

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



13 February 2019

Amanda Mordey
Principal
Forest Oak School
Windward Way
Smith's Wood
Birmingham
West Midlands
B36 0UE

Dear Mrs Mordey

Short inspection of Forest Oak School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019 with Sarah Ashley, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since Forest Oak School was judged to be outstanding in February 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, together with other leaders and governors, have ensured that the strengths of the school have been sustained and built upon.

Forest Oak is a relaxed and friendly school. My colleagues and I were made to feel very welcome by all staff and pupils. Pupils are confident, resilient, respectful and invariably polite. They are proud of their school and this was evident in their behaviour in lessons and at social times and in their attitude to work.

Outstanding teaching provides pupils with the necessary skills to make exceptional progress, not only in academic areas, but also in personal and social development. Teachers build on previous learning and ensure that lessons stimulate pupils' learning and enjoyment. Visual timetables and resources are firmly established in each classroom, enabling pupils to settle quickly into lessons.

Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptionally warm and supportive. Staff use a balance of fun and firm discipline to maintain good classroom order and any minor behavioural disruptions are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Behaviour around school is exemplary. During our observations and discussions with pupils they demonstrated an overwhelming sense of pride about their school and were eager to chat about their likes and dislikes and their future aspirations.

Pupils clearly enjoy attending school and in particular the reward system that you have introduced enthusiastically. They enjoy looking forward to their class prizes as well as their individual shopping vouchers. Pupils feel that their contributions are valued. They show a great deal of respect and tolerance towards each other and go out of their way to offer support to peers when faced with distress or anxiety.

Parents are very supportive of school leaders and staff. Almost all parents who shared their views with inspectors were grateful of the provision and the progress that their children are making. Parents feel assured that their child is safe and happy and 'now enjoys coming to school'.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong safeguarding culture is evident at Forest Oak School. You and the leadership team have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and take account of the needs of pupils within the school. Protecting pupils and keeping them safe is a key priority for everyone.

Clear protocols are in place for the start and end of school days. Key staff on duty ensure that pupils arriving into school use the appropriate entrance for their year group. This ensures that all pupils feel welcome, safe and calm at the beginning of each day.

Safeguarding training is regularly provided for all staff and members of the governing body. All staff are aware of what to do and how to report matters if they have a concern about a pupil. There are clear protocols in place to ensure that issues are resolved quickly when that is possible. Throughout the school pupils are taught about the potential risks and dangers they might face as they grow up, including a workshop session on sexual health.

Logs of behavioural incidents and analysis of pupils' behaviour show that the use of restrictive physical interventions has significantly reduced due to the work of the behaviour and welfare staff team with pupils and their families.

Inspection findings

- The relocation of the sixth-form provision to the local college has had a significant and positive impact on student's learning. Through interacting with mainstream peers students feel better prepared for their next stage of life. Led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership team, the sixth form enables students to access high-quality education in a safe, controlled environment.
- A wider range of courses are on offer to sixth-form students. There is now a balance of academic and vocational options. Students are able to study for GCSE/Functional Skills qualifications in English, mathematics and computing and ASDAN qualifications in hairdressing, cookery, gardening and expressive arts.
- Successful modular courses enable students to work to their strengths while

providing the appropriate support to develop their areas of weakness.

- Members of the governing body have been proactive in ensuring that the school continues to move forwards. They feel passionate about pupils' education and well-being and are wholly supportive of the headteacher and leadership team.
- Governors have embarked on a rigorous training package, supported by the local authority, in an effort to provide the necessary skills and knowledge to support the school. Training already undertaken has included special educational needs and disability awareness, health and safety, equality and diversity and safeguarding. Governors have not yet accessed external training on understanding assessment and progress data.
- A strong emphasis on attendance is promoted throughout school. Initiatives introduced by school leaders have had a significant impact on reducing absence. Funding has been spent wisely on providing additional transport and a daily breakfast club.
- Pupils and their families are well supported by school staff for medical needs, ensuring that transitions between school and home are positive and smooth.
- School places a strong emphasis on promoting good mental health for all pupils. A range of mindfulness activities are provided on a daily basis, including physical activities such as yoga, walking and listening to calming music.
- Close working with an established educational resource provider has resulted in artwork provided by pupils being incorporated into a range of resources, for which a pupil has received recognition.
- While the majority of staff spoken to felt supported by senior leaders and were happy in their role, some staff raised concerns about aspects of management and about the behaviour that a very small minority of pupils demonstrate.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors continue their training to improve their knowledge and skills
- relationships with some members of staff are strengthened

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Solihull. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kim Ellis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and senior leaders to discuss progress since the last inspection, the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. We discussed the key lines of enquiry and agreed an inspection plan for the day.

My colleague and I spoke with several members of staff about the curriculum, assessment, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' welfare and attendance. I met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, the designated governor and lead for safeguarding. I also met with a representative from the local authority.

We observed learning in parts of lessons with members of your leadership team. We also looked at examples of pupils' work from all key stages. We met with pupils and observed behaviour at lunchtime.

We reviewed a range of documents provided by school, including the self-evaluation, performance management of staff, local authority visit records, minutes from governing body meetings and records relating to safeguarding. We considered the seven responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and 62 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.