

Inspection of Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School

Russet House, 35 Russet Close, Tuffley, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL4 0RQ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision is a school where pupils' needs are identified quickly, understood and valued. Staff share high aspirations for all. Everyone seeks to secure pupils' positive learning experiences. Pupils study personalised programmes. They re-engage in their learning because they know staff care about how well they do.

Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. Staff promote care, tolerance and respect. Discriminatory or unkind behaviour are not tolerated. Pupils feel that bullying is very rare. They say that when it happens, 'staff are on it'. Consequently, pupils feel safe and experience success. Pupils go on to attend better, achieve well and believe in themselves.

Pupils can present with complex and difficult behaviour. Nevertheless, leaders and staff have created a calm and orderly environment. There are clear expectations and routines. When pupils do present with challenging behaviours, staff know how to respond. This helps pupils to manage their own feelings and refocus on learning. Pupils improve their behaviour rapidly over time. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning, maintain better relationships and recognise their own self-worth.

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

Leaders have secured an ambitious curriculum that meets the specific needs of pupils well. Pupils arrive following fragmented periods in their education. Staff assess pupils' needs straight away. The strong curriculum focuses on addressing gaps in pupils' learning. Skilled staff utilise strong relationships to help deliver the curriculum effectively. Useful strategies, including the unrelenting focus on improving vocabulary, enhance pupils' learning.

Leaders are very effective. They have ensured everyone is focused on pupils' learning. Leaders utilise useful external support and robust challenge from the management committee to enhance their plans for improvement. This ensures leaders' actions address identified weaknesses rapidly. Staff share leaders' ambition. Many believe leaders consider their well-being and support them to do better. Consequently, the school continues to improve.

Skilled teaching ensures the intended curriculum is implemented well. Assessment information is used effectively. Teachers ensure they adapt lessons to meet individual need well. Academic targets, aligned to pupils' personal plans, are used consistently to promote learning.

Pupils' reading is prioritised. The reading curriculum is carefully planned, adaptive and implemented by well-trained staff. Staff use timely assessments to offer tailored packages of learning. Early readers learn their phonics in a systematic way.

However, despite leaders improving the books available to support early readers, the match between the books and the sounds pupils know is not always consistent.

Leaders have high expectations of what they expect pupils to learn. Curriculum leaders have focused on key concepts from all areas of the national curriculum. Key components of knowledge are identified. Curriculum leaders ensure these components are taught to pupils in an ordered and well-sequenced way. Pupils learn to succeed. Pupils' attitudes to learning improve quickly. Many reintegrate into mainstream education. Older pupils go on to attain qualifications in key areas of the curriculum.

Pupils are well prepared for their next stages, including returning to mainstream education, qualifications and other destinations. However, some pupils have varied access to this well-sequenced curriculum. This is because some pupils' attendance is still low. For others, their learning choices mean they might miss key concepts in some subjects. Consequently, leaders cannot assure themselves that pupils access key elements of the curriculum consistently.

Staff ensure pupils have a rich experience of their local and wider community. In lessons, pupils discuss beliefs and values through religious studies and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. This helps develop pupils' moral compass and preparation for adult life in modern Britain. Pupils receive useful and well-considered careers advice. The school meets the expectations of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. However, there are times when pupils lack the resilience or tenacity to write in subjects other than English.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leadership of safeguarding is strong. Leaders know their local setting and related challenges very well. They have rightly focused on how to support pupils who are vulnerable to the culture of exploitation and drugs. Leaders have implemented secure systems for managing safeguarding and responding to these challenges. Staff follow processes diligently. They report concerns in a timely fashion. Leaders take appropriate action if they are unhappy with responses from other agencies.

Leaders ensure they follow relevant guidance when employing staff. Appropriate checks are made when new staff join the school. These are recorded diligently on the single central record.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have significantly improved the ambition and breadth of the curriculum. Staff give pupils choices about when they learn different elements of the curriculum. However, some pupils' attendance, although improving, is not as high as it should be. Other pupils' choices limit their access to parts of the curriculum. Leaders are not able to assure themselves that pupils get the same learning from the developing curriculum. Leaders should strengthen the processes they use to assure themselves that pupils have full access to the curriculum.
- The implementation of the curriculum is increasingly effective. Pupils are learning the curriculum with much greater security. However, some pupils lack resilience when asked to write in subjects other than English. Leaders should consider how to build greater resilience among pupils to write across the curriculum.
- Leaders have improved the books available to early readers. Many pupils are benefiting by taking home books they can read independently. However, for those in the very earliest stages of reading, books do not match the sounds pupils know as well as they could. Leaders should accelerate their plans to ensure all pupils can take home books that directly link with the sounds they can use to decode independently.

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	135330
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10200976
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair	Lyn Dance
Headteacher	Elisa Entwistle
Website	www.gfaps.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gloucester and Forest Alternative Provision School caters for pupils who have been permanently excluded or who are at risk of being excluded. The school operates on three sites. Russet House, in Gloucester, provides education for key stage 4 pupils. The Raikes Centre has a secondary department for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. Rutherford House caters for primary-age pupils in key stages 1 and 2.
- The school uses seven alternative providers, one of which is registered with Ofsted.
- Pupils arrive throughout the year through referral from the local authority, usually as the result of permanent exclusion from a mainstream school.
- All pupils have some specific need associated with past schooling or personal circumstances. Most have social, emotional or mental health needs. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan or are about to obtain one.
- There were no children in the Reception Year at the time of the inspection.

- The school's outreach team works with pupils in mainstream schools who are either at risk of exclusion or are returning to mainstream provision after a period at the school.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, including the headteacher, and representatives from the management committee, including the chair and vice-chair. Inspectors discussed leaders' evaluations, priorities for improvement and systems for monitoring and accountability, as well as the curriculum.
- Inspectors did deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, science, history and PSHE. Inspectors met with senior and subject leaders, and with teachers and pupils. They visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and talked to pupils. Inspectors reviewed some subject planning and spoke to leaders about other subjects. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised feedback from 24 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement, external reports and paperwork relating to the work of the management committee. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by meeting with the designated safeguarding lead, the school business manager, the headteacher and centre leads and also by reviewing safer recruitment processes, speaking to staff and speaking to pupils. Inspectors analysed safeguarding procedures relating to the use of alternative provision and visited the Gloucester Youth Project to check arrangements were appropriate.
- Inspectors scrutinised school policies, governance arrangements, records of concern and links to other agencies.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stewart Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector

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