

The Forest Academy

Harbourer Road, Hainault, Ilford, IG6 3TN

Inspection dates

17–18 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of students	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of students	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Forest Academy has improved rapidly since it was opened. Students join the school with below average skills in reading, writing and mathematics, make good progress and achieve well. GCSE results are at the national average.
- Students who join the school partway through the year make outstanding progress, because they are very well supported.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Teachers' skilful questioning and strong subject knowledge deepen students' understanding.
- Students from a wide range of backgrounds get on well with each other. Relationships between staff and students are respectful.
- Students' behaviour has improved significantly over the last year. There is a positive atmosphere in and around the school.
- Parents are supportive of the school, and feel it is a very safe place for their children to be.
- The headteacher's very high expectations, which are shared by all leaders and managers, have helped to bring about improvements in students' progress.
- The sponsorship of the academy by The Beal High School has helped to bring about major improvements. The sharing of inspirational ideas between the two schools has improved teaching.
- Governors have benefited from working with the governors at The Beal High School. They now use the information they receive on the school's performance to challenge leaders and managers, and demand continual improvement.
- The sixth form is now good and has improved dramatically. Numbers in the sixth form are rising and students taking work-related courses achieve particularly well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' performance is not outstanding overall. The most able students do not reach the highest grades at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5.
- Students are not always given the opportunity in lessons to write accurately, at length. As a result, their reading has improved at a faster rate than their writing.

Information about this inspection

- The Forest Academy is a below-average sized secondary school which opened in January 2012.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action and at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is sponsored by The Beal High School.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The number of students who join or leave partway through the year is higher than in secondary schools nationally.

Inspection team

Miranda Perry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marion Hobbs	Additional Inspector
Kevin Morris	Additional Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons or part lessons. Twelve lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders and managers.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, staff members, and the executive headteacher of the sponsor school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents on self-evaluation and safeguarding. They observed the school's work, looked at students' books and the tracking system used to monitor students' progress.
- Inspectors considered the 25 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and the school's own student, staff and parent questionnaires.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - increasing opportunities in lessons for students to practise writing at length
 - improving the accuracy of students' writing across all subject areas.
- Raise achievement still further, particularly for the most able students by:
 - identifying most able students as soon as they arrive in school
 - setting work at the right level for the most able students
 - checking how well the most able students are doing more regularly, and taking effective action if they are at risk of underachieving.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with levels of skill in literacy and numeracy which are below average. The skills of those who arrive partway through the year are particularly low. The school now has a successful programme in place which addresses any gaps in the students' understanding, so that by the end of Key Stage 3, students make good progress in English and mathematics, science and languages. Progress is faster in reading than in writing.
- Overall, students' GCSE attainment is average, and above average in art, biology, chemistry, French, media studies, religious studies, Spanish, physical education, and physics.
- The proportion of students making good progress in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 is similar to those achieved by their peers nationally. Students' progress in GCSE French, media studies and Spanish is excellent.
- Students who sat their GCSE examinations early in 2013 made good progress. Students are entered for GCSE examinations early and if they do not get an A or A* grade they are allowed to continue to work to improve their grades until the end of Year 11. This serves to motivate them well.
- Progress at Key Stage 4 in history and geography has improved significantly over the last year. This was as a result of changes made to the way senior leaders measure the performance of teachers and students so that they are taught in a more structured way.
- The progress of students taking work-related courses at Key Stage 4 and 5 is outstanding. For example, students taking business studies achieve very well because they have an excellent understanding of how well they are doing, and how to do better.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form has improved dramatically over the last year. All students begin their AS-level programme with GCSE attainment below that of other students following these courses nationally and the majority make good progress, particularly in biology, history, Italian, media studies and photography.
- Students from minority ethnic groups and who have a first language other than English achieve as well as, and often better than, their peers, because the school actively promotes equality of opportunity. The academy is very good at giving these students the right materials to make good progress.
- The progress of students who arrive midway through the year is rapid because leaders are quick to identify the potential barriers to learning, and addresses them swiftly.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs has improved and is now good at all key stages. Staff with responsibility for these students meet regularly to measure their progress and put in place successful support programmes.
- In English and mathematics in 2013, Year 11 students who were eligible for pupil premium funding were between a quarter and a third of a GCSE grade below their peers. This is an improvement on the 2012 results. Achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium is good overall. It is slightly less than that of their non-eligible peers, but better than the progress of eligible students nationally. Attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals was less than a quarter of a GCSE grade below their peers.
- The school has introduced a range of successful approaches to meet the needs of students entitled to pupil premium funding, for example, small group sessions and extra English lessons in Year 11.
- Students targeted for the Year 7 catch-up programme enjoy their reading and they make at least good progress.
- Across subject areas, opportunities are not consistently provided for students in order to develop their writing skills to a high level. For example, in a Key Stage 4 lesson, students began to write a rationale for their decisions, but were not given time to finish it.
- The school is working towards accurately identifying most able students when they arrive in the school. Most able students make good progress but do not reach the highest grades in national

