

The New Forest Academy

Long Lane, Holbury, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 2PA

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal, ably supported by the whole staff team, has improved the school significantly since the previous inspection. She has created a positive sense of ambition and purpose throughout the whole school community.
- Leaders have successfully improved teaching across the school. It is now good overall. There is a strong culture of learning among the staff which is continuing this improvement.
- Alongside high-quality training in the school, leaders have used carefully chosen support from the trust and other schools well. This has helped teachers to develop a secure knowledge of their subjects and to understand the requirements of the new examination specifications.
- Overall, lessons are purposeful and planned well to meet the needs of pupils. Consequently, most pupils learn well and make good progress.
- Outcomes are good overall. However, outcomes for some disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4 are not yet in line with those of other pupils.
- Some pupils, including some of the most able and disadvantaged pupils, do not attempt work of the right level of challenge, preferring to complete easier tasks. This limits their achievement overall.
- Governors know the school well and make good use of their regular visits. They provide thoughtful support and challenge to school leaders. Their work has helped the school to improve.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported very well and make strong progress.
- Leaders have shaped a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils. The new assembly and tutorial programme successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have successfully improved pupils' attendance so that it is now better than the national average.
- Pupils are proud of their school and the contributions that they make to help refine and develop it. They are respectful to each other and behave well in and out of lessons.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel safe and have a sound range of strategies to keep themselves safe, especially when online.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend it to another parent.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop leadership capacity further in order to share good practice within and across subject areas so that all teaching is as good as the best.
- Ensure that pupils, especially the most able, are consistently challenged in all subjects so that they make more rapid progress from their starting points.
- Continue to develop pupils' confidence to try more challenging tasks so that they make more rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined principal, ably supported by her equally determined team, has transformed the culture of the school. All who are part of New Forest Academy share her ambition and belief that the pupils and community deserve a school that they can be proud of. Throughout the school, there is a sense of purpose and drive to achieve the best for all.
- Key to the success of leaders' work has been the high-quality professional development programme provided for teachers. Research-based learning is carefully matched to the needs of teachers and has helped to improve the overall quality of teaching across the school. Teachers are very positive about it, enjoying the way it has helped to engender what some described as 'a culture of learning' among them.
- In particular, less experienced teachers like the way that their ideas and contributions are valued alongside those who are more experienced. However, leaders are aware that some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain and that they need to continue to develop teaching so that all is as good as the best across the school.
- Staff see the small size of the school as an advantage because it helps to ensure that communication in the school is effective and it means that they all have to work closely together. However, leaders have developed useful partnerships with other schools, some of which are in the trust. These provide effective support and monitoring for middle leaders and subject teachers to make sure that subject knowledge is secure and assessment is accurate, especially when a subject specialist is working alone.
- The trust supports leaders and teachers well, especially with assessment of the new GCSE examination specifications. This work allows leaders to check whether teachers' assessments are accurate and so to check pupils' progress across subjects more accurately. Subject leaders also value the training and support that they receive from the trust.
- Leaders have carefully designed a broad and balanced curriculum that is matched to the needs of the pupils. They adapt its structure according to the profile of each year group. They ensure that pupils receive good-quality independent careers education, information, advice and guidance, building this up from Year 8. This has successfully supported pupils as they decide on their post-16 choices.
- The recently introduced tutor time programme to support pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare successfully promotes fundamental British values and develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning well. Many pupils take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities – for example, 'Bugsy Malone' was in production during the inspection.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) makes sure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported very well by teachers. As a consequence of his work, teachers have the right knowledge and skills to meet pupils' needs effectively, and pupils make very good progress.
- Leaders have ensured that Year 7 catch-up funding for literacy and numeracy is used well to help pupils catch up with their peers. However, leaders' evaluation of the use of

the pupil premium funding is not precise enough for them to understand which of their many strategies were effective in removing pupils' barriers to learning.

