

# Forest Academy

Bridle Road, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey CR0 8HQ

## Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching are not consistently strong across year groups and subjects in key stage 2. Leaders' actions are securing improvements. However, these are not embedded. Teaching requires improvement.
- Weak teaching in the past means that some pupils have gaps in their learning, particularly in mathematics. Teaching across key stage 2 has not enabled pupils to reach their potential.
- Over time, teaching has not catered sufficiently well to the needs of different groups of pupils. Although diminishing, differences persist in the outcomes of boys and girls.
- In the 2016 and 2017 key stage 2 reading and mathematics assessments, Year 6 pupils made much less progress compared to the national average. The progress of boys and disadvantaged pupils was also well below national figures.
- Teaching does not expect enough from the most able pupils. In the 2017 key stage 1 and 2 statutory assessments, too few pupils attained the highest standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. Similarly, very few children exceed the age-expected standard by the end of the Reception Year, compared to other schools.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has wasted no time in raising aspirations. He has the full backing of the school community.
- Leaders' actions to improve teaching and raise standards are well targeted. Pupils in key stage 2 are making stronger progress than they have done in the past. They are starting to catch up in their learning.
- Effective teaching in key stage 1 promotes good gains in pupils' learning. Pupils' attainment is strong, including in phonics.
- Pupils behave well and attend school regularly.
- The curriculum makes strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are kind, reflective and considerate.
- Leaders and staff go to great lengths to promote pupils' well-being. Pupils feel safe, well cared for and enjoy learning. As one pupil said: 'I can't say what I like best about Forest Academy because I like everything.'
- The early years is well led. Leaders and staff ensure that children typically make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.

## Full report

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

- In key stage 2, leaders should ensure that teaching and pupils' outcomes are consistently good, and that all groups of pupils fully overcome their previous underachievement.
- Across the school, including in early years, leaders and staff should ensure that the most able pupils attain the standard of which they are capable, by:
  - raising expectations of what most-able pupils know and can do
  - providing teaching which routinely extends pupils' thinking and knowledge.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher leads with determination and vision. Together with his team of skilled senior leaders, he has taken decisive action to reverse the decline in the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders' work has a relentless focus on pupils' well-being. Leaders have taken effective steps to promote high standards of behaviour. The school is a caring and harmonious community, where pupils and teachers concentrate on learning. Parents and carers appreciate how leaders and staff strive to support and nurture every pupil.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils receive plentiful opportunities to develop their understanding of British values and learn about the world. Pupils spoke confidently about how the school ensures that everyone is included, and that different cultures and faiths are valued and celebrated. Displays around the school highlight pupils' achievements. This contributes well to the inclusive ethos.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strength and weaknesses. Their actions are focused sharply on raising standards and tackling the legacy of inconsistent teaching in key stage 2. While leaders' work is increasingly bringing about the necessary improvements, it is not embedded in some classes and subjects. Over time, pupils do not make good gains in their learning in key stage 2. Pupils, particularly the most able, are capable of more.
- Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' progress and hold teachers to account rigorously. They match this with personalised training and guidance to support staff to develop their teaching skills. Leaders monitor the impact of this support carefully to ensure that it makes a positive difference to how well pupils learn. For example, training on phonics teaching has led to improved reading outcomes in key stage 1.
- Staff share leaders' ambitions for the school and its pupils. The headteacher and his team have worked successfully to raise staff morale. Staff feel valued. They appreciate how leaders challenge and support them to improve their teaching.
- While leaders have rightly focused on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, they have given equal emphasis to developing a broad and stimulating curriculum. Across a range of subjects, including science, pupils are increasingly able to acquire and deepen their subject-related knowledge and vocabulary. Nevertheless, some aspects of leaders' work to improve the curriculum are at an early stage. For example, key stage 2 pupils do not routinely benefit from effective teaching in modern foreign languages.
- Leaders and teachers provide pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as trips to Kew Gardens and after-school clubs. These experiences enhance pupils' learning and foster their positive attitudes to school.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well led. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that these pupils' needs are understood and planned for, without delay. Additional funding is spent effectively. These pupils receive

high-quality support, particularly in relation to their emotional and social needs.