examinations. The school is reviewing how regularly it measures their progress, and what activities it provides for them in and out of lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching at the school has improved and is now good. Teachers check how well students are achieving in lessons, and change activities if necessary. In a Year 7 girls' netball lesson, every time a student positioned her foot incorrectly, the teacher got another student to model the correct position, and the girls improved their catching skills dramatically.
- Teachers keep detailed records of the progress each student in their class is making, and ensure that lessons are planned so that the progress made in a previous lesson is built upon in the next.
- Across subject areas, students have positive attitudes to learning. In a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, where there was an atmosphere of hard work, one student explained, 'We all focus on what Miss tells us, because she makes sure we know more at the end than we did at the beginning.'
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In a Year 11 English lesson, students successfully analysed newspaper articles, because of the teacher's detailed understanding of journalistic style.
- Students have high expectations of themselves and are skilled at assessing their own work and each other's. A Year 9 student said, 'We know how to mark each other, and we don't let anybody get away with anything.'
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs learn well. They have small-group sessions, where they discuss what they have found hard, and how they can overcome obstacles to their learning.
- In the sixth form, the majority of teaching is good. Students have positive relationships with staff, and achieve well because they feel that what they learn is relevant. In a Year 12 sports studies' lesson, a student said that the course inspired him to be fit in his everyday life.
- In some lessons, most able students are given work which challenges them. This is not always the case.
- Students are not given sufficient opportunities to write in lessons as they are to read. Students sometimes start a piece of writing, and do not get the chance to finish it, while their mistakes can go uncorrected.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. Students' enthusiasm for working in groups, pairs and on their own helps them progress well in lessons. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, occasionally, when students are not engaged, they get distracted.
- Students are positive about different subjects, and their learning in and out of the classroom. The school's Saturday lessons are oversubscribed because students are motivated to take every opportunity to improve.
- Parents, staff and students recognise how much behaviour has improved. They think the new 'Forest Five' rules work, and students appreciate the fact that the classroom is now a place where they can get on and work.
- Students are polite and courteous. They enjoy it when the school has visitors and go out of their way to be welcoming and friendly.
- Attendance rates have improved considerably over the last year and are now at the national average. Students understand how attending well means they make good progress. 'We have to be here to learn,' one Year 8 girl said.
- Students have a very thorough understanding of how to keep safe and benefit from how effectively the school keeps them up to date with issues related to e-safety.
- Students do not think bullying happens very often at all, and are entirely confident that if it

does, it is dealt with immediately. A Year 9 student said, 'We are not the kind of students who bully here.'

- Students sort out disagreements among themselves and appreciate the fact that the school does not tolerate discrimination. In the playground, a group of boys from a range of different ethnic backgrounds negotiated a fair system of sharing the football.
- The school has a support programme to help students who might find it difficult to behave well. Students come off the programme very quickly because it is so successful in bringing about improvements in their behaviour.
- Students feel that the school looks after them. Several students commented that the school was the safest place they could be.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team has been completely reorganised so that it is focused on the relentless improvement of students' learning, achievement and well-being.
- Senior and middle leaders work very well together, sharing extremely high expectations, and a conviction that there is always room for improvement. Nevertheless, leadership and management are not yet outstanding because teaching is not yet good enough to ensure students make excellent progress.
- The financial arrangements of the school have been comprehensively reviewed. As a result of robust performance management procedures, staff who have a positive impact on student performance are rewarded financially.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are excellent role models. They do not expect any member of staff to reach a standard that they have not reached themselves. Senior leaders responsible for teaching and learning are respected by colleagues as outstanding teachers and as a result teachers improve their practice in the light of their example.
- Teachers starting out in the profession receive very thorough and effective support, which does not end after their first year of teaching. Forest Academy has worked in partnership with its sponsor, The Beal High School, to ensure all staff receive well-considered training programmes to enable staff to improve their practice.
- The school has worked very successfully with its sponsor to bring about improvement in the leadership and management of the sixth form. The best ideas, materials, and systems have been shared across the two schools so that student numbers, retention, and achievement have improved.
- The school provides a broad range of opportunities for learning, which interests students and inspires their positive attitudes. Partnership with the sponsor school has resulted in students having a clear progress route between Key Stages 3 and 5.
- The school offers advice and guidance on what students want to do when they leave school as early as Year 8. Year 8 students enjoy the 'My World' course, which helps them improve their skills ready for the world of work. Once he had finished his design for a chocolate bar, one boy said, 'I reckon I can sell this to anybody. When I grow up, I'm going to sell, sell, sell.'
- Leaders and managers measure student performance thoroughly overall and take effective action to bring about improvement. However, they do not measure the progress of most able students as well as, for example, disabled students and those with special educational needs, or those eligible for the pupil premium. As a result, they do not always put strategies in place to ensure most able students reach their potential.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, take their responsibility for safeguarding students seriously, and all statutory requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors from both schools in the sponsorship arrangement have benefited from high quality exchanges of expertise and training, particularly in understanding what makes teaching good, how they can use information about the school's performance to bring about

improvement, and how it compares with similar schools nationally. Governors have been instrumental in revising the school's financial arrangements, so that remuneration is now used to effectively tackle underperformance and reward the best teachers. The improvement of students' achievement is central to every decision the governors make. They are fully aware of decisions about how pupil premium funding is spent and its impact on eligible students.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its students' needs. This ensures that students are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its students' needs. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137692
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	399892

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	868
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	85
Appropriate authority	The Forest Academy Trust
Chair	Michael Stokes
Headteacher	Will Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8500 4266
Fax number	020 8500 0036
Email address	admin@theforestacademy.org

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