

# Forest Academy

Address: Bury Road, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0FP

Unique reference number (URN): 136316

## Inspection report: 10 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Strong standard ●

### Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Inclusion lies at the heart of everything the school does. The identification of pupils' needs is prompt, including for the significant number of pupils who move to the school at different ages. The information shared with staff is detailed and helpful. The 'ordinarily available provision' in every classroom includes a wide range of supportive practices. These include word banks and visual images. This helps all pupils succeed, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress means that staff can identify and address gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders monitor the quality and effectiveness of interventions to ensure that they represent good practice and make effective use of staff time.

Staff work closely with families. They are supportive and get to know families well. For pupils who join the school at different times of the year, leaders work closely with both previous and next schools so that the pupils' education is as smooth and uninterrupted as possible. Leaders ensure that there is effective support for pupils and families, for example when parents are working overseas.

### Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils are taught a high-quality personal development curriculum. This revisits the previous learning each lesson before moving on to new content. Such repetition, combined with direct teaching of key points, ensures that pupils have excellent recall of what they have been taught. Pupils confidently articulate how they can avoid risk. This curriculum includes age-appropriate relationships education. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they have learned about puberty and value this learning.

Pupils learn to cooperate, care for each other and value difference. These inclusive behaviours and teamwork skills are taught from the very beginning of Nursery Year, where children accept each other and join in activities together by choice. Pupils learn about life beyond rural Suffolk. They can clearly explain how life differs in the various cultures and countries they have studied. They are also very knowledgeable about the history of Britain. Such learning ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Lessons in confidence and resilience get pupils ready for secondary school.

The school provides a wide range of popular clubs, such as coding and sports clubs. Staff are trained to deliver inclusive sports. These lessons are accessed by those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those without. The school has actively sought funding to further develop this provision. For example, it now offers wheelchair basketball. Pupils enthusiastically attend boccia practice sessions ahead of competitions.

Leaders track participation of disadvantaged pupils closely. This ensures that everyone has the same opportunities. For example, every pupil will represent the school in sport before leaving. Leaders often host events at the school rather than travelling to external venues so that more pupils can access them.

## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

By the end of Year 6, pupils are typically well prepared for secondary education. Attainment for all pupils is broadly in line with national averages when they leave. This is also the case for the Year 4 multiplication check. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests is below average. As a result, leaders have revised the approach to teaching these areas. However, it is too early to fully see the impact of this work.

The proportion of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics check has risen rapidly over the last 3 years. This is a result of the consistent and precise teaching methods in place. Pupils continue to read enthusiastically throughout the school. Everyone reads a challenging word before entering the lunch hall. The quality books that pupils are encouraged to read as part of 'Forest Fantastic Reads' are well loved. Pupils talk excitedly about their favourites.

### Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Until recently, pupils' attendance was not where it needed to be, especially for persistently absent pupils. Leaders revised and strengthened their processes and systems. They have built effective relationships with families where attendance was poor. As a result, attendance is now in line with national averages, including the proportion persistently absent. Leaders maintain a daily focus on this and are working with other schools to further increase attendance figures.

Pupils behave well throughout the school. They follow staff's consistent expectations and are calm as they move around the building. Pupils work hard, even when they find something challenging. They understand where there are reasonable adaptations made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are supportive of each other. Staff care for and support pupils. Bullying is not tolerated. On the rare occasions when this occurs, staff deal with it quickly and appropriately.

### Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Teachers deliver English and mathematics to a high standard. Consistently high-quality practice in classrooms means teaching is precise and enables pupils to do well. Staff are well trained.

However, leaders recently identified that some elements of pupils' basic skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar were holding them back. Consequently, they introduced additional, more focused teaching and catch-up interventions in these areas. This is having an impact, although some pupils still do not achieve as well as they could in spelling and writing. Leaders also reviewed and improved the way staff taught phonics. This new approach has resulted in the Year 1 phonics check scores being significantly above national averages in 2025.

Teachers make extensive use of visual images and physical objects to support pupils' understanding. This helps all pupils understand new learning. It particularly benefits those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is well organised and progressive. Pupils' work in some subjects, such as art and design, shows that teacher subject knowledge, direct teaching and precise building of skills leads to better understanding and practice. In a small number of subjects, the choice of activities for pupils is not always focused enough on the subject-specific learning. This means that, in these areas, some pupils do not learn all that they could.

## Early years

Expected standard 

The early years provision provides a positive start to children's education. Staff work closely with parents, sharing strategies to support early language, reading and writing at home. Children are well prepared for reading, as well as socially and emotionally for Year 1. Leaders have looked at what has stopped children from achieving the early learning goals and have put a much greater emphasis on early writing skills, in books and on paper. This focus is clearly visible in the current work of the children in Reception Year and Nursery Year.

Children enjoy their time at school. They love painting and, in particular, climbing. They enjoy racing cars down slopes, taking turns and cooperating to rebuild the tracks when they fall apart.

