

Forge Valley School

Wood Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S6 5HG

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership, management and governance have considerably improved the school's effectiveness since the last inspection. The enthusiasm and commitment of the inspirational headteacher and his leadership team are unwavering. Expectations are high, and the school continues to improve.
- Governors are knowledgeable and carry out their duties successfully. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Teaching is good. Leaders have addressed previous weaknesses in teaching effectively. As a result, most pupils in the school are now making good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- Strong support is in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and this is helping them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have taken successful action to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the gap in progress made between this group of pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive. There is a strong culture of support in the school.
- As a result of effective leadership and good teaching, sixth-form students' learning, personal development and outcomes are good. Careers guidance in the sixth form is strong.
- The curriculum is effective and provides very good opportunities for pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They develop their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through assemblies and within their lessons.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils generally conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school. They are confident, polite and courteous to one another and to staff. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning.
- Leaders have improved pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Records of behaviour are thorough. However, leaders are not accurately evaluating the effectiveness of their actions.
- Overall, school attendance is above the national average. However, despite the intensive work of the attendance team, disadvantaged pupils remain more likely to be absent than their peers.
- A small amount of variability remains in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in some subjects. This leads to an element of unevenness in the progress of pupils, including that of the disadvantaged pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further reduce any remaining variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers consistently plan learning activities that challenge all pupils effectively, including the disadvantaged pupils.
- Continue to improve the rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils.
- Further develop the work of analysing patterns and trends of pupils' behaviour so that leaders can more sharply identify actions to be taken and accurately evaluate the effectiveness of their actions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior leaders provide strong leadership. Leaders have systematically addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They set high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. Leaders have established a positive and ambitious climate in which pupils can thrive. As a result, they have improved the effectiveness of the school.
- Senior and middle leaders, as well as teaching and support staff, are very appreciative of the quality of personalised training and coaching available to improve their practice. The professional development programme provided by the trust includes opportunities to work with other schools and has a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Training and support are closely linked to an effective programme of self-evaluation. There are very clear processes in place to monitor the quality of teaching. Leaders take decisive action, when needed, to eradicate weak teaching. Consequently, the quality of teaching is now good.
- Leaders and governors have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. School leaders regularly analyse pupils' progress in each subject and can accurately identify pupils who need extra support. For example, the school uses after-school sessions, when teachers provide extra teaching on specific topics that have not been mastered well enough in class. As a result of the leaders' actions, most pupils make good progress.
- The trust has provided effective support for the school since the last inspection. Middle leaders attend trust network meetings and training events to share best practice. Consequently, middle leadership of the school is improving.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding, including pupil premium, catch-up and funding to support pupils with SEND, is used effectively. They evaluate the effect of the school's intervention programme to make sure that their actions are making a difference. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving in most year groups and gaps with their peers and other pupils nationally are diminishing. The progress of pupils with SEND is also improving.
- Senior leaders continuously review the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils and reflects their interests. Leaders have made sensible revisions to the range of subjects available to pupils. They ensure that learning in subjects is enhanced effectively through the wide range of sporting and after-school activities on offer.
- Leaders work effectively with the trust to build senior leadership capacity, strengthen middle leadership and subject expertise further, and check standards. The trust provides this support without compromising the school's distinctive ethos. As a result, leaders at all levels are now better equipped to ensure the school's improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the positive relationships that are prevalent across the school community. Throughout the year, pupils take part in a range of fund-raising activities for a number of charities. The weekly form-time activities and themed assemblies for all pupils in Years 7 to 11 provide opportunities to raise awareness of moral and ethical issues, as well as to

develop understanding of different faiths and beliefs. As a result, pupils are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain and respect diversity.

