



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR FOREST ACADEMY

Name of School:	Forest Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Swabra Lloyd
Hub:	Inspire
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Inspire Partnership Academy Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Not applicable
Date of this Review:	01/05/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Effective
Date of last QA Review:	08/06/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	08/02/2022

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 Not applicable

Quality of provision and outcomes Not applicable

AND

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

Area of excellence Not submitted for this review

Previously accredited valid areas of excellence Not applicable

Overall peer evaluation estimate Not applicable

The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

Please note that Challenge Partners is a school improvement charity and not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding procedures, handling or behaviour policies, however, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' Safeguarding Policy and report any concerns.

1. Context and character of the school

Forest Academy is a below average sized, one form entry, 4 – 11 mixed primary school. The 1950s purpose-built school buildings and grounds provide pupils with plenty of pleasant space.

The school's location within Croydon is an area of high deprivation. The pupil deprivation base is very high, with a well above average proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The majority of pupils are White British and Black or Black British, although the school is diverse having many ethnicities. The stability of pupils is well below average because the school is located next to a housing estate with a high proportion of temporary housing. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above the national average.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well below average, although increasing.

The school sits within Croydon local authority. Forest Academy is considered to have opened as an academy converter in 2013, later joining The Inspire Partnership Trust. The trust's mission is that its pupils have the skills needed to be successful members of the local and global community in the 21st century. This is underpinned by its values of respect, curiosity, collaboration, kindness, responsibility and resilience.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- To help everyone in the school community live their vision, leaders run weekly 'values, reward and celebration' assemblies. Pupils choose who should get the values certificates. Teachers use the values in their conversations, feedback and encouragement. Leaders use them in their decision-making and in their newsletters to parents. Pupils use them in their actions, with pupils describing how kind and helpful everyone is.
- In keeping with the headteacher's focus on community, parents are invited to attend learning showcasing activities every half-term. These rotate between 'learning together' sessions and class assemblies, where pupils rehearse before reciting poetry or performing small pieces and showcasing their work. Parents love these, so attendance is very high, contributing to pupils' pride in their work.

- Similarly, leaders' improve practice and opportunities with several high quality external partnerships and quality marks, such as re-achieving their Inclusion Quality Mark and being accepted by Nurtureuk for a three-year project on a whole school approach to supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. These have raised the profile of the school in the wider community significantly and, as a result, the Reception class for next year is now full.
- Subject leaders meet with their two counterparts in the trust hub to improve their shared curriculum. For example, the religious education (RE) lead has attended training for the new local RE curriculum and specified what is needed for pupils to achieve greater depth.
- As well as developing with the Challenge Partners hubs, staff upskill in their subject knowledge, drawing on expertise from the trust's subject hubs. School leaders personalise continuous professional development (CPD) to staff needs, introducing a new coaching curriculum and the concept of 'plus one' where staff identify one aspect they will focus on from any whole school training. As a result, staff identified impactful CPD as a key strength of the school. Leaders are delighted by how staff now make improvements to their own practice.
- Provision for well-being is a high priority across the trust and the school. The trust provide staff with a range of free support services, such as mental health counselling. Leaders run half-termly after-school events, such as the bingo session with tea, scones and strawberries this half-term. Six small eggs still remain hidden around the school following the staff Easter Egg hunt last half-term! Staff stability is high.
- Pupils' holistic development is a key mission for the trust. The school's ethos is to teach and provide opportunities for pupils to develop their character skills of wonder, mindset, integrity, leadership and relationships. One pupil shared, 'I am proud of the diversity of our school and that we welcome those of different cultures'. People treat each other equally. As a result, character development is a strength of the school.
- Pupils learn about the beliefs and customs of other faiths, visiting religious buildings for each faith by the end of Year 6. This includes the Croydon Mosque, the Buddhist Temple in Wimbledon, the Shirley Baptist Church and a Sikh temple. Leaders also plan other trips to show pupils what it is like to live outside of Croydon, including the Year 6 residential to a farm in Cornwall.
- Leaders have responded to the six EBIs from the last QA review, some of which have now become strengths of the school. For example, leaders encourage distributed leadership for both staff and pupils. Subject leaders monitor and track using Steplab, a specialist platform and produce their

'health of subject' reports. In the last year, they increasingly use evidence to make requests and suggestions for improvements, such as increasing the length of the reading fluency sessions from 30 minutes to 40 minutes.

