

Inspection of Forest Academy

Bridle Road, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey CR0 8HQ

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like their school. They are safe, happy and enjoy learning. Staff plan exciting activities to enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 recently spent two days on a working farm in Somerset developing their collaborative skills. These opportunities help pupils to make sense of the world around them.

Pupils behave well. They support each other when difficulties arise – in both the classroom and playground. Pupils know what bullying is, but said that it rarely happens at school. If it did happen, they would tell an adult and expect them to resolve it.

Leaders have planned a curriculum that is meaningful to pupils. Pupils learn the core knowledge from the national curriculum through global themes such as power and governance. Staff have high aspirations for all pupils. They expect them to develop core character skills such as integrity and wonder. Pupils respond to these expectations and produce good-quality work.

Pupils have many opportunities to lead in their school. The junior leadership team members hold 'surgeries' to listen to the views of their peers. Playground ambassadors assist the youngest pupils during playtimes. Reading ambassadors make book recommendations. Pupils also help the principal to check work in books.

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

Leaders have planned and put in place a curriculum that builds knowledge logically. They have recently enhanced it by adding links to the local area and what is happening globally. For example, in Year 6, pupils learn about the civil rights movement linked to Martin Luther King. They then build on this by learning about present day protests.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils start learning the sounds letters make from the beginning of the Reception Year. Phonics 'masterclass' sessions are held every morning before school. Pupils who need to catch up with their reading are invited to these sessions. This is having a positive impact on pupils' phonics knowledge. Leaders trained all staff in the new phonics programme last term. This means that most staff have the expertise to teach phonics well. However, there are a small number of staff who would benefit from further training.

Leaders overhauled the reading curriculum two years ago. They have ensured that whole-class reading sessions happen every day. These sessions focus on developing pupils' speaking and understanding. Teachers model the use of sentence starters to answer questions fully. As a result, pupils talk about their learning with clarity and confidence. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, were able to explain why they like Gustav Klimt, and how they used his style to create their own line drawings.

Pupils remember most of the key knowledge they are taught. Teachers build in regular opportunities to recap learning and check pupils' understanding. However, on occasions, these strategies are not always effective. For instance, in science, some pupils could not remember the previous week's learning, which they needed in order to learn new content.

Pupils are confident in their mathematical knowledge. They help each other by explaining misconceptions. Pupils understand why mathematics is important, and how it will help them in later life. Teachers regularly check pupils' knowledge through small tests and quizzes.

In the Reception class, children benefit from a daily structured mathematics session. Staff support children in these sessions to embed previous learning and extend learning further. For example, children were learning to manipulate numbers up to eight. They made eight, using cubes and other resources, exploring what happened when adding and removing cubes. This prepared children for learning their number bonds to eight.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are successfully enabled to learn the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers adapt the curriculum and break down learning into smaller steps. Pupils are then helped to explain their learning by referring to photographs of activities. This is helping them to remember important knowledge.

Pupils learn about the main religions. They also visit places of worship in the local area, like the gurdwara. Pupils understand what it means to be physically and mentally healthy. They learn about mental health, for example, through some of the core texts they read. These texts also challenge stereotypes, and are chosen to reflect the diversity of the community.

Leaders have created a nurturing environment for pupils and staff alike. Staff benefit from shared expertise across the trust schools. This means that there are many opportunities to develop professionally, as well as plan collaboratively. This in turn helps staff with their workload. A few middle leaders are new to their posts and less experienced. Senior leaders understand the importance of supporting middle leaders so that the curriculum is consistently well taught across the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to keep pupils safe. They know what signs may indicate that a pupil is at risk, and how to raise concerns. Leaders secure swift help from safeguarding partners as appropriate.

All staff understand the immediate risks pupils face in the local community, so leaders actively promote safer initiatives, for example by working with the youth engagement team to understand the dangers of gangs, knife crime and county lines.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe inside and outside of school. They spoke to inspectors about online safety, and what they would do if they were being cyber-bullied.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently revised the curriculum to make it more relevant to their pupils. Teaching regularly recaps what has been taught. However, occasionally, pupils do not remember key knowledge, and this limits their success in tackling what comes next. Teachers should continue to check on pupils' learning, but make sure that this learning is even more consistently embedded in pupils' long-term memory.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	140113
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10212270
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Sinead O'Brien
Chair of governing body	Amanda Boyne
Interim Principal	Abi Oldfield
Website	www.forestacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Forest Academy is an average-sized primary school.
- The school joined the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust on 1 April 2020. Previously the school was part of The Synaptic Trust.
- Governance is provided through a board of trustees and a local governing body.
- The school no longer has a nursery provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered plans for art and computing.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records, and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including leaders' priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors spoke with the chief executive officer of the Inspire Partnership. They met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. They spoke to a representative from the local authority and a further independent school improvement partner.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's surveys, were considered.

Inspection team

Alison Colenso, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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