- Leaders and governors ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has a positive impact on their academic outcomes and personal development. Although differences remain in some subjects or year groups, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving quickly.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary sports and physical education (PE) funding to increase pupils' participation in exercise, including inter-school athletic competitions. In order to make sure that the impact of this funding is sustainable, staff work alongside specialist sports coaches to deliver PE classes and develop their teaching skills.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors and trustees know the school well. They provide effective support and challenge for leaders. They recognise that pupils' outcomes need to be better in key stage 2, and are now holding leaders to account with appropriate rigour. They have set leaders ambitious targets, and ask probing questions about how well different groups of pupils learn.
- The chief executive officer visits the school regularly. He works effectively with senior leaders to evaluate the impact of their work and identify priorities for improvement.
- While governors have confidence in the work of the headteacher and his team, they are ambitious for rapid improvement. They have recently appointed external advisers to support the headteacher in tackling the remaining weaknesses in the quality of education.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong culture of safeguarding permeates all aspects of school life. Leaders and staff are unwavering in their work to promote pupils' welfare. Close partnerships with external agencies, together with high levels of vigilance, mean that vulnerable pupils receive timely and well-targeted help and support.
- Leaders are proactive in working with families to identify and resolve any issues that may have an impact on their child's welfare. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe and well looked after.
- Staff are knowledgeable and well trained in safeguarding issues, including their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. They know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's safety.
- Leaders respond effectively to safeguarding risks that are prevalent in the local community. For example, they have worked closely with the police to raise pupils' awareness of risks related to gang activity and social media. Pupils told inspectors that staff provide them with helpful information on how to keep themselves safe.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- In key stage 2, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across subjects and classes. Some teaching does not take account of pupils' needs or demand enough from pupils, particularly those who are most able.
- Although leaders and teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils know and can do, these improvements are uneven across key stage 2.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new mathematics curriculum. Teaching now provides pupils with increasingly well-planned tasks and resources to develop their calculation skills and understanding of number. While improvements are variable, this new approach is helping to address gaps in pupils' learning. However, teaching in key stage 2 does not cater equally well for other aspects of mathematics, such as shape and measure.
- In reading, teaching now gives greater weight to the development of pupils' comprehension skills. Teachers increasingly check that pupils understand what they read, and provide texts to broaden pupils' vocabulary. On occasions, teachers plan activities that are not targeted sufficiently on strengthening pupils' reading ability. Leaders have identified this and intend to make further adjustments to the school's approaches to the teaching of reading. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of this work.
- Over time, the teaching of writing has typically been stronger than reading and mathematics. Teachers give careful thought to topics that will enthuse pupils, particularly boys, about writing. Pupils have frequent opportunities to write for different purposes, drawing on their learning in subjects, such as science and geography, to stimulate their ideas. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge. They check that pupils understand the main features of different genres and encourage them to include them in their work. However, teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work vary between classes in key stage 2.
- In key stage 1, teaching typically caters well for pupils' needs and abilities. Well-chosen resources, including technology, contribute effectively to the quality of pupils' learning, including the most able pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Phonics teaching is of high quality. Adults check that pupils say sounds correctly and use their phonics knowledge to read unknown words accurately. Adults support pupils to identify common spelling patterns and apply this knowledge in their own writing.
- Teachers provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning. This stimulates pupils' thinking and strengthens pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils collaborate well and are keen to share ideas with one another.
- Staff have a secure understanding of the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants typically encourage pupils to discuss their ideas and work out how to be successful in a task.
- The teaching of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education provides effective opportunities for pupils to understand and explore issues related to their well-being. Tasks are well planned and enable pupils to discuss ideas with maturity.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their learning. They are courteous and kind to each other. Older pupils enjoy looking after younger pupils in the playground. Staff act as good role models in the way they speak to and listen to pupils. They praise pupils frequently to build their confidence.
- Pupils know the different forms bullying can take. They say that unkind behaviour is rare. As one younger pupil put it: 'We are taught not to be the bully, but to be the person who stands up for the one being bullied.' School records show that bullying is infrequent and that leaders manage incidents effectively.
- Pupils feel secure and well cared for. They appreciate the different options the school provides for them to raise their concerns, such as 'worry boxes'. Pupils told inspectors that adults are 'very kind' and 'always find a way to sort out our problems'.
- Leaders and staff know pupils exceptionally well. They are alert to any circumstances that may adversely affect pupils' welfare. Working sensitively with families, staff anticipate when pupils need additional pastoral support and ensure that pupils receive it without delay.
- Through the curriculum, pupils have ample opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles. Year 6 pupils taking part in 'Health Week' were keen to tell inspectors what they had learned. They explained how they were applying their learning in their own lives, for example, by cutting down on sugary drinks and eating more vegetables.
- Pupils appreciate how leaders and staff listen to their views on what the school could do better. For example, leaders involve pupils in their checks on the curriculum and teaching. Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility, such as taking lunchboxes back to classrooms at the end of lunchtime. They were proud of the way their contribution was helpful to their peers and kept the school tidy.
- In classrooms, pupils typically try hard and are keen to do their best. On occasions, pupils become distracted and struggle to maintain their concentration. Older pupils sometimes require additional reminders from adults to refocus on their learning.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils conduct themselves in a sensible and considerate manner throughout the day, including in the breakfast club.
- At playtimes, staff supervise pupils carefully. When playtimes finish, staff ensure that pupils line up quickly and return to classrooms with minimum levels of fuss.
- A small proportion of pupils, particularly boys, experience difficulties managing their behaviour. In 2016, the proportion of fixed-term exclusions was high compared to other schools. In response, leaders set up 'the Discovery Zone', a space dedicated to nurturing pupils' well-being and self-esteem. Pupils who attend benefit from bespoke programmes of support to help them manage their emotions, such as what they can do

