of teaching.
- In collaboration with other schools in the trust, leaders have devised an increasingly effective assessment system. This helps leaders and teachers to identify those pupils who are underperforming and assists leaders in holding teachers to account for pupils' progress. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high.
- The pupil premium funding has, in part, been used effectively to reduce differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others, especially over the last year. For example, in English at key stage 3 these differences have been eliminated. However, this is not fully consistent. Furthermore, allocation of funding has not been effective in reducing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent.
- Leaders have used allocated funding well for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils make good progress overall.
- The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities that support their learning and enrich their experiences. Leaders use assembly time and personal, social, and health education lessons well to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The school's work to develop pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is successful. Pupils have opportunities to express their thoughts appropriately. For example, in one lesson pupils questioned a blind person sensitively about the challenges faced in everyday life.
- Funding to provide extra support for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up in literacy and/or numeracy is used well. As a result, these pupils make good progress and the differences between their attainment and the attainment of others are diminishing.
- Leaders work collaboratively with the Tipton Academy Trust. Leaders from the trust provide effective support and challenge which is helping quicken the pace of improvement. For example, the system developed to assess pupils' progress is rigorous and regularly moderated with other schools in the trust.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is committed to ensuring that the school's provision improves and is becoming increasingly effective in its duties. Governors undertake their own, separate, activities to gather information about the school's effectiveness. This includes days in school with leaders and teachers, and attending governor training. An external review of governance identified areas for improvement upon which the governing body is acting.
- The governing body understands its role in challenging leaders to improve progress. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors have the skills to do this and are beginning to do so more consistently. The chief executive of the trust has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils contribute positively to a safe culture. Staff have been properly trained in child protection and know what the procedures are if they have any concerns. Referrals to outside agencies are completed precisely and the school tracks the needs of vulnerable pupils. Leaders engage with parents to ensure that pupils are safe and supported.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online and the school has filters in place to prevent inappropriate internet usage.
- During the inspection, inspectors noted lapses in the checks of attendance records for pupils who attend lessons off site. Between the first two days of inspection and inspectors' visit to collect further evidence, leaders took action to put this right.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there remains too much inconsistency in its quality between subjects and year groups. Teaching is improving but some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve.
- Teachers are increasingly effective in checking pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. There are examples of good practice, where teachers take account of pupils' needs, tackle misconceptions and challenge them at the right level. In these cases, pupils make stronger progress. However, this is not a consistent picture, resulting in other pupils not making good enough progress.
- Not all teachers regularly use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' understanding. This also limits the progress of some pupils.
- Teachers are taking steps to help pupils to write with accuracy and to improve the quality of their writing. Leaders have put measures in place to ensure this happens with increasing frequency, but teachers do not consistently follow the school's agreed literacy policy.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well because their individual needs are identified. Teaching assistants are effective in

helping pupils learn because they use skilful questioning to support learning and understand the needs of this group of pupils.

- The few pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Consequently, they make strong progress.
- Most teachers develop positive relationships with pupils and model respectful behaviour. Teachers create a constructive and purposeful atmosphere by frequent use of praise and humour. However, some teachers manage behaviour less well. Weaker, less challenging and uninspiring learning activities lead to disinterest and some pupils disrupting their own learning and that of others.
- Teachers provide sixth-form students with a good level of challenge so they make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Weak presentation in pupils' workbooks across a range of subjects and year groups and incomplete work in a small proportion of books show that some pupils lack pride in their work and do not demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including cyber and homophobic bullying, and racist behaviour. School bullying logs show that incidents are rare and that leaders and teachers respond appropriately. The pupils interviewed by inspectors said that they felt safe and cared for by staff.
- Pupils receive careers information and guidance in all year groups. Initiatives such as a 'dress to impress' day, links with businesses and a mock interview programme support pupils well in preparing for the world of work. Provision is most effective in Year 11, where adults support pupils well in accessing the next stage of learning. Pupils are advised well about the range of options and, consequently, are confident in making their choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Occasionally, some pupils do not focus when work is not interesting or when expectations of what pupils can achieve lack ambition. A small minority of pupils exhibit low-level disruption and off-task behaviour.
- School records show that the number of behaviour incidents recorded has increased because leaders have, rightly, raised their expectations. It has taken some pupils some time to adapt to the raised bar.
- While the proportions of exclusions are high, recent strategies by leaders and a determined effort to ensure improved behaviour of some pupils have led to a reduction in the numbers of fixed-term exclusions. However, leaders have permanently excluded more pupils than average when compared with other schools. A disproportionate

number of pupils given fixed-term exclusions are disadvantaged.

