

# Inspection of SGS Forest High School

Causeway Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire, GL14 2AZ

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Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The headteacher is Alan Dane. The head of school is Nicola Mooney. This school is part of the South Gloucestershire and Stroud multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Downing.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

SGS Forest High School is improving rapidly. Routines are carefully considered, so pupils make the best use of their time. For example, pupils practise their reading skills each morning and many older pupils attend revision classes at the end of the day. Expectations of what pupils have the potential to learn and achieve are high. Pupils recognise that, through the curriculum, they learn powerful words and ideas. Increasingly, they take confidence from this and their aspirations are growing.

There is a strong sense of community in the school. Relationships are based on mutual respect and trust. Pupils' strengths, achievements and differences are celebrated. Pupils receive valuable support with their personal challenges. This helps them to feel safe and settled. If pupils notice any disrespectful behaviour, they report this. They have confidence that the school's approach will be fair.

Many pupils represent the school in sporting tournaments and competitions. A recent performance of 'Matilda' was a great success, providing pupils with a valuable opportunity to perform drama and music for a live audience. Experiences such as these give pupils a sense of self-belief and an appetite for success, including among pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

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

The school offers a full and ambitious curriculum. The school's inclusive culture ensures that the benefits of this are felt by all pupils. The quality of education has improved in many subjects. This has encouraged more pupils to choose to study the subjects of the English baccalaureate.

The school's published outcomes do not fully reflect the impact of the improvements made to the quality of education. Pupils have not yet learned enough of the school's curriculum to fully realise its aims. Many pupils acquire a scholarly vocabulary, of which they are rightly proud. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunity for pupils to use this vocabulary in extended discussions or writing. This limits the development of the independent thinking and writing skills necessary for success in GCSE examinations and for post-16 study.

Assessment is not used precisely enough in some subjects. Therefore, the school does not always know how to adapt the curriculum to best meet pupils' needs. Consequently, some pupils are left with insecure knowledge and others miss the chance to deepen their understanding. When pupils have not understood new curriculum content or difficult concepts, teaching is not consistently responsive. This inhibits their ability to learn the curriculum successfully and has a particular impact on pupils with SEND and those who speak EAL.

The school is determined that all pupils read accurately and fluently. Pupils read widely, gaining cultural capital as they go from text to text. There is a phonics

curriculum for pupils in the earliest stages of reading. This includes specialist teaching for pupils who speak EAL. As a result of the school's sustained focus on improving reading, pupils follow more of what the wider curriculum has to offer.

Pupils usually learn without disruption. They receive effective support to improve their behaviour if they struggle with this. The school has a precise, strategic understanding of the reasons why pupils do not attend school regularly and the families affected. Pupils who are persistently absent receive well-focused support. This often helps them to re-establish regular school attendance. Nonetheless, high rates of absence prevents many pupils from fulfilling their potential.

As part of the personal development curriculum, pupils explore relevant, age-appropriate topics. Pupils recognise the value of this learning, which helps to keep them healthy and safe. They consider the school to be a welcoming place for all pupils and staff, regardless of their background or circumstances. Pupils receive clear messages about British values, such as tolerance and democracy. Careers education is comprehensive. There are meaningful opportunities for pupils to meet with employers and training providers and this continues to grow.

Pupils' experiences at this school have improved significantly because of determined and resilient leadership. The local school board is sharply focused on improving outcomes for pupils with particular needs. The school provides highly effective support and career development to teachers who are new to the profession. As a result, staff make a notable contribution to the ongoing improvements to the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils' understanding of the curriculum is not checked systematically. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND or those who speak EAL, do not always understand the language or the ideas that they need to follow the curriculum confidently. This also means that pupils who have already securely understood curriculum content do not deepen their knowledge further. The trust must ensure that teaching is responsive to pupils' level of understanding.
- In some subjects, assessment is not used with enough precision to rectify insecurities in pupils' knowledge and skills. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge persist, making it difficult for pupils to integrate new learning. The trust should ensure that information as to what pupils know and can do informs what is emphasised and revisited within each subject.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to discuss or write about what they have learned. This limits their ability to apply what they know and develop the skills to independently think and write confidently about curriculum ideas. The

trust should ensure that pupils learn how to discuss and write about subject ideas and concepts in an extended way.

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could because they miss too much school. While the school is working with individual pupils and their families to secure better attendance, it remains the case that some pupils do not attend school well enough to succeed. The trust should support the school to continue their proactive work to secure high attendance for all pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138496
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10299763
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	281
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Andy Downing
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Alan Dane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Mooney
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://academytrust.sgscol.ac.uk/the-forest-high-school">https://academytrust.sgscol.ac.uk/the-forest-high-school</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	12 – 13 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the school's last graded inspection in May 2022, an interim chair of the board of trustees and a head of school have been appointed.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the fourth routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of the senior leadership team, trustees and members of the local school board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered pupils' work in several other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also took into account responses to the surveys for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Collins

Ofsted Inspector

Simon Tong

Ofsted Inspector

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