if they feel angry or overwhelmed. This approach has proved effective in improving pupils' behaviour, with the number of serious incidents reducing over time.

- Leaders and staff use a range of well-chosen strategies to reduce absence levels. For example, pupils receive rewards and certificates to celebrate improved or regular attendance. Pupils' attendance is similar to other schools nationally.
- No group of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, are disadvantaged by poor attendance. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to identify and support pupils who are not attending school as often as they should. Very few pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Leaders and staff continually seek the most effective ways to maintain high standards of behaviour. They involved pupils in devising a new behaviour policy, with a focus on ensuring that excellent behaviour is recognised and rewarded. Pupils told inspectors that this motivates them to behave well. Nevertheless, on occasions, a few pupils still require reminders from adults to behave as well as the school expects.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Although improving, pupils' progress during key stage 2 requires improvement over time.
- In two out of the last three years, Year 6 pupils made much less progress during key stage 2 compared to their peers nationally. This was particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and boys. Not enough pupils attained the expected standard by the end of Year 6, particularly middle-attaining pupils.
- Leaders have taken decisive and effective steps to halt the decline in pupils' outcomes across key stage 2. This year, school assessment information and work in pupils' books show a clear picture of improvement. Pupils make stronger progress than previous cohorts. Leaders and staff keep a close eye on middle-attaining pupils so they do not fall behind. As a result, attainment is rising. Nevertheless, more work is required before pupils make up fully for their previous underachievement.
- Differences in how well different groups attain are diminishing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. In most year groups, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes are broadly similar to those of their peers. An increasing proportion of disadvantaged pupils attain standards expected for their age. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities typically make good gains in their learning, particularly in their personal development. However, differences in outcomes between boys and girls persist, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Over time, the most able pupils do not attain to the best of their abilities, particularly in reading and mathematics. Too few pupils attained the highest standards in the key stage 1 and 2 assessments in 2016 and 2017. This was also the case for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Standards in key stage 1 are typically strong. In 2017, the proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the expected standard was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books and school assessment information indicate that outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 are strong.

