

Inspection of The Forest Academy

Thornton Road, Kendray, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 3NG

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Forest Promise' of 'Be the best that you can be,' is lived and breathed by all in this community of excellence and achievement. An ethos of care and compassion runs through the school. Nobody is left behind. Staff share a relentless commitment to giving all pupils the very best education and improving their life chances. Pupils revel in the opportunities that the curriculum affords them. They are highly engaged, enthused and passionate about their learning. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their ability to be independent self-motivated learners but also to look for chances to help other pupils.

Pupils develop an impressive and deep-rooted sense of right and wrong. They are able to use this to recognise situations and scenarios in the wider world that they should challenge. Relationships between staff and pupils are built upon extremely solid foundations of care, respect and trust. Pupils say that they feel physically safe. Staff create an environment that allows for a feeling of emotional safety in which pupils thrive. Pupils feel confident and articulate enough to identify incidents of bullying and promptly report them. Their well-founded trust means that they know these rare incidents will be dealt with.

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

Pupils benefit from a curriculum which is extremely ambitious. The curriculum that pupils learn is very carefully designed. The knowledge and vocabulary that leaders want pupils to learn builds up year on year. The work pupils produce is of exceptional quality. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are skilfully supported by staff so that they successfully access the same curriculum as their peers. All pupils, but particularly pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged, are successful in their learning and achievements. Pupils achieve incredibly well within the curriculum because it is ambitious and taught by highly skilled teachers. Teachers skilfully check what pupils have understood from their learning. They give precise support to help all pupils to produce their best work.

Opportunities for reading are everywhere in this school. Pupils develop a deep appreciation of the importance of books. Pupils quickly become confident, fluent readers through the phonics curriculum that leaders have chosen. Staff who teach phonics lessons are experts. They give targeted support to pupils who need support with their reading. Pupils develop a love of reading and a love of being read to. Staff use story times as opportunities to engross pupils in stories and to develop their vocabulary. Books are displayed attractively in classes and around school. This entices pupils to read them. This love of reading, combined with a rigorous and clear approach to teaching pupils how to read, means that pupils become fluent, confident and engaged readers during their time at school.

The personal development of pupils is a golden thread that runs through their day-to-day life. They have access to an extensive range of clubs and activities. Leaders

strategically plan these to give pupils, especially pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, opportunities and experiences that they would not otherwise access. Pupils have multiple opportunities to make their school community a better place. They wholeheartedly undertake their roles as digital leaders, curriculum champions and sports leaders. Pupils consistently behave with maturity and sensitivity around issues such as discrimination and prejudice. The curriculum for teaching pupils about equality, diversity and protected characteristics is a significant strength.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. Staff have a deep and rich knowledge of the early years curriculum and why it is so important to the children in their class. There is a relentless focus on giving children the skills and attitudes to become lifelong learners. Developing pupils' vocabulary is a priority for teachers. Staff ensure that activities and resources in classrooms help children to learn. As children move through their early years experiences, they become focused, resilient and independent learners. All subject leaders work closely with the early years staff to check that future learning for children is rooted in what they are taught in Nursery and Reception.

Leaders are sharply focused on their commitment to giving pupils the best education possible. They share a common goal and mission to improve the life chances of pupils. They know that this also has a positive impact on the school community. Leaders ensure that staff are given very high quality training to ensure that they have the skills to deliver the ambitious curriculum that leaders have designed. Governors maintain a highly strategic view of the school. This allows them to offer precise, skilled and effective challenge and support for leaders. Along with the executive leadership within the trust, governors work with school leaders to continually improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders focus on building highly positive relationships with families. These relationships enable leaders to quickly identify any barriers or circumstances that families may need help in overcoming. This helps leaders to act quickly when pupils need additional support. Staff are clear on what the local safeguarding risks are. They understand the systems for reporting concerns and are diligent and swift in doing so. Leaders regularly check that staff have understood key information about how to keep pupils safe. Through the curriculum, pupils receive important knowledge and develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe both within their community and the wider world.

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.

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	139136
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10211956
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Hobson
Principal	Katie Pierce
Website	www.theforest-academy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Wellspring Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Barnsley and Leeds Primary Learning Partnership.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with senior leaders from across school.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of the local governing body and several other members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors did not get the opportunity to speak with trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history, computing and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, looked at pupils' work, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult and met with pupils formally in both same-sex and separate groups.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through informal discussions at the beginning and end of the day and through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work from several other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Liam Colclough, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Ralph	His Majesty's Inspector
Jen Sloan	His Majesty's Inspector

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