

The Forest Academy

Thornton Road, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 3NG

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal's outstanding leadership has transformed the school by bringing rapid improvement to key areas of its work in a very short time. With the support of the executive headteacher and the academy trust, she has inspired the drive for improvement among governors and staff at every level.
- Pupils make better than expected progress and are now achieving well from their different starting points.
- Improvements in teaching have led to a significant rise in pupils' achievement since the academy opened.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and has been transformed since the academy opened. They are polite, respectful and keen to learn. They are well cared for and enjoy good relationships with adults and other pupils.
- Governors provide an effective level of support and challenge, and are ambitious for further improvement.
- Parents are very happy with the quality of education and care provided for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The attainment of pupils, although rising strongly, is not yet as high as it should be throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet strong enough to ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, make outstanding progress.
- Teachers do not consistently give clear feedback or guidance that will help pupils improve. They do not always check that pupils act on the advice they are given through marking.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in checking that all groups of pupils achieve the best they can in their area of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in many lessons and also made additional visits to observe parts of lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the Principal and executive headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils about their work in lessons.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised in writing, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle leaders, members of the governing body, teaching and support staff, pupils and a member of the academy's trust board.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 5 and checked reading progress records.
- Pupils were observed during lunchtimes, break times and at the breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also the school's 94 responses from their most recent parent view survey. They also spoke informally to a number of individual parents at the start of the school day.
- Twenty three staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school, with rapidly increasing numbers. The Forest Academy converted to become an academy school on 1st May 2013. When its predecessor school, Kendray Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, is well above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support children who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after).
- The proportion of pupils in the school who are from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Children start school in the early years in the Nursery and attend part time, either mornings or afternoons, from age three.
- The school runs a very well attended breakfast club from 8am to 9am every day. Currently 140 pupils attend regularly.
- Last year the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Principal has been in post for just over one term, since September 2014. The executive headteacher has worked with the academy for nearly a year.
- A new governing body was established by the trust board, which replaced the governing body of the predecessor school on 20th May 2013.
- A member of the academy trust board works closely with school leaders in the role of school improvement consultant.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to accelerate progress and raise standards still further by making sure that:
 - teachers always provide the right level of challenge for all pupils
 - pupils have more opportunities to write at length in curriculum areas other than English
 - teachers always communicate high expectations for the way pupils present their work
 - pupils get clearly focused advice from teachers in their books and use it to improve their work.
- Further develop the work of middle leaders so that they have greater impact across the whole school by:
 - providing them with targeted leadership training and support to enable them to contribute fully in improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school
 - ensuring that they have opportunities to challenge and support all staff in their work with all groups of pupils who are at risk of falling behind, including the most able.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's leadership has had an enormous impact on the school's rapidly improved performance. In the relatively short time since her appointment, she has taken the skills and expertise of governors, teachers and support staff to a higher level and gathered around her a team whose only focus is to continue to improve on what they do.
- Since converting to an academy, there have been significant changes of personnel throughout the school including school leaders, teaching staff and governors. The academy opened in May 2013 at a point following significant challenges and turbulence that had resulted in the parents and the local community having little confidence in the school. Attainment and progress had declined and was well-below national averages. As well as this, the behaviour of pupils was not good. Since then the whole school community has successfully embraced the support of the academy trust and other external consultants to improve behaviour, teaching and pupils' progress. The trust and the governing body now have every confidence that the Principal and school's leaders can continue to manage further improvements.
- Senior leaders from the school and the trust have now secured a strong team of teaching and support staff. All staff receive training to improve subject knowledge and skills. Robust systems for checking teachers' work and opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to reflect on and share ideas about their own teaching have significantly improved the quality of teaching and learning. Confidence levels are high and teachers know what is expected of them. All are fully committed to continually improving the quality of their work so that standards continue to rise rapidly.
- Leaders have provided a strong focus on ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good. As a result teaching has improved. This has resulted in pupils achieving well across the school. Where teaching has not had sufficient impact in ensuring pupils' good achievement over time, the leaders have responded quickly and effectively to make the necessary improvements.
- Middle leaders have a good knowledge of their areas of responsibility and are developing as a team. They need further support to make sure that they are able to fully challenge and support staff to improve teaching to outstanding. The school's view of its successes and areas for improvement is accurate and leaders know what remains to be done to improve further. The planning for future improvement is detailed and contains the right priorities.
- The Principal and governing body ensure that performance targets for staff link directly to pupils' achievement and targets in the school's improvement plan. Checks on the performance of staff are undertaken regularly and this information has been used to make decisions on teachers' pay.
- The academy's leaders have made a concerted effort to work more closely with parents, providing several opportunities for them to join in activities with their children. The work of the parent support adviser has been central in overcoming barriers and supporting parents both in school and at home. This work, together with the positive attitudes of all staff, has completely reversed any previous negative perceptions so that now parents feel a valued part of the school community.
- The curriculum is organised to ensure that pupils can access and enjoy their learning. All adults model respectful attitudes, as well as promoting the importance of working together, listening and communicating effectively with one another. As a result pupils from the youngest to the oldest demonstrate respect for each other in classrooms and around the school. This prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.
- There is not enough opportunity for the most able pupils to access work that will challenge them further and help them to reach higher levels of attainment. In the same way, these pupils would benefit from more opportunities to reinforce their skills across different subject areas.
- Funding available through the pupil premium is used effectively to help eligible pupils to take a full part in school life and benefit, where appropriate, from specific resources and additional help from adults. This has been successful in raising their achievement and they now make good progress.
- The use of the primary sport funding is enhancing pupils' chances for active outdoor learning and physical activity effectively. Teachers are currently improving their skills through training and there are further plans to extend the range of activities for pupils in order to further improve their health and physical well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly ambitious for the school and are fully aware of how good it can become.
 - They have a very accurate analysis of the school and national assessment data, which gives them a clear picture of the rapid progress made as well as the distance still to travel.
 - Governors, alongside school leaders, prioritise improving teaching and learning in order to rapidly raise