- Older pupils enjoy reading, and choose books that challenge them. As one Year 6 pupil commented: 'I try to read books to help me learn new words and find out more about the world.' Staff ensure that younger pupils read books that are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. This successfully builds pupils' reading accuracy and fluency.
- Pupils attain well in phonics. Leaders have taken effective steps to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and boys. These groups of pupils have secure phonics knowledge and attain as well as their peers.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leaders have an accurate picture of the quality of education in the early years. They are quick to identify weaknesses, and act promptly to ensure that children's good outcomes are maintained. For example, they have strengthened systems to check children's attainment when they join the school. This means that leaders and staff have an accurate view of children's progress over time.
- The early years classrooms are stimulating and safe environments, both indoors and outside. Adults give due attention to how space and resources are organised to maintain children's welfare. Children are safe and secure. Staff provide children with clear routines and guidance to ensure that they play and learn together sensibly.
- Teaching is typically strong. Staff plan imaginative activities that appeal to children's interests. They ask questions to check and probe children's understanding. Staff help children to sustain their concentration and try hard with the activities on offer.
- Children are prepared well for their learning in Year 1. Teachers plan tasks with a strong focus on developing pupils' early reading, writing and mathematics knowledge. For example, an adult skilfully explored children's understanding of number by helping them to use counters to double and halve different amounts.
- Effective teaching ensures that children acquire secure phonics knowledge at an early stage. Children use their knowledge confidently to sound out and read words accurately. Children are excited about reading. They read enthusiastically to inspectors and showed how they used 'their sounds' when they got stuck on a word.
- Children's outcomes in the early years have improved markedly over the last two years. From starting points that are lower than those typical for their age, children make consistently strong progress. In 2017, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was broadly in line with other schools. Children's work and assessment information indicate that a high proportion of children are now attaining the age-expected standard in all areas of learning.
- Leaders and teachers have prioritised improving the outcomes for disadvantaged children. This work has paid dividends. Through well-targeted additional support, a much higher proportion of disadvantaged children are attaining the standard expected for their age. The outcomes of disadvantaged children are now as good as their peers.
- Although children's outcomes are good overall, very few children exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. The provision provides insufficient experiences to stretch children's knowledge and understanding, including while children play and explore in the environment.



## School details

Unique reference number	140113
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10048054

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Keith Robinson
Principal	Wayne Cooper
Telephone number	020 8777 2808
Website	<a href="http://www.forestacademy.org.uk">www.forestacademy.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@forestacademy.org.uk">info@forestacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	29–30 April 2015

## Information about this school

- Forest Academy is an average-sized primary school. The number of pupils in each year group varies considerably across the school. Typically, there are two classes in each year group. The school can accommodate up to three forms of entry in each year group.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is high compared to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below that found in other schools.
- The school is part of The Synaptic Trust. Governance is provided through a board of trustees and a local governing body.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2017.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms in every year group. Many of these visits were carried out jointly with senior leaders. A wide range of subjects were seen, including English, mathematics and PSHE.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work during visits to classrooms and in a meeting with senior leaders. Inspectors also spent time talking to pupils about their experiences at the school and listening to pupils from Year 1 and Year 6 read.
- School documentation related to safeguarding, pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching was reviewed. Inspectors also held meetings with leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the impact of their work to improve pupils' outcomes, behaviour and well-being.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, including those at the early stages of their teaching career.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally before and after school and took account of the 13 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. This included six written comments. Inspectors also reviewed the school's own surveys of the views of pupils and parents.
- Inspectors met with governors, the chair of the trust board and the chief executive officer. They also met with external advisers who support leaders with school improvement.

## Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Birtles	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector

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