

Inspection of Forest Academy

Bury Road, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 0FP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to Forest Academy. They say that their school is a happy place where everyone gets on well together. Pupils speak excitedly about the subjects they study. They enjoy choosing books from the virtual library, exploring the woodland area, visiting the environmental garden, and using the sensory play area. Pupils say teachers are helpful and make learning enjoyable. Nearly every parent who gave their views agreed. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'I am really happy with everything that goes on at Forest Academy and have nothing but praise for all the staff.'

Pupils feel safe at school. They use the school's mantra of 'be kind, be safe, be responsible' to guide how they should conduct themselves. Pupils can explain what they would do if they had any concerns or worries. They say that bullying rarely happens at their school. If it did occur, they are confident that adults would sort out any problems quickly.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils work together well. They are attentive and listen to the opinions of others while working in class. Pupils are polite and courteous to those who visit the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have improved every aspect of the school since its previous inspection. There is a strong and cohesive team of senior leaders. Leaders know the school well. They understand where the school is successful and what they need to do to make it even better.

Leaders have thought carefully about their plans for the curriculum. Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. Every staff member plays their part in helping pupils to achieve their best. Curriculum plans, including in the early years, clearly identify the things pupils need to know. Leaders ensure that pupils cover the full content across subjects. Curriculum leaders carefully check how well their subject is being taught so they understand what pupils have learned.

Teachers plan activities that spark pupils' interests. This helps pupils to remember their learning. In subjects such as science, for example, pupils can recall important facts about what happens to different materials when they absorb water. This is because they remember previous experiments. Teachers assess learning carefully. They ask questions to check pupils' understanding. Teachers quickly address any misunderstandings pupils may have. However, some pupils lack the confidence to participate in class discussions. This means that not everyone gets as much chance to practise listening and speaking as well as they could.

Leaders have ensured that there is a consistent approach to teaching phonics. From the start of school, children begin to identify initial letter sounds, such as those on class labels and for their own names. Well-structured teaching quickly develops

children's confidence in using phonics to help with reading. Adults ensure that anyone at risk of falling behind receives the support they need to keep up. There are regular story times, a wonderful selection of books to read, and an individual reading programme for each child. Leaders promote pupils' love of reading and give every pupil the chance to succeed.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the same opportunities to access the curriculum as their classmates. Teachers are supported well by the special educational needs coordinator. Teachers adapt their plans to ensure that the school's curriculum meets the needs of pupils with SEND effectively.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through a variety of additional activities. They learn how to keep healthy, both physically and emotionally. Pupils participate in local events. For example, Year 6 pupils proudly took part in the Remembrance Day service in the Market Place. Pupils learn about diversity, including different beliefs and lifestyles. Some pupils are elected to be school councillors and others become digital leaders. Older pupils help look after the younger children at break and lunchtimes. This contributes well to pupils being responsible, caring citizens who are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

In the early years, adults take good care of the children. They have a strong understanding of how young children learn and develop. Staff in the Nursery and Reception Years work well together. This means that learning is consistent, and the children are well prepared for starting Year 1.

Many governors are new to their roles. They are already extremely well informed about the school. They check whether leaders' actions are making a difference to improving the school. However, governors are in the earliest stages of developing a clear, strategic plan for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have been trained well in safeguarding matters. They know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety. They are vigilant for any signs of abuse and they quickly report concerns, no matter how small. Leaders keep accurate electronic records. They act quickly on the information they receive. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils and families receive the help they need.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They know how to use the internet safely and how to report any worrying signs to adults. The curriculum teaches pupils about keeping themselves safe and how to manage risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The development of pupils' speaking and listening is in very early stages. Some pupils lack confidence as speakers and listeners. This prevents them from getting the most out of their learning. Leaders should give priority to ensuring that the speaking and listening curriculum is of the same high quality as other subject areas.
- The governing body is new and relatively inexperienced. This means that they have not yet developed a clear, strategic vision for the school. Governors should give a high priority to completing this work.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136316
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10200510
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	419
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phillip Richardson
Headteacher	April Grimes
Website	www.forest.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There are separate morning and afternoon nursery sessions that pupils attend part-time once they have turned three years old.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club providing childcare.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the school's leadership team, including: the special educational needs coordinator, the leader with responsibility for disadvantaged pupils, and the safeguarding, welfare and attendance leader. Inspectors met with three members of the local governing body, including the chair, who is also the chair of the trust.

- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, music, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum, reviewed curriculum plans, visited lessons and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors considered the work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning. Inspectors listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of pre-employment checks. They spoke to leaders, school staff, governors and pupils about the arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 46 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 41 free-text responses. They also considered the 53 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and seven responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pauline MacMillan	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Rogan	Ofsted Inspector

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