

Inspection of a good school: Forest Gate Academy

Daniel Adamson Avenue, Partington, Manchester M31 4PN

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2023

Outcome

Forest Gate Academy continues to be a good school.

The head of school of Forest Gate Academy is Katy Higginson. This school is part of the Dean Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tarun Kapur, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Damian McGann.

What is it like to attend this school?

Forest Gate Academy is a warm, supportive and aspirational community. The cheerful greetings that pupils receive from staff at the start of each day helps them to feel happy and ready to learn.

The school has created a culture of respect and tolerance. Pupils respond well to this and strive to follow the 'Forest Gate Way'. For example, they treat each other with kindness and with consideration. Pupils are keen to earn rainbow and star of the week awards. They spoke proudly of reaching the 'pot of gold' and appreciate recognition for following the school's values.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Overall, pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils are positive role models for younger children. For example, they relish being play leaders and reading and maths ambassadors. Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles that support the school to become better for all. They embrace being members of the school council and the eco committee.

Pupils value many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They spoke enthusiastically about the variety of clubs that they attend, including drama, choir, puzzle, craft and gymnastics clubs. Pupils enjoy a range of trips and visits that help to bring their learning to life. They told the inspector that the rich experiences that they have help to make Forest Gate Academy an exciting place to be.

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

The school has worked closely with the trust to design an ambitious curriculum for pupils, including children in the early years. It has identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught.

The school is equally ambitious for pupils with SEND. It identifies the additional needs of these pupils quickly and accurately. Staff support pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum and to learn well.

In 2023, the proportion of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils meeting the expected standards in writing was lower than national averages. The school has identified the reasons for this. It has taken effective steps to overcome any gaps in pupils' learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, pupils are learning the curriculum well.

Staff benefit from a well-designed programme of training and support. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. Staff explain facts clearly and model subject-specific vocabulary well for pupils.

Overall, pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education. Staff make regular checks to make sure that pupils remember what they learn. In the main, this helps pupils to build their knowledge across most subjects. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has recently made refinements to the curriculum. In these subjects, some pupils struggle to connect new learning with earlier concepts. This affects how well they build up their knowledge in these subjects over time.

Reading is an important part of the school's curriculum. Pupils enjoy a wide range of books in the 'reading room' and outdoor reading sheds. They draw inspiration for their book choices from teachers and the school's reading ambassadors. Pupils are keen to receive golden reader awards for reading regularly.

From the earliest opportunity, children in the early years begin to learn stories, rhymes and songs. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics programme well. They successfully help pupils to get off to a good start with their reading. Pupils who struggle with reading receive timely support to help them to catch up with the phonics programme. As a result, most pupils learn to read confidently and fluently.

Children in the early years settle quickly into school. They concentrate well on their activities and play happily with their friends. These firm foundations for learning and for behaviour are built on throughout the school. The school places high priority on supporting pupils' levels of attendance. It provides pupils and families with the necessary support to improve pupils' attendance rates.

Pupils learn about diversity. They understand that people have different families, backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. Pupils spoke confidently about the importance of treating everyone equally. They are taught how to stay safe when online. Pupils are encouraged to live healthy lives. They understand the importance of regular exercise for their good health.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the time that the school provides for them to fulfil their roles effectively. Changes to policies, for example the marking policy, have reduced staff workload.

Trustees exercise their statutory duties well. They ensure that any weaknesses are quickly addressed. The local governing body supports and challenges the school effectively about the quality of education that pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the refinements that the school has made to the content that pupils should learn are relatively new. Some pupils struggle to make connections between earlier knowledge and new learning in these subjects. The school should embed the improvements to these curriculums so that pupils develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2018.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138788
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10291433
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Damian McGann
CEO of trust	Tarun Kapur
Headteacher	Anita Edwards (executive headteacher) Katy Higginson (head of school)
Website	www.forestgateacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Dean Trust.
- The executive headteacher is also responsible for another school in the trust.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken this into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions

about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also spoke with subject leaders and some pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other school leaders. She also met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the CEO. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with the leaders responsible for behaviour, SEND provision and pupils' wider development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences at school. She looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. She also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rebecca Jewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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