- The school provides a comprehensive programme of careers guidance for pupils in all year groups. Pupils have access to a careers officer and have explored a range of training and employment routes through the curriculum and during 'drop-down' days. Pupils also benefit from visits to local employers and from joint projects with local universities. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how different careers require different skills and qualifications.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are passionately committed to continuous whole-school improvement.
- The governing body is ably led by an experienced chair of the governing body and includes very skilled members with a wide range of knowledge and expertise. They provide effective challenge to school leaders at all levels.
- Governors are actively involved in school life and they are aligned to areas of the school that best match their areas of expertise. They play a vital role in developing the school further.
- Governors frequently visit the school and regularly evaluate all aspects of school performance. They scrutinise school performance information, including safeguarding records. Consequently, they know well the strengths and areas of development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff have appropriate training, for example in awareness of child sexual exploitation. As a result, staff know what to do should there be a safeguarding concern about a pupil. Staff act quickly and appropriately to share any concerns they may have. The designated safeguarding leader acts on all concerns swiftly.
- Records about safeguarding and child protection concerns are thorough. They show that leaders take appropriate and comprehensive action as it is needed. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive additional support. Leaders make and record thorough checks on the adults who work at the school.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and know what to do to stay safe, including when online. Leaders have ensured that there is an effective internet filtering system in place to protect all pupils and it is regularly monitored. Pupils also say that although unusual, bullying sometimes does happen; when it does, teachers and leaders tackle it quickly. Inspection evidence confirms this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved considerably since the previous inspection, and is now consistently strong in almost all subjects in the school. As a result, most pupils now make good progress.
- The positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils make a clear contribution to the quality of learning in the vast majority of lessons. The work in most pupils' books is well presented and shows that they take pride in their learning.
- Arrangements to assess pupils' progress are effective. Teachers regularly check on pupils' progress during lessons. In the vast majority of pupils' workbooks, in line with school policy, teachers' feedback ensures that pupils know how to improve their work. Consequently, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, develop their knowledge and understanding.
- There are detailed systems in place for checking the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders use the school's teaching, learning and assessment policy to identify strengths and areas for further development for each teacher. As a result, senior and middle leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching in each subject area.
- Teaching assistants are very effective in their support for pupils' learning because teachers and teaching assistants work together well, and they regularly check on the progress of individual pupils. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that teachers are aware of individual pupils' needs and how best to support these pupils. Consequently, teaching is adapted to make sure that pupils with SEND make good progress.
- There is a strong promotion of reading across the school. Pupils read regularly, and they told inspectors that they enjoy reading. When inspectors listened to pupils read, the pupils were happy and confident to read out loud, with fluency and were able to explain the context of their book in detail.
- Most teachers use their subject knowledge to plan activities that deepen pupils' understanding. Careful planning enables most pupils to work at an appropriate level, moving on to more challenging work when they are ready. However, in some lessons, teachers set activities that either lack challenge or are not engaging enough. As a result, some pupils in these lessons, including the disadvantaged pupils, make weaker progress and take less pride in their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through the school's taught curriculum, form-time activities and 'drop-down' days. Senior leaders coordinate a carefully planned and comprehensive programme of themed assemblies. Pupils are aware of different cultures and faiths and make regular visits to different places of worship. Pupils display respectful and tolerant attitudes towards

each other and are keen to get involved in fund-raising activities for charities. Pupils are reflective and understand the responsibilities of being good citizens.

- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and how to avoid potential dangers when using social media. Consequently, pupils feel safe and are confident to report any concerns to an adult. Most pupils, parents and carers, who made their views known, said that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- Pupils appreciate the impartial careers advice and guidance they receive. This is helping pupils in Year 11 to think carefully about possible career options and raising their aspirations. As a result, over time, the proportion of pupils continuing into further education, employment and training, has been either in line with or above national averages.
- Leaders ensure that the welfare of the small number of pupils who attend the school's alternative education provision is of a high priority. There is effective communication between school staff and the providers. Pupils follow a personalised curriculum that is appropriate to their needs. Consequently, the pupils who are educated in the school's alternative education provision are well cared for and behave well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, pupils are happy at school and proud to be members of its community. They report that the school has improved considerably in the last couple of years. Pupils wear their uniform with pride, respect the learning environment and are rarely late for lessons. Pupils move between lessons with purpose and in an orderly and well-behaved manner.
- Senior leaders have recently reinforced the high expectations of behaviour. Both pupils and staff report that behaviour has improved. Fixed-term exclusions have been below national averages over the last two years and the number is reducing further. Leaders' systematic approach to behaviour is effective in reducing further the number of incidents of poor behaviour. Staff deal with any incidents quickly and efficiently. Pupils are clear about the consequences and sanctions associated with specific actions.
- There are very few incidents of bullying and when it does occur, staff deal with it appropriately. Inspection evidence and the views of staff, pupils and most parents confirm this.
- Most pupils show very positive attitudes towards their own learning. They attend regularly, and the school's overall attendance rate is above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND has improved because of the school's concerted efforts to work more closely with individual pupils and their families. However, despite the hard work of the attendance team, disadvantaged pupils remain more likely to be absent than their peers. Leaders are currently restructuring this team of staff to further enhance its effectiveness.
- Typically, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well in lessons. However, occasionally, when learning is not matched to pupils' starting points and abilities, a few pupils become less actively engaged with the tasks.
- Leaders record and monitor the behaviour of pupils regularly and produce detailed

