

Inspection of a good school: Forest Lodge Academy

Charnor Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE3 6LH

Inspection dates:

15 to 16 June 2022

Outcome

Forest Lodge Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they like coming to school because staff listen to them. They feel that their opinions matter. Children in the Nursery Year vote for books to share together in story time. Leaders ask pupils what clubs and activities should be organised outside the school day.

Leaders want all pupils to know as much as possible before they leave for secondary school. Some pupils had gaps in their knowledge which emerged following the three periods of national lockdown. Closing these gaps has been a priority. Many pupils are catching up quickly.

There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere at Forest Lodge Academy. Pupils generally listen well to each other and to staff. They conduct themselves around school sensibly. Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens. Most of them feel that staff sort this out properly. Pupils know who to tell if they feel that someone is being unkind to them.

Parents value the many ways in which their children are supported and rewarded. They say that 'teachers have a highly personal approach and ensure that children feel welcomed'. Pupils feel appreciated when they are invited to drink hot chocolate with senior staff. Classes look forward to winning the 'golden lunchbox' at the end of the week.

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

Staff at Forest Lodge Academy want pupils to find out more about the world around them so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils recall what they learn about the variety of religions and cultures in Leicester. They are respectful of each other's faiths and can explain their own beliefs.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge in mathematics. Staff spot any misconceptions that pupils may have and address them. They know exactly what pupils need to learn next. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right help to

learn alongside their peers. As a result, pupils enjoy mathematics. They look forward to teachers challenging them more.

An ambitious phonics curriculum has been introduced recently. Leaders have made this a priority. All staff, from the Nursery Year to Year 6, have been trained. Staff have raised their expectations of what all pupils, including those with SEND, will know. Pupils get help to keep up with the learning appropriate to their age, or to catch up if required. Books match the sounds that pupils know. Most pupils read fluently from them. Older pupils describe the books that they enjoy reading. Reading ambassadors explain how they promote a love of reading and encourage others to use the library.

The curriculum is broad and detailed. Leaders have planned what they want pupils to know and by when. This is sequenced well so that pupils build on what they have learned before. For example, in design and technology, pupils evaluate different bags and investigate materials before they design their own. Teachers give opportunities for pupils to recall previous learning in history. For example, pupils compare different approaches to warfare in Roman and Ancient Greek times. Occasionally, teachers do not implement the curriculum consistently well. Not all activities help pupils to gain, review or apply important knowledge.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Staff spot any additional needs quickly. They make sure that children get the right help at the right time to catch up. Children practise what they know as they play. They enjoy counting the lollipop candles that they put in their play dough birthday cakes. Children listen to stories with rapt attention. Some can explain what tricky words mean, such as 'levitate'. Everyone joins in with familiar responses. Children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Some subject leaders have recently learned more about the early years curriculum. However, leaders have not made sure that all curriculum thinking starts from what children learn in the Nursery and Reception Years.

There is a rich variety of clubs and opportunities for pupils to get involved in. Pupils value how this helps them to develop new interests, from learning about life as a farmer to being able to play the glockenspiel. Pupils also relish opportunities to help each other. Peace agents explain the 'positive peaceful places promise' which helps pupils to know exactly what bullying is. The peace garden is a haven from the bustling playground activity at lunchtime. Pupils appreciate sometimes being able to choose a quieter alternative.

Staff value the training that they have had and the time to develop subject leadership roles. They say that leaders make sure that what staff have to do is for the benefit of the pupils. Teachers at the early stage of their career feel well supported as valued members of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that staff have the knowledge that they need to spot when a child is at risk of harm. They check that staff remember this through regular quizzes and updates. They make sure that the training reflects the risks in the local area. Governors check that the staff are doing the right things to keep children safe.

Staff liaise well with external agencies. Leaders challenge decisions where they do not feel that children's interests are being put first. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They can explain how to stay safe online and what to do about unwanted messages.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made sure that there is a curriculum in place for all subjects and in all phases of the school. They have begun to ensure that this is sequenced from the EYFS to Year 6. This work is not yet complete. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders and staff further develop their understanding of how knowledge builds from early years throughout the school.
- Much of the curriculum is well developed. However, some parts of this are not yet fully embedded. Not all pupils securely gain the knowledge that they need in all subjects. Leaders should make sure that they continue to develop staff subject knowledge. Leaders check that the curriculum is being implemented consistently and that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with SEND, are gaining the knowledge that they need to be ready for the next stage of their learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Forest Lodge community primary school to be good in January 2015.

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	145357
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10226930
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	597
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Buck
Headteacher	Claire Caldwell
Website	www.forestlodge.leicester.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Forest Lodge Academy converted to become an academy school in January 2018. The school joined L.E.A.D. multi-academy trust. When its predecessor school, Forest Lodge Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Since the previous inspection of the predecessor school, the academy has become a three-form entry primary school. It has moved into a new building.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector spoke with the director of schools and deputy chief executive officer from L.E.A.D.

multi-academy trust. The lead inspector spoke with the chair and vice-chair of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, design and technology, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons and scrutinised work. They spoke with pupils and staff. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with leaders, staff and pupils. They scrutinised documents that the school keeps.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning and end of the day. They considered the views expressed on Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and during less-structured parts of the day. They considered the outcomes from the pupil survey and these discussions.

Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Lowther

Ofsted Inspector

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