- Leaders' work to improve the attendance of pupils has been very successful and attendance is now better than the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils, parents and carers, and staff who completed an online survey view the school positively. For example, all 112 parents who submitted responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree or strongly agree that the school is well led and managed, and all would recommend it to another parent.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body is appointed by the trust, and the chair of the governing body is also a trust member. This allows effective communication between the trust and the school. It also supports governors to challenge school leaders effectively because they have clear measures for, and expectations of, leaders' performance.
- Governors have a good working knowledge of the school. Some governors are themselves school leaders and they use their knowledge well when touring the school with leaders.
- Governors are effective in their challenge to school leaders. They understand the constraints of running a small school and work well with leaders to find solutions that meet the needs of the pupils. For example, they have supported leaders to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and addresses pupils' needs well.
- Governors share leaders' high expectations and aspirations. Along with the trust, they have monitored the leadership of the school and the performance of staff effectively. They routinely hold leaders and teachers to account for the progress of pupils. They are taking steps to hold leaders more closely to account for the use of the pupil premium funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding where everyone is prepared to 'think the unthinkable' in order to keep pupils safe. Processes are sound, with routine training and refresher information used to make sure that all staff and governors are clear about what to look out for and the procedures in place if they have the slightest worry.
- Leaders have successfully developed parents' and pupils' knowledge and understanding of e-safety. Pupils have a high awareness of e-safety due to this work. They told inspectors of multiple strategies that they use to keep themselves safe online. They take the matter seriously and are reassured by the support and training they are given.
- The school's record of checks made on the suitability of staff to work in a school is kept accurately and meets the requirements of statutory guidance. Safer recruitment procedures are followed carefully.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers share leaders' high aspirations for the school and its pupils. They are similarly determined to support pupils to make rapid progress and develop well academically, socially and emotionally. Teachers enthusiastically make use of the professional development that is routinely provided. They contribute well and use the research and resources to refine their own practice.
- Where weaker teaching persists, teachers receive thorough support and guidance so that they can quickly improve. As a consequence, teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection, and are now good overall.
- Teachers have formed strong working relationships with pupils and know them well. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their secure knowledge of pupils' learning and understanding to plan tasks that challenge and support them to make good progress. There is a palpable sense of purpose, and pupils make strong progress as a consequence.
- Pupils do not make such strong progress when learning activities are more general or when they do not build on what they can already do. It is evident from scrutiny of pupils' books that some pupils, including the most able, do not select the more challenging tasks available even when they could easily do the tasks they had chosen. Books indicated that pupils learn most when teachers direct their learning more closely and pupils do not spend time doing work that is too easy.
- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge. They make good use of the links with other schools and advisers from the trust to keep up to date with changes to examination specifications and make sure that their assessment is accurate. This particularly helps those subjects with just one specialist due to the small size of the school.
- Teachers have made effective use of the resources and training provided by the SENCo. They support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Consequently, these pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils like the self- and peer-evaluation that is a part of learning at New Forest Academy. They use this technique sensibly because they have been taught how to evaluate carefully. Pupils told inspectors that the reflection time helps them to recognise the progress they have made and focus on their next steps. Scrutiny of their books suggests that the process helps many pupils, but it is not yet consistently effective across different subject areas.
- Pupils also value the feedback they are given by teachers, whether written or verbal. They recognise the time and effort their teachers give to support their learning, progress and well-being.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the support teachers give pupils. All the 112 responders to Parent View agreed or strongly agreed that their child is taught well at the school. Parents who provided a free-text response commented positively about the quality of teaching, one describing 'dedicated staff' who 'inspire' pupils.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are rightly proud of their school and the contributions that they make to create the positive, inclusive community. They are adamant that bullying is, as one pupil told an inspector, 'not acceptable'.
- Pupils told inspectors of memorable assemblies and work during tutor times to explore how they could be fully inclusive and help to eradicate bullying and discrimination. This work is continued very well across the curriculum. For example, in beliefs, ethics and religion lessons, pupils wrote with sensitivity and insight about how lessons from the past could be used to help to create a more tolerant modern Britain.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at the school because 'everyone is nice' and there is always someone to go to if they have any worry. They are able to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when online, due to the work they have completed in tutor times that is routinely supported in other subjects.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. School leaders work closely with staff at this provider to make sure that these pupils are supported with their attendance, behaviour and learning. Arrangements for ensuring the safety of these pupils are strong.
- Pupils enjoy evaluating aspects of leaders' work, such as the new assembly and tutorial programme. They provide thoughtful and insightful responses in order to help to refine this work. They explained to inspectors that their ideas are always listened to, even if they are not taken forward, and that they feel valued due to this.
- Pupils trust their teachers and thrive on the meaningful praise and support that they receive. However, some, especially the most able, are reluctant to step out of the comfort zone of success that they enjoy and attempt the harder challenges provided. Leaders are aware of the need to develop pupils' confidence and ability to take a risk and try these challenges, even if they might make mistakes when doing so.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well around school and in lessons. Inspectors were greeted with smiles and a warm welcome from pupils who relished talking about their learning and the positive changes they had seen in their school over the past few years.
- In lessons, pupils listen with respect to their teachers and each other, helping each other with ideas and by providing honest feedback.
- Pupils' attendance has improved greatly and is now better than the national average. Leaders' work to address the persistent absence of a small number of disadvantaged pupils has been successful and this has reduced rapidly.
- The 'learning pathways' provision in school helps a wide range of pupils to access the curriculum successfully, including those who struggle with their behaviour. Pupils spoke