Children work hard when asked to by the staff, practising their early letter and number formation or planting seeds. These focus activities help advance their learning, with the same high focus on speaking, listening and developing vocabulary as elsewhere in the school. However, staff could sometimes further develop children's play. Some of the interactions between the children and staff in these moments could further encourage the development of speech, language and mathematics skills.

## Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders consider staff workload carefully when introducing new initiatives and provide support to sustain staff wellbeing. School leaders know the school well. They have a clear rationale for all actions undertaken and always have pupils and inclusivity at the heart of their work. They have driven improvement, evident in the quality of mathematics and phonics teaching. Leaders are role models, highly visible around the school. They teach alongside their colleagues, modelling their expectations. Leaders rigorously track the progress and participation of pupils who are disadvantaged and/or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that as many barriers as possible are removed.

Staff access a wide range of evidence-based professional development. This builds expertise. The school ensures that it looks beyond itself to understand good practice. It works closely with the local authority and other schools to develop the school's offer for mathematics and attendance.

Trustees, who are known as governors, ensure that their statutory responsibilities are met. They check the quality of provision and undertake their roles as trustees appropriately. The trust is at an early stage in ensuring that all governors are fully confident in their roles, especially regarding the management and oversight of a single academy trust.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Pupils enjoy attending this school. Staff get to know pupils well and are supportive and encouraging. The school is highly inclusive, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The provision for each pupil is considered in fine detail so that any gaps in learning are identified. Staff use effective interventions to help pupils overcome any barriers to their learning. Typically, pupils achieve results in line with the national averages. Attendance also matches these national figures. Leaders continue to prioritise this daily so that pupils are consistently present to benefit from the school's supportive and inclusive environment.

The school tracks in considerable detail what experiences beyond the core curriculum pupils who are disadvantaged and/or have SEND take part in. This enables pupils to have a broad set of experiences and learn to be confident so that they are ready for secondary school.

Pupils are supportive of each other and include everyone in their play. They are very active at playtimes, climbing, building, swinging on tyres or taking part in skipping and basketball games. They know who to talk to if they are worried about something. Staff deal with bullying promptly and well, on the rare occasions it occurs. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

The school makes the most of the local community. Leaders work closely with local charities and councils to enhance the learning environment. Staff engage with many external projects, aiming to bring experiences to the school so that everyone can take part. For example, staff organise regular theatre productions to bring stories to life for pupils. This work helps pupils to experience the wider world and be prepared well for life in modern Britain and for their next steps.

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## **Next steps**

- Leaders should ensure that staff choose activities for pupils that deepen pupils' understanding of what they need to learn. This includes consistently reinforcing key spelling and grammar knowledge so that pupils are better prepared for the expectations by the end of Year 6.
  - Leaders should further develop how adults support and extend children's play in the early years, making the most of every opportunity for learning and developing their speech, language and vocabulary.
  - All trustees should continue to access appropriate training and support so that they fully understand their role, particularly that of the management of a single academy trust.
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## About this inspection

This school is a single academy trust. It is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Anderson.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, trustees, staff, parents and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: April Grimes

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### Lead inspector:

Tessa Holledge, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Jo Nutbeam, Ofsted Inspector

Jonathan Clarke, Ofsted Inspector

Vicki Webber, Ofsted Inspector

## Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 10 March 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**412**

Above average

### What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

### **School capacity**

**420**

Above average

### **What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

### **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**26.25%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

### **Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**3.88%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**19.17%**

Above average

## What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

## Location deprivation

### Above average

## What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

## Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

### No resourced provision

## What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

## All pupils' performance

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	54%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	54%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	60%	60%	Close to average

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	68%	74%	Below
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	65%	75%	Below
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	68%	74%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	73%	73%	Close to average

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	70%	72%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	67%	72%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	71%	72%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	73%	71%	Close to average

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	68%	73%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	70%	74%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	59%	73%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	75%	73%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils' performance**

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	45%	46%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	53%	47%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	36%	46%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	40%	44%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	68%	62%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	68%	63%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	45%	62%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	90%	60%	Above

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	58%	59%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	63%	59%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	45%	58%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	60%	58%	Close to average

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	60%	60%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	79%	61%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	45%	59%	Below
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	40%	59%	Below

### **Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap**

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	45%	68%	-23 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	53%	69%	-17 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	36%	67%	-31 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	40%	66%	-26 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	68%	80%	-12 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	68%	81%	-12 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	45%	80%	-34 pp
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	90%	78%	12 pp

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	58%	78%	-20 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	63%	78%	-15 pp
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	45%	78%	-32 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	60%	77%	-17 pp

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	60%	80%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	79%	81%	-2 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	79%	-34 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	79%	-39 pp

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	6.3%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.4%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.5%	5.9%	Close to average

### Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	21.1%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	19.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	19.4%	16.2%	Close to average

## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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