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

...leaders ensured greater consistency of teaching and learning by facilitating the sharing of effective practices observed in certain year groups.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious in line with the National Curriculum. Governors are an active and important part of the community. They visit routinely for tea or link meetings and help by attending most trips. For example, a link governor joined a trip and tour of the Houses of Parliament to teach pupils about British values, arranged via the local MP.
- Leaders' further improvements to the curriculum avoid cognitive overload for pupils. For example, when designing tasks as distinct lesson chunks, staff use 'learning strips', a dual coded visual stimulus for pupils' recall of sticky knowledge.
- Teachers have high expectations of the quality of work that pupils can achieve and make sure that the work given interests and engages pupils. They ask questions promoting curiosity and use high quality resources for active lessons. Year 4 pupils enjoyed using manipulatives when learning about decimals and doing a practical investigation on digestion, with one pupil saying, 'This is fun – look Miss!'
- Teachers embed reading routines to ensure smooth transitions and reduce cognitive overload, particularly helpful when pupils learn new phonemes. Reading is celebrated, for example Key Stage 1 parents come in to read with pupils every week. As a result pupils learn to read well, enjoying texts from their reading canon, core texts and supplementary texts.
- Teachers help pupils to work independently using electronic devices, widgets, word banks, sentence stems and high-quality modelling. Pupils routinely work together to move each other's learning on. For example, Year 3 pupils enjoyed helping one another to think of a metaphor to describe how a Dickens character was running across a rickety bridge.
- Teachers develop and build pupils' oracy in every lesson using talk partners, visual prompts and tiered vocabulary. They make sure that pupils always answer clearly with full sentences. Pupils want to talk and share, excitedly but politely using their hands to show that they want to 'build' on what someone has said. As a result, pupils show excellent oracy skills.

- Pupils apply for and take on a range of leadership roles, such as subject ambassadors and play leaders. Being elected to the Junior Leadership Team (JLT) is a coveted role, advocating between the pupil community and staff. For example, the JLT gain pupil voice by running lunch time surveys about some of the core priorities. At lunch times, rotating JLT members offer 'surgeries' so that any pupil can seek advice, make suggestions or get support.
- Staff work together to create and maintain a calm and beautiful environment. They consider this a foundational factor in helping pupils to regulate their emotions and to want to produce work worthy of publishing on corridor noticeboards or the electronic newsletters. Pupils are exceptionally calm and proud to show visiting reviewers their work.
- The strong relationships between staff and pupils build a culture where pupils feel safe to share verbal answers and make mistakes. Staff embed the character skills that underpin the school culture. This is evident from the beginning of the learning journey where all Reception children's interactions show empathy and kindness towards others and accept each other for who they are.
- There is a feeling of 'love' across the school, for each other and for learning. For example, younger pupils are keen to talk about getting their pen licence. Staff show a high level of care and attention to detail. In turn pupils respect the learning environment. Pupils say they are proud. As a result, pupils want to come into school and attendance is above the national average.

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

...teachers improved their pupil writing task checklists and other self-assessment directions, so that when pupils finish they do not waste time waiting.

...leaders ensured that curriculum documentation explicitly referenced which supplementary texts provide the best age-appropriate sequences for English language and literary techniques.

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

- Leaders identify the biggest barriers for their vulnerable pupils as attendance and emotional regulation. Their response is to prioritise expertise, staffing and systems to meet these needs for their families. Parents have numerous ways to report issues. All staff identify problems early and work with the appropriate support staff to solve them.
- The attendance officer has an exceptional attitude towards valuing pupil learning, ensuring their high attendance. Her work with parents means that over time they meet school expectations, for which she rewards them with certificates. Her tenacity and expertise in working with families, combined with a whole staff commitment has led to the DfE appointing the school as an Attendance Hub for 65 schools.
- The school's culture is that all poor behaviour is really communication and as part of the Nurtureuk School project, pupils learn how to recognise this and respond. Staff emphasise being safe, ready and respectful. Teachers use strategies to help pupils, such as asking, 'Are you in the green zone?' or 'What do you need to do because you are dysregulated?'. Pupils can then use the safe, ready respectful regulation stations set up in every classroom.
- Staff use Boxall profiles to identify pupils with SEMH needs. A small number of pupils have behaviour plans. Expert pastoral staff greet these vulnerable pupils for morning check-in regulation and are on hand to take out and work with any pupil before problems go too far. As a result, behavioural incidents are now rare.
- Leaders train learning support assistants (LSAs) within the school day, either collectively as a whole staff or by mirroring the same training as teachers, particularly for phonics. Teachers describe LSAs as highly effective. Leaders and the SEND Co-ordinator monitor the quality of interventions, providing feedback to LSAs to maintain this standard.
- Parents with pupils who need to catch-up appreciate the before school breakfast interventions called masterclasses, such as phonics for Year 1 and mathematics for key marginal pupils in Year 6. Pupils make strong progress in these sessions.

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

None identified.

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, 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 (SLP) 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. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)