standards further.

- Governors have contributed well to the school’s rapid improvement because they actively check the school’s performance with the Principal and staff. They especially focus on the impact of pupil premium spending to make sure that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils and that any gaps in achievement of any groups are continuing to close rapidly.
- Governors are also aware of how the sport funding is used to benefit pupils. Statutory duties are fulfilled efficiently. All policies are reviewed and updated regularly and safeguarding procedures meet all the government’s requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and show respect towards each other and for adults. Pupils are very polite and courteous. They happily talk about the friendly and caring climate of the school and how much it has changed for the better.
- Pupils are welcoming to visitors and keen to share their interests and explain their work. Most pupils are eager to learn and behave well in lessons. Most are keen to do their best. They play well at breaks and lunchtimes. Different ages play together enjoying a wide range of games. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and are keen to help younger children regularly to improve their reading skills.
- The school provides effective support for the small number of pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult. The learning mentor is highly valued by pupils, families and staff in providing good levels of support that enable pupils to continue learning in a positive atmosphere.
- The school provides very good support for parents and families, especially to support those who have not been good attenders in the past. The outstanding early morning breakfast club is very well attended with 140 pupils attending regularly. It is enthusiastically and efficiently run by staff and parent volunteers. Children are provided with a healthy and nourishing breakfast and opportunities to engage in a range of exciting and stimulating activities. Pupils from Years 1 to 6 are provided with coaching sessions after their breakfast to help them to improve their achievement.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Policies to support pupils’ behaviour, safety and well-being are well established across the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that adults will take care of them. They have a clear understanding of the school system for managing behaviour and understand the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that any incidents are rare and will be dealt with quickly should they occur.
- Almost all parents said that the school deals effectively with behaviour. Informal discussions with parents during the inspection confirm this view.
- Attendance has improved and is almost in line with the national average. The school works hard to promote good attendance through effective communication with parents and concerted actions taken by the school leaders and the school attendance officer.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching throughout the school has improved at a very good pace because of the positive ways that teachers and other staff have responded to the high expectation set by senior leaders.
- All the classrooms provide a wealth of stimulating displays linked to topics pupils are studying. There are examples of pupils’ work and helpful prompts to support their learning. The displays in corridors celebrate pupils’ achievement and raise their self-esteem.
- Training to improve the subject knowledge and skills of all teaching staff has been a main feature of improvement over the past year.
- Work seen in last year’s books as well as checks done by the school’s leaders, and evidence gathered throughout the inspection, demonstrates that the better quality teaching over the last year has ensured higher achievement.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and their work. There is mutual respect between

pupils and their teachers. As a result pupils are generally keen to get on with their work and try to learn successfully by following their teachers' instructions.