highly of the personalised approach they experienced when accessing this support.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are good overall. Provisional information about the 2017 GCSE results indicates that pupils' overall attainment and progress measures are in line with those of all schools nationally. This information shows that pupils made good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils' overall attainment is also good, including the proportions of pupils attaining grades 4+ and 5+ in English and mathematics. The provisional 2017 GCSE results show that these figures are also in line with national figures.
- Current pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books identified some variation between subjects. This is being addressed well by school leaders.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are more mixed. Provisional 2017 GCSE results and school information suggest that their achievement has improved when compared with previous years but is still lower than that of other pupils. School information and scrutiny of pupils' work in their books indicated that disadvantaged pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making good progress in many subjects including English, mathematics, science, history and physical education.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, attain well but few go on to attain exceptionally high results because they do not make the most rapid progress possible from their starting points. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books suggested that these pupils are not routinely challenged to attempt the hardest work, even when they might be ready to try it. Consequently, their achievement is limited.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make very good progress across a wide range of subjects due to the excellent support that they receive. Many achieve standards that exceed those of other pupils who have similar starting points.
- Pupils who join the school with lower than expected skills in literacy and/or numeracy are supported very well and catch up with their peers in these areas. This helps them to access the whole secondary curriculum effectively.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next steps. This is due to the improvements to teaching and learning established throughout the school. Their success in the next stage of their education, employment or training has rapidly improved in recent years due to the effective careers education, information, advice and guidance they receive.

School details

Unique reference number	138585
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10040935

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Steve Cottrell
Principal	Karen Godsall
Telephone number	02380 891 192
Website	http://newforestacademy.org/
Email address	head@newforestacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	19–20 January 2016

Information about this school

- The New Forest Academy is a smaller than average-sized school. It is sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- The school leaders work closely with leaders of other schools, some of which are in the trust, in order to provide and receive support.
- The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average. A few of these pupils are in receipt of an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Greenwood School.
- The school ceased recruiting students to the sixth form in September 2015. There are

currently no students in Years 12 or 13.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 41 part-lessons across the school. Many of these were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised a wide sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff and a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body who is also a representative of the trust. They also spoke to the leader of the alternative provision and a representative from an external agency by telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 26 staff who completed Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school. They also met formally with groups of pupils and considered the views of 60 pupils who responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers. They took account of one letter from a parent, 112 responses to Parent View and 14 written comments. The lead inspector also spoke with two parents by telephone.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including information available on the school's website and records relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Information on governance, including minutes of governors' meetings, was examined. The school's improvement plans and self-evaluations were scrutinised, along with records of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Foster	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Doherty	Ofsted Inspector

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