- Despite the efforts of leaders, and improvements in overall attendance, the absence of disadvantaged pupils and a few of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains high. This is in contrast with the strong attendance of other pupils. Pupils who attend alternative provision do not attend regularly enough.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves around the school in an orderly manner. They wear their school uniform with pride. When reminded of the expectations around school, pupils respond quickly. Neither staff nor pupils tolerate the use of derogatory or discriminatory language. Older pupils reported to inspectors that they had seen an improvement in behaviour since they started in Year 7.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, there has been too much variability in pupils' achievement across subjects by the time they leave key stage 4. Although improving, pupils' workbooks show that some teachers in some subjects are still making too little demand on pupils.
- Since the school became an academy, the rates of progress of groups of pupils have steadily improved. Over the last year, there have been further improvements in the progress of pupils currently in the school. Disparities that remain in rates of progress between subjects and groups are because of the inconsistencies in teaching.
- The proportion of Year 11 leavers in 2015 making at least adequate progress in English and mathematics from their starting points, although improved on the previous year, was below average. However, few pupils, including the disadvantaged, made greater than expected progress. In 2016, the least able and most able disadvantaged pupils made at least as much progress as similar pupils nationally overall, particularly in mathematics and across most English Baccalaureate subjects. However, the progress of the average-ability disadvantaged pupils has been weaker and slower to improve.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school across all year groups have made further gains in the last year although this is not consistent across all subjects. For example, the difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others across key stage 3 has diminished and in some cases have been eliminated, especially in English. However, there remains some inconsistency; differences remain greater in geography and Spanish, for example, in some year groups.
- Achievement in some subjects over time has been stronger. These are generally subjects for which fewer pupils have been entered for GCSE qualifications, for example, business studies, health and social care, and dance. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well across a wide range of subjects.
- The achievement of the most able pupils overall in 2016 was in line with that of similar pupils nationally, and slightly better for the few most able disadvantaged pupils. The most able pupils currently in the school make generally good progress, although there is scope for greater challenge for the most able pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities over time and currently in the school make good progress because of the quality support they receive. Those pupils who enter Year 7 not having met the expected standard in English and/or

mathematics are also supported well to make good progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership in 16 to 19 study programmes is strong and students make good progress.
- Students who took GCSE English in Years 12 and 13, because they did not pass in Year 11, all passed and the majority of those taking GCSE mathematics passed.
- Disadvantaged students who stay on in 16 to 19 study programmes achieve at similar levels to other students nationally. The small numbers of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make similar progress to their peers.
- Teaching is good and meets students' needs effectively. Teachers promote independent study and provide opportunities for students to share their points of view. Students are usually provided with appropriately challenging activities. Consequently, they enjoy learning and their attendance is higher than the rest of the school.
- Students are safe and well supported. They appreciate the independence and responsibilities they are given, both personally and academically, and believe they have ownership of their study.
- Students provide good role models for the younger pupils, taking lessons seriously and treating each other and staff with respect. Students deliver assemblies to pupils in key stages 3 and 4, demonstrating their contribution to school.
- Study programmes are well planned and meet students' needs. In response to feedback from students, a range of courses is available. Students benefit from work experience arrangements.
- Students receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. A high proportion of students move on to attend university. Year 13 students identify the high-quality support and advice they receive when making decisions about their next steps.

School details

Unique reference number	140547
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10031940

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,160
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	106
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Jayne Crawshaw
Headteacher	Dale Barrowclough
Telephone number	0114 234 8805
Website	www.forgevalleysheffield.org
Email address	enquiries@forgevalley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- This is the first inspection of the school since it converted to academy status. Forge Valley School became an academy in January 2015 and is sponsored by the Tapton Academy Trust.
- The school uses four alternative providers, Not In School, Endeavour, Hillsborough College and Barnsley College.

- Thirty-four pupils are supported in the on-site integrated resource centre.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website and complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- An initial inspection visit to the school took place on 25 and 26 April 2017. Two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors undertook a further visit to the school on 6 June 2017 to gather additional evidence.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 42 lessons; a number of these observations took place with a member of the senior leadership team. Lessons covered a wide range of subjects and year groups. Inspectors visited Years 7, 10 and 11 tutorial sessions. Pupils’ behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes was observed by inspectors.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils’ work in lessons and in a check of pupils’ books.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, including those with responsibility for safeguarding, with teachers, and four members of the governing body. An inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Tapton Trust. An inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed 183 responses made to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also analysed the views of 56 members of staff through online inspection survey responses.
- Inspectors gained the views of pupils from the 23 responses to the online pupil questionnaire. Pupils met formally with inspectors on two separate occasions. Inspectors also conducted many informal discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including information about self-evaluation and action plans, safeguarding, outcomes, teaching and behaviour, and the minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Deano Wright, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Lesley Butcher	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Natasha Greenough	Ofsted Inspector
Sai Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Riozzi	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Nick Whittaker	Her Majesty’s Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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