

# Forest Academy

Bury Road, Brandon, IP27 0FP

**Inspection dates** 22–23 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Children get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and make outstanding progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they leave Reception many exceed national expectations for their ages in each area of learning.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in Key Stage 1, and so they reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils are currently making good progress in Key Stage 2. All are on course to make nationally expected progress in English and mathematics, and a significant number are on track to do even better.
- Many pupils make outstanding progress in physical education and in writing.
- Teachers show high expectations for learning, plan learning in lessons effectively, maintain excellent relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well.
- Behaviour is good throughout the academy. Attendance is above average. The academy's efforts to keep pupils safe are outstanding.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders provide very effective leadership and direction that are moving the academy forward quickly. They are supported well by other leaders and governors, and enjoy the full confidence of staff and most parents.
- The governors maintain a good oversight of the academy's work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In 2013, the first year in which pupils took Year 6 tests, a small number underachieved. The gap in attainment between some groups of pupils and their classmates was too wide.
- Sometimes work is too hard for some pupils, and sometimes it is too easy and does not extend learning enough.
- The marking in pupils' books does not always show them clearly how to improve their work or extend their thinking.
- Subject leaders have not yet fully implemented their plans to raise attainment in Key Stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons and saw all teachers. Fourteen of these lessons were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at samples of their work with English and mathematics leaders.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils and informal discussions took place with different pupils at break times and lunch times. Other meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the special educational needs coordinator, three members of the governing body and the academy's external consultant.
- Inspectors talked to individual parents and small groups of parents when they brought their children to school. They looked at 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and examined the academy's most recent survey of parental opinions. Inspectors also looked at the 41 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding policies, records of behaviour, attendance figures, self-evaluation documents, the academy's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and information about pupils' progress.

## Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Veronica McGill

Additional Inspector

Concetta Caruana

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Forest Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care, is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The academy has a dedicated room which is used to support pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. It does not use any alternative providers for any of its pupils.
- The school converted to become an academy in November 2010. When its predecessor school, Forest Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding. It has had its first group of Year 6 pupils in September 2012.
- Three members of the governing body act as academy trustees. The academy has entered into a 'soft' federation with Elveden Church of England Primary School. This means there are two separate governing bodies, but an executive principal and heads of both schools form a federated senior leadership team. The academy has recently applied to adopt a more formal federation with more shared leadership.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement for all groups of pupils by making sure that:
  - pupils of different abilities are given tasks which they can do, but which challenge their thinking
  - pupils are clear about how to improve their learning and extend their thinking when their books are marked
  - subject leaders fully implement their plans to raise achievement at Key Stage 2.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Nursery with skills which are slightly below those expected for their age in communication, language and personal, social and emotional development. They are broadly typical in all other areas of learning. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, reaching above-average standards by the end of the Reception Year.
- When they enter Year 1, pupils continue to make outstanding progress. In 2013, pupils' performance in the Year 1 check on phonics (the sounds that letters make) was well above average. At the end of Year 2 their attainment in reading, mathematics and writing was high. The academy's data show that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to continue to reach high standards in each of these subjects.
- In 2013, Year 6 attainment was well above average in writing, and above average in reading and mathematics, with a high proportion achieving level 5 in the national tests in mathematics and writing. However some pupils achieved less well, given their starting points, in mathematics, reading and in the tests of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. This was the first set of Year 6 results for the academy. Leaders have taken effective action in response, and current pupils are achieving well.
- All groups of pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are making good progress in English and mathematics and attainment is rising. The academy's data show that the proportions on course to make and exceed expected progress in these areas now compare favourably to national averages. Many pupils in Year 6 make outstanding progress in writing, and 41 out of 45 pupils from the academy were accepted for a writing competition from 30,000 other pupils nationally.
- In 2013 pupils who were eligible for support through the pupil premium were approximately two terms behind their classmates in mathematics, nearly one year behind in writing, and about five terms behind in reading. They had made similar progress to others in mathematics and writing, but slower progress in reading. Current eligible pupils have nearly caught up with their classmates in reading and mathematics and are only one term behind in writing. The additional support in literacy and numeracy enables them to make rapid progress.
- The few pupils at an early stage of learning English are progressing as well as their classmates. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also making similar progress in literacy and numeracy. They are benefiting from good support for their learning, through specialist teaching and whole-class teaching.
- Most more-able pupils are making good progress, and some are making outstanding progress in English and mathematics because expectations for learning are usually high. However, a few of these pupils said that their work was sometimes too easy and this was also occasionally reflected in their books.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because they are carefully shown how to link letter sounds to their names. Pupils use these skills well to read unfamiliar words and many read widely at home and in school.
- Pupils make at least good and often outstanding progress in physical education and in staying fit and healthy, as a result of excellent use of the primary school sports funding. For example, pupils have won county competitions in team games such as football and hockey.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The academy's evaluation of teaching as good overall is consistent with inspection evidence of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, the teaching of writing across the academy and some teaching in mathematics are particularly strong.
- In all lessons seen teachers maintained excellent relationships with pupils and managed their behaviour well. As a result, a positive atmosphere for learning was clearly evident. Pupils usually tried hard, followed instructions and listened carefully to their teachers.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Parents spoke highly of the way staff accommodate the learning needs of these pupils. Staff ensure that tasks are broken down into smaller achievable steps and resources such as flash cards are usually matched closely to individual needs. In some lessons such as mathematics in Year 4, teaching assistants worked highly effectively with different groups of pupils to consistently challenge their thinking and provided practical examples to clarify any misunderstandings and move learning rapidly forward.
- Teachers usually show high expectations for pupils' learning, and use information on what they know and can do to carefully plan activities to challenge their thinking. Nevertheless, a few more-able pupils said their work was sometimes too easy and a few of the less able said it was too hard. This was also seen in pupils' books when learning tasks were not always matched closely enough to their different abilities.
- Pupils' work shows that the teaching of the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy is now at least good. Pupils apply their reading and writing skills in different subjects. However, subject leaders have rightly recognised that written feedback on how well they are applying these skills when writing in different topics is not always helpful.
- Pupils nearly always know how well they have done when their books are marked. However, they are not always clear about how to improve their work. Subject leaders have also identified the consistency of this as an area for development, and it appears in their action plans.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and around the academy, and particularly well at playtime where they are sensitive to each other's needs and cooperate well in their play. The academy's records and the views of most parents and pupils show that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are also good. They are usually attentive and cooperative in lessons, although occasionally they lose concentration when work is too easy or too hard. A few pupils and parents also had reservations about this.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils say that some bullying takes place, although the majority of parents and pupils believe that this is usually dealt with effectively when it occurs. Pupils have an increasing awareness of bullying.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They learn how to use the internet safely and strictly adhere to the rules regarding access to social networking sites. They play very safely together in the playground and