analyses of the different types of behaviours. However, leaders acknowledge that they need to make some further improvements in this area, to make the evaluation of the effect of their actions on the behaviour of pupils more accurate.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As a result of leaders' actions, the progress pupils make has improved. By the end of Year 11 in 2018, the progress pupils made across a wide range of subjects was broadly in line with national averages, a considerable improvement to the previous year, where progress was below national averages.
- In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages and history, results in Year 11 in 2018 were disappointing. Weaker teaching in the past in these subjects had a negative effect on pupils' achievement over time. However, as a result of decisive and effective actions by leaders, pupils' achievement in these subjects has greatly improved. Current school assessment information and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are now achieving well in these subjects.
- Inspection evidence, work in pupils' books and school assessment information show that, from their starting points, current pupils in Years 10 and 11 are continuing to make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Since the last inspection, the progress of the most able pupils has continued to improve. At the end of Year 11 in 2018, the progress of this group of pupils improved considerably compared to that achieved by pupils of similar ability in 2017. Inspection evidence, scrutiny of pupils' workbooks and school assessment information indicate that this improvement is continuing for current pupils.
- The progress disadvantaged pupils make from their starting points is improving and the gap in progress and attainment between this group and their peers and other pupils nationally is diminishing. In 2018, the progress of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 11 improved considerably compared to 2017. Inspection evidence indicates that the progress of this group of pupils continues to improve further.
- Pupils with SEND are also making strong progress from their starting points in most subjects as a result of effective teaching and tailored support.
- Destination information for pupils leaving Year 11 shows that they are being well prepared to move into further education, employment or training. Leaders ensure that all pupils receive high-quality careers education, advice and guidance.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Since the last inspection, leaders have ensured that sixth-form students' learning, personal development provision and outcomes continue to be good. Students achieve well. This is as a result of good teaching and effective leadership. The new sixth-form leader has a clear vision, high expectations and a very strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this area.
- Leaders have planned all aspects of the 16 to 19 study programme carefully and students follow coherent programmes of study. Outcomes in academic subjects are at

least in line with national averages.

- In 2018, there was a dip in students' outcomes on applied courses. However, as a result of strong sixth-form leadership, the outcomes of students on these courses are improving. School assessment information and inspection evidence show that students currently in both Years 12 and 13 make strong progress and outcomes are improving.
- Disadvantaged students and students with SEND are supported effectively and make good progress from their starting points. These groups of students achieve as well as their peers.
- Sixth-form teaching is good. Typically, expectations and the level of challenge are high for all students. Students demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They are polite and respectful to each other, attend regularly and behave maturely.
- The small number of students who did not gain a GCSE pass in English and mathematics in Year 11 receive additional support and teaching to help them make successful progress towards securing a good pass.
- Sixth-form students enjoy supporting younger pupils as mentors. They also have dedicated tutor sessions to track their own progress and to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Students spoken with said that mental health is discussed openly, and staff support them to explore ways to reduce and manage stress.
- Students speak very positively about the quality of provision and the support they receive. The quality of careers guidance and advice provided to students is very strong. Aspirations are high. For example, the number of students with offers to join Russell group universities has doubled this year compared to last year.
- The school offers work experience to all students, but only about one third of students currently take up the opportunity. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to improve this part of the provision and are already taking appropriate actions so that students are better prepared for future employment.

School details

Unique reference number	140547
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10089056

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,243
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jayne Crawshaw
Headteacher	Dale Barrowclough
Telephone number	01142 348 805
Website	www.forgevalleysheffield.org/
Email address	enquiries@forgevalley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 April 2017 and 6 June 2017

Information about this school

- Forge Valley school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The majority of pupils are White British.
- The school converted to an academy in January 2015 and joined the Tapton School Academy Trust. The work of the trust is overseen by a board of trustees. Some responsibilities are delegated to the local governing body. The trust supports three secondary schools and five primary schools.
- Forge Valley School hosts a resource base for 25 pupils with needs on the autism spectrum. Admissions to the provision are controlled by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than

the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is also above the national average.
- The school currently uses Endeavour, Boys and Girls Club South Yorkshire, Blended Learning, Heely City Farm and Youth Association South Yorkshire, as alternative providers of education for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 57 lessons covering most curriculum areas and most teaching staff. Some of these visits took place with senior leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' workbooks and questioned pupils about their learning. Inspectors also visited form learning time and observed an assembly for Year 9 pupils.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, heads of departments and members of the wider body of staff, including newly qualified teachers.
- Discussions took place with the chief executive officer and the director of standards from Tapton School Academy Trust. Inspectors also met with the chair and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils from all year groups, including students from the sixth form, about what it is like to be a young person at the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors took into account the 190 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 136 free text responses. They also analysed the 60 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documents, including school development plans, governing body minutes of meetings, school surveys of pupils' opinions, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.

Inspection team

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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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