



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR FOREST ACADEMY

Name of School:	Forest Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Abigail Oldfield
Hub:	Inspire
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Inspire Partnership

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	07/072021
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Not applicable
Date of last QA Review	Not applicable
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires improvement
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	19/06/2018

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of excellence Not applicable

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** Not applicable

Overall peer evaluation estimate Effective

Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Context and character of the school

Forest Academy is an undersubscribed school with 240 pupils on roll. It serves an area with a high level of deprivation. Two thirds of the pupils are disadvantaged and just under half are learning English as an additional language. It has been an academy since September 2013 and moved from the Synaptic Trust to the Inspire Partnership Trust in April 2020.

The current interim principal started at the school during the summer term 2020 after having worked with the school as a consultant from the Inspire Trust. The Inspire curriculum aims to educate pupils to be global citizens using the themes of diversity, community and global learning. The school collaborates closely with the Croydon hub within the Inspire Trust to tailor the curriculum for the local context. The school has achieved the Inclusion Quality Mark.

There is a private nursery, Kendor, on the site. Also on the site is provision run by the Beckmead Trust for 12 Key Stage 2 pupils with education health and care plans (EHCP) for social emotional and mental health needs.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The interim principal has supported the development of leadership in the school and the transformation of the curriculum by using the Inspire global curriculum. The executive headteacher of the trust and executive governing board appointed by the trust provide well-directed oversight and support for leaders as they execute the clear transformation plan.
- School leaders have implemented the new curriculum despite the two lockdowns during the Covid 19 pandemic. Staff have used time when working at home to understand the curriculum and work with colleagues across the trust. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Knowledge, vocabulary and key skills are well defined for each topic. Pupils learnt and understood important global issues, enthusiastically saying that they want to be like Greta Thunberg, for example.
- Leaders have ensured that all staff have received detailed training in specific practices to improve the teaching of phonics and reading. This has had a significant impact on pupils' skills and ability to articulate what they know. Pupils were confident in their knowledge of the language devices to use in persuasive writing, and how punctuation determined how to read, for example.
- Subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years foundation stage (EYFS) leaders work closely with their colleagues in the nine schools of the trust. This collaboration has been invaluable to the staff, enabling them to plan together and share best practice. Any training is recorded and made

available to all staff.

- Leaders fully involve pupils in leadership. The junior leadership team is an elected group of pupils who work alongside subject and senior leaders to monitor and evaluate provision.
- Pupils become reading ambassadors when they have achieved the full range of certificates. They review book corners in classrooms and provide feedback to teachers against the strict criteria they determined. Other pupils form a 'practice panel' to approve pen licenses for their peers. All these pupils understand the impact of their responsibilities and the contribution this makes to school improvement.
- All pupils understand that their opinions are valued. Leaders know that pupils like learning outdoors so they are continuing to develop areas outside each classroom for pupils to grow vegetables, for example.
- Governors know the school really well and recognise that it is a strong community that supports the pupils and their families. They provide challenge and support, using their professional skills and experience through their link governor roles. They recognise the rapid improvements to the curriculum and EYFS provision that leaders have made by working with staff across the trust. Governors have appreciated the training the trust has provided to inform them about the curriculum and trust wide policies.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

...leaders provided training so that teachers are confident in the learning journey for mathematics.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils are enthusiastic, motivated and apply themselves well to learning in the well-structured lessons. They present their work neatly and value their books.
- Teachers teach phonics and all reading skills in a well-sequenced and structured way. Teachers provide a bank of vocabulary and helpful 'stem' sentences to support pupils increasing oracy skills and written work. Pupils in Year 3 used these well to describe the effect on the reader of description and punctuation.
- Teachers use appropriate processes to assess pupils' progress including standardised tests and subject and lesson specific criteria. They provide instant verbal feedback in lessons, sensitively and quickly correcting younger pupils' choice of vowel digraphs in phonics lessons, for example.
- Pupils learn about contemporary and global issues such as war and refugees through the high quality, relevant texts that teachers have chosen. For example, Year 6 pupils understood the impact of bombing on communities in the current Syrian war, through studying, 'No Ballet Shoes in Syria'.

- The global curriculum plan makes creative links between subjects, for example looking at gender and diversity while studying ancient Egypt, for example. Pupils evaluated the role and impact of Cleopatra and understood that in ancient Egyptian law, men and women were equal.
- Pupils evaluate their work, correcting and redrafting writing to produce neat and well-presented pieces in their books or for display. Pupils develop oracy skills well. They presented their work to an audience and evaluated how they have overcome their apprehension prior to doing this.
- Teachers highly value pupils' contribution in lessons. Pupils use a variety of hand signals to challenge the teacher or a peer or to build on something that has been said. For example, one quickly identified that quotes can be used as an effective tool in persuasive writing and another challenged what a peer had said.
- Children arrive with communication and language skills below that which would be normally expected and quickly learn how to respond in full sentences. Staff are well trained to model and support this through the Nuffield early language intervention programme. Children in the Reception class worked together to make a home for a snail they found, discussing how it moved and its eyes.
- Teachers structure learning well so that pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities can access it. The common format of the learning intention, steps to success, vocabulary and 'stem' sentences used in each lesson helps pupils understand what they are learning. Skilled staff question pupils effectively providing the right balance of support and challenge.
- Curriculum projects have a 'real life' purposeful outcome that pupils contribute to determining. Teachers plan projects using interesting texts that fire pupils' imaginations. For example, all classes used 'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse' as the basis of the recovery curriculum in the Autumn Term 2020. Pupils wrote sensitive stories, showing their understanding of feelings and expressed themselves in many creative ways to produce a 'Museum of Hope' which parents booked to visit.
- Teachers plan for as many 'hands-on' experiences as possible. Pupils in Year 6 learnt about the heart by examining and dissecting sheep hearts. Pupils' skills in art enabled them to observe accurately and build a library of techniques they practised in their sketch books.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

- ...teachers ensured that they record pupils' work in phonics in a retrievable way to show progress.
- ...in mathematics lessons, teachers used assessment for learning so that provision is continually adapted to provide challenge for all pupils and this is consistent across the school.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- School leaders have ensured that there is a strong inclusion team to provide for the complex emotional and social needs of the pupils and their families. They meet each week to review cases and ensure that the support is as holistic as possible and no incidents are overlooked. The pupil and family support worker is highly experienced and builds relationships of trust with families. Many of them are coping with additional burdens that characterise vulnerable communities.
- Leaders provide targeted support to the most vulnerable pupils by providing breakfast masterclasses. Pupils arrive with enthusiasm and along with breakfast, they enjoy engaging in fun activities to support phonics or learning times tables. This has also supported attendance and significantly improved pupils' progress in basic skills.
- The school has been working with Place2Be for some time. This organisation provides professional counselling and support to children, their parents and staff. There are many examples of this emotional support being transformative in pupils' lives. This work has been essential to support all members of the school community recover from the effects of lockdowns and the pandemic.
- School staff have built up good relationships with a variety of support services that they can signpost parents to. They are continually working to raise pupils' and parents' aspirations. Parents highly value the support school staff have given to them, particularly when their children have transferred from another setting where they have had a negative experience.
- Attendance for all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is just above the national average. Leaders know this is because of the targeted, persistent work of the attendance officer. She always makes sure she contacts families and visits homes to bring pupils to school. She refers to the education welfare officer for support with punctuality and attendance. Certificates and other prizes are awarded regularly for good attendance, particularly for times of the year when families often take their children out of school.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...leaders used the adverse childhood experiences index to quantify the barriers that pupils face.

5. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

School leaders are looking forward to making full use of the wider network when there are less restrictions.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.