

Inspection of Forest Academy

Harbourer Road, Hainault, Ilford, Essex IG6 3TN

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Forest Academy is a welcoming place for pupils of all cultures and faiths. Pupils enjoy finding out and celebrating the diverse backgrounds of their friends. There is a friendly atmosphere around the school.

Leaders and governors have high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have designed an ambitious curriculum which aims to provide pupils with high-quality education. Pupils achieve well overall, and in a range of subjects.

Pupils feel safe and are happy. Staff have a positive working relationship with pupils, which reflects the school's culture of respect. Pupils are polite and considerate of others. They learn in an orderly and calm environment. In lessons, low-level disruption is not tolerated. Pupils reported that bullying is not common. When it occurs, leaders deal with it swiftly.

Pupils behave well and socialise happily together. They feel supported and know who to speak with if they have concerns. Staff know pupils well. They have put in place a range of supportive programmes to promote pupils' well-being and mental health.

Leaders use the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and careers education as the main pillars for pupils' personal development. Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs to develop their interests. These range from debate and cooking to basketball and badminton.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-ordered curriculum for all pupils. The curriculum matches the aims of the national curriculum, and the knowledge that pupils need to learn has been carefully considered. In the main, this knowledge is taught in a logical order to support pupils' subsequent learning. Leaders are continuing to sharpen their curriculum thinking. They want to further improve how knowledge is sequenced in each subject. In a few areas, such as history, mathematics and languages, leaders' work is not securely embedded. This affects how well teaching enables pupils to retain knowledge and progressively increase their understanding.

In Years 10 and 11, the number of pupils opting to study a modern foreign language has increased markedly. As a result, the proportion of pupils following the English Baccalaureate qualification is now above the national average. Leaders ensure that there are a broad range of subjects for pupils to select for their GCSE options.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are specialists in their subjects. They model work clearly and promote the use of subject-specific vocabulary across the curriculum.

Teachers set tasks that allow pupils to revisit previous learning. For example, in science, before learning about the function of the lungs, pupils recapped what they had been taught about the organ system of the human body. This approach enables teachers to quickly identify gaps in knowledge and address any misconceptions. However, across subjects, some inconsistencies remain in how well teachers check pupils' understanding and, where necessary, adjust learning activities to help pupils build up their knowledge. These inconsistencies reduce how well pupils are able to remember learning in the long term and work towards achieving leaders' demanding curriculum goals.

Pupils with SEND have access to the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are quickly and accurately identified. They know the pupils well and work closely with external agencies to provide professional specialist support when required. Leaders provide training for staff to enable them to meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively.

Leaders prioritise reading across the curriculum. They ensure that weaker readers are identified when they join the school. These pupils receive targeted support to become fluent readers. Leaders are taking steps to further develop the school's culture of reading. For example, they have introduced a new reading programme and routinely encourage pupils to read high-quality texts.

Pupils learn in a calm environment and their attendance is high. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.

Leaders put an emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils value the PSHE programme. They learn about healthy relationships, protected characteristics, online safety and British values. Leaders ensure that pupils receive high-quality careers education. This includes workshops from a range of speakers and working with local businesses.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They said that leaders, governors and trustees are mindful of their workload and well-being. Staff receive regular training from the trust in order to improve their expertise.

Governors are knowledgeable and experienced. They have high expectations of pupils' learning, and they hold school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They have established a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are vigilant and know how to report concerns.

The safeguarding team works well with external agencies, including the local authority, to provide support to vulnerable pupils and their families.

Leaders ensure that staff and governors are trained appropriately, and they are regularly provided with refresher training. Leaders keep records meticulously and respond promptly to concerns.

The PSHE curriculum is designed to respond to pupils' experiences and circumstances. For example, it is used to teach pupils about local risks and how to keep themselves safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers' checking of pupils' understanding is variable. When this happens, misconceptions are not routinely addressed and pupils do not develop a deep understanding of key concepts. Leaders should provide staff with training and guidance to strengthen their expertise in identifying and addressing misconceptions, and in turn, ensuring that pupils know more and remember more of their learning.
- While leaders have done much effective work in the strengthening of curriculum sequencing, some subjects are at an early stage of implementation and are not fully embedded. As a result, sometimes teaching does not help pupils to build securely on what they already know and can do. Leaders should support teachers to follow the planned curriculum thinking. This includes developing expertise in helping pupils to develop knowledge progressively through teaching and revisiting subject content in a logical, well-sequenced manner.

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	137692
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10255381
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	765
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Sidwell
Principal	Will Mackintosh
Website	http://www.theforestacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Forest Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The school is part of the Beacon Multi Academy Trust (BMAT). BMAT consists of three schools.
- Leaders make use of two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The current principal took up the post in September 2020.
- The school has an additional resourced provision on site which caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.

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.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator and staff. Inspectors had conversations with the chair of trustees, an additional trustee, a member of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art and languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils’ work, and spoke with teachers and pupils from the lessons visited.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in other subjects. They also visited lessons and reviewed pupils’ work.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to review documentation and find out how the learning of pupils with SEND is supported across the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour and conduct in lessons, tutor periods, breaktimes, lesson changeovers and throughout the school day to gather evidence about pupils’ behaviour and attitudes.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff about their views on pupils’ behaviour, their well-being and workload. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted’s online staff survey.
- Inspectors had conversations with pupils, staff, governors and leaders to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors also scrutinised documentation regarding safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks and work with external agencies.
- Inspectors looked at records of pupils’ attendance and behaviour. They also met with leaders to discuss their programme for pupils’ wider development.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Jeffery Quaye, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Jan Shadick	Ofsted Inspector
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