- Pupils needing additional help, such as those with special educational needs, are given well-targeted support by teaching assistants or other adults so that all can learn well and make good progress. Teaching assistants work in classes where they are needed most. They are briefed well by teachers in how to help pupils and are skilled in supporting learning.
- Teaching is invariably an enjoyable experience for pupils. Teachers' good command of their subjects and knowledge of pupils promotes effective learning. Teachers demonstrate considerable skill in teaching reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects leaders' priorities and the substantial amount of professional development teachers have undergone in ensuring that learning in reading, writing and mathematics is effective.
- Pupils write regularly and produce some lengthy pieces of work. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop and express their ideas through writing at length across different subject areas.
- Teachers consistently provide verbal advice and feedback to pupils to help move their learning on. There are examples of some useful guidance in pupils' books on how to improve their work. However, there are too few examples of pupils responding to teachers' comments and taking action to improve their work.
- Some pupils take great pride in the way they present their work. However, teachers do not all set high expectations for presentation, especially in mathematics work, and there is some minor variation between classes in the neatness of pupils' books.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the early years with levels of skills that are low compared with those typical for their age. They progress quickly and their attainment is now just below average by the end of the Reception Year.
- Results in the Year 1 screening check on pupils' knowledge of phonics (letters and their sounds) have been below average for the last two years but are improving significantly. Pupils now in Year 1 use good phonics skills in their reading and writing.
- For pupils who have recently left Key Stage 1, their attainment when they left the Reception class was much lower than average. However, the progress they made in Years 1 and 2 was good. Therefore, by the end of Year 2, since the academy opened, there has been an increasing proportion of pupils reaching the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2014. However, since then pupils' progress across the school has improved rapidly and it is clear that these pupils made strong progress from when the academy first opened. Inspection evidence also shows that the rapid rate of improvement is being sustained by pupils currently in the school in all three key stages.
- Pupils' achievement has risen significantly since the school converted to academy status and there has been a distinct and rapid increase in the rate of pupils' progress. The impact of previous underachievement has been holding down attainment, especially for the most able, and this means that although all groups of pupils now make at least good progress, their attainment was not as high as it should have been at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- From very low starting points, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are now making exceptional progress in all subjects. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 made twice as much progress over the last year than is usually expected. The attainment of the current Year 6 is two years ahead of the Year 6 pupils in school last year. They have made excellent progress already this year in reading, writing and mathematics and their knowledge, skills and understanding are already very close to the national average. Pupils currently in most year groups throughout the school are making good or better progress in English and mathematics.
- In 2014 the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in comparison to other pupils in the school was four terms behind in reading, three terms behind in writing and two terms behind in mathematics. In comparison to other pupils nationally their attainment was five terms behind in reading, seven terms in writing and six terms in mathematics. School data supported by inspection evidence show that gaps are closing rapidly and securely. Currently, disadvantaged pupils are one term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics. In reading and writing there is no gap.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress overall. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is now good in reading, writing and mathematics. The academy's leaders have focused on this area in recent months and the better organisation of how support is implemented for these pupils has resulted in stronger progress in the last year.
- The progress of the most able pupils has improved and more pupils are making outstanding progress and

pupils in Year 6 are already achieving the higher level of work in reading and mathematics. This is linked to more effective and well-targeted teaching that makes sure that these pupils are set work which moves their learning on swiftly. However, this is not consistent across all year groups and pupils are not always challenged enough. Their progress slows when they are expected to do things they can already do, rather than learn something new.

- The rapidly improving achievement of all groups of pupils demonstrates the success of leaders, teachers and support staff in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to make good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership, management and the quality of teaching are good and ensure that children leave Reception classes prepared well for Year 1, especially in reading.
- Children start the early years in Nursery with levels well below those typical for their age. Teachers and teaching assistants focus on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, ensuring that children gain a firm foundation to learn more effectively. As a result most children make good progress.
- All adults in Nursery and Reception work together as an effective team. Teachers and other adults model language well for children by challenging them to express themselves and extend their use of new words. As a result children's vocabulary and confidence develop quickly.
- Children are given opportunities to demonstrate their developing confidence and enthusiasm in the classrooms and in the outside area. When left alone to explore, many make their own discoveries and solve problems.
- The outdoor learning environment is well resourced and stimulating with opportunities for children to explore and learn in all areas. The indoor provision is good with some good resources and activities that help children to learn the basic skills of reading, writing and number.
- There is a positive partnership with many parents, who are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning each morning. They have opportunities to celebrate their children's good work.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are identified early so that they are given appropriate support to make similar progress to that of their classmates.
- All safeguarding and child-protection policies and procedures are fully in place.

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

Unique reference number	139136
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	449876

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Davis
Headteacher	Sam Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01226 284719
Fax number	01226 734029
Email address	s.bailey@theforest-academy.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