always move with great care from one area of the academy to another. All pupils said they felt safe in the academy and in discussion, parents said their children stay safe.

- Pupils' attendance has risen from broadly average in 2013 to above average as a result of the use of effective rewards to promote good attendance. Most pupils now arrive at school punctually and well prepared for lessons.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The executive principal and senior leadership team are providing very effective leadership and direction in driving up standards and improving the quality of teaching. They receive good support from middle leaders.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning over time and are using this information effectively to identify clear priorities for development. Middle leaders have identified well-chosen objectives and identified clear and appropriate strategies in subject action plans, in order to raise achievement in Key Stage 2 across a range of subjects, as well as in English and mathematics. Not all of these plans have been fully implemented.
- The effectiveness of staff, especially those with leadership responsibilities, is greatly enhanced through the robust system for managing their performance and the excellent support and training opportunities available. Objectives to improve teachers' performance are securely based on the national *Teachers' Standards*. Newly qualified and recently qualified staff receive excellent training that enables them to quickly improve their skills. Staff are highly positive about the help and encouragement they receive.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity well. It uses funds effectively to ensure pupils who might otherwise be disadvantaged make good academic progress. Pupil premium funds are used to provide extra one-to-one and small group support in literacy and numeracy, and to provide sports kit and fund school trips for eligible pupils so they have the same opportunities to participate in the academy's activities as other pupils.
- The academy has also been very effective in increasing the proportion of girls engaging in competitive sports alongside boys, as a consequence of the excellent use of primary sports funding. This has been used to train staff in coaching, to provide a wide range of after-school clubs and provide high quality teaching of physical education under the very effective direction of the physical education leader.
- Leaders are ensuring that the curriculum is matched well to the different needs of different pupils, with a strong emphasis on developing basic skills. A wide range of clubs, visitors to the academy and trips to places of interest enhance pupils' learning.
- Leaders are promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through many opportunities to celebrate success, reflect on their achievements and develop a sense of care, kindness and consideration for others. Pupils are developing their awareness of diversity through, for example, their work on Buddhism.
- The academy consultant is providing effective support for its work through, for example, regular training for recently and newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are strongly committed to the success of the academy and have recently carried

out an audit of their roles, using this effectively to develop their oversight of the academy's work further. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching based on their visits to classrooms, their scrutiny of informative reports from the executive principal and their increasingly accurate interpretation of data. They are ensuring that performance management arrangements are linked to maintaining high standards in Key Stage 1 and raising attainment in Key Stage 2. Governors have a good knowledge of how the pupil premium and primary sports funding are used and are asking questions to challenge the academy and ensure leaders achieve good value for money. Governors robustly check that legal requirements for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are met. They ensure that all training for safeguarding and policies are up-to-date, and that rigorous and regular checks are made on the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children.

## 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 pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils 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 pupils' needs. Pupils 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 pupils 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136316
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	443801

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	351
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Brooks and Graham Hawksworth
<b>Principal</b>	Maria Curry (executive principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01842 810309
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