

Forest Academy

Address: Bridle Road, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 8HQ

Unique reference number (URN): 140113

Inspection report: 14 July 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Exceptional

Leadership and governance

Exceptional 

Leaders know pupils and their families extremely well. The impact of leaders' rigorous tracking of pupils' vulnerabilities is tangible. This means that leaders make decisions with pupils' needs at the heart of everything. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, have access to an excellent education. Parents and carers appreciate leaders' care and how every family is valued and represented. Leaders at all levels champion equality. For example, they use their roles to increase tolerance and respect in the wider community.

Professional learning is substantial and includes trust-wide and school-specific experiences. Staff use research and personalised one-to-one training sessions to improve their practice. For instance, the school's 'professional growth model' development is unique to each staff member. These elements enable staff at all levels to thrive and continually drive the school development plan. This results in pupils, including the most vulnerable, achieving and thriving. Staff value the investment in their individual growth, as well as leaders' careful consideration for their wellbeing and workload. Similarly, trust leaders ensure that they shape practice with workload in mind.

Leaders demonstrate an unwavering commitment to community engagement, forging sustainable partnerships. Central to this is their work with the local community council (LCC), which ensures that the trust's strategic vision and policies are adapted appropriately for the local context. The trust, LCC and leaders regularly use staff and pupil voice to further develop the school.

Leaders continually aim for improvement. Their passion and determination help to ensure that transforming pupils' life chances is fundamental to the school's work. Leaders are tenacious in their work with external agencies and professionals to break down barriers to pupils' wellbeing. Trust leaders provide robust support and challenge, which contributes to a culture of success for pupils regardless of vulnerabilities.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard 

Pupils at this school achieve highly in national tests at the end of Year 6. Outcomes are above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils perform particularly well. Staff prioritise pupils securing strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who face other barriers to learning. This starts from the very first days in Reception. Pupils achieve well in the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1. Where appropriate, staff provide additional teaching through before-school teaching sessions called 'masterclasses' and adapt learning for pupils who need extra support in these. Where appropriate, this includes new pupils joining the school. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education. Pupils achieve very well across the wider curriculum. Leaders are

taking appropriate action to further improve writing across the wider curriculum, with demonstrable impact in all year groups.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Leaders' work in attendance is vast. Leaders are clear that attendance fundamentally links to pupils' sense of belonging and positive relationships with staff and peers. They have comprehensive and thorough systems and processes to track pupils' attendance, which rigorously link attendance with other barriers to learning. Staff actions result in attendance improvements for all groups of pupils. Although published information shows that some attendance rates are close to the national average, this does not capture the complex circumstances that impact this. Leaders complete significant work to share their practice with other schools. Pupils are highly knowledgeable about the importance of attending school regularly. For example, the pupil 'Attendance Ambassador' supports attendance reward systems.

There is a culture of excellent behaviour at the school. Pupils behave with respect for others. Children in the early years show positive attitudes to their learning. This continues throughout other year groups. Where appropriate, pupils independently use self-regulation stations in classrooms. Highly trained staff support pupils where needed. Leaders log behaviour incidents closely and use this information to provide additional support and teaching. Incidents of poor behaviour of any kind are rare. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who face other barriers to learning, interact with tolerance and kindness. Bullying is incredibly rare. Staff act swiftly to ensure that any unkind or inappropriate behaviour does not escalate.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders work to secure an ambitious and broad curriculum across the school. They ensure that knowledge across the curriculum builds from the early years to Year 6. Key texts are central to the curriculum. Leaders make astute choices about these, for example to ensure that they are diverse and reflect the many contexts and backgrounds of their pupils. Leaders and staff enhance the curriculum through practical experiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 dissected lambs' hearts to link their science learning about the heart and how the organ functions. Staff have high aspirations for vocabulary development through the curriculum. Leaders are aware that a small number of pupils still struggle to use this vocabulary as much as they would like.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. This means they present information clearly and make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Staff teaching of reading, writing and mathematics supports pupils to establish strong foundations, such as consistent sentence structures and phonics skills. Pupils apply these foundational skills across the wider curriculum. Staff adapt teaching quickly to explain any misunderstandings. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those facing other barriers to learning receive careful support. This supports success across the curriculum.

Early years

Strong standard 

The early years is full of the purposeful buzz of learning. Children absorb themselves in a range of activities. For example, painting flowers with watercolours or creating pictures using different shapes. Routines are well embedded and children are confident about what staff expect. Staff have excellent relationships with children. They use these to shape activities around children's interests and needs.

The curriculum is ambitious. Children's learning is appropriately sequenced. Leaders have ensured that key vocabulary is prioritised and that staff support language development well. Leaders remain focused on their work to embed high-quality interactions to further strengthen vocabulary development. Skilled teaching ensures that children, including those with specific vulnerabilities, make considerable progress from their starting points.

Staff are highly effective in securing foundational reading, writing and mathematical skills. Consistent phonics teaching means that children are confident to read with growing confidence. Children relish opportunities to use their phonics in their writing. Throughout the early years, high standards of mathematical learning are evident. Staff act swiftly to address any foundational skills, such as reminding children about appropriate pencil grip and demonstrating how to correctly form letters and numbers. By the end of Reception, children are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders and staff have high expectations for all pupils, regardless of any vulnerability or barriers they may face. Inclusion is at the centre of the school's work and barriers to learning are never an excuse.

Leaders use rigorous systems to track key information, such as whether a pupil is known or previously known to social care, their current attendance and whether they are a young carer. Leaders regularly meet to review pupils, and they use this information to inform their discussions and subsequent actions. This means action is swift and regularly reviewed for impact. Staff have detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and next steps, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. From the early years, staff quickly identify and assess children's needs. This is also true for the many pupils who join the school at other points in the year. Staff check progress from pupils' starting points and provide additional help when required.

Staff training ensures that they are experts in supporting pupils through any challenges in their lives. Leaders work closely with a range of other professionals to ensure the best for their pupils. Leaders, including those at trust level, pay careful attention to the impact of the pupil premium funding strategy. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders and staff give careful thought to preparing pupils for transitions and not just at the end of Year 6. This means pupils are extremely ready to access the next stage of their education.

Leaders ensure that there is a vast personal development offer. They strategically plan this offer to provide opportunities to all. However, they especially work to include disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who face other barriers to their learning. For example, staff use chess club to teach pupils about strategy and problem-solving, providing pupils with opportunities to compete in an activity they would otherwise have been less likely to do. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils to make a difference to the world, supported by the school's global curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about the impact that plastic pollution has in our oceans. There are a wide range of trips, visitors and experiences, such as visiting museums, art galleries and farms. Leaders have chosen these to provide life experiences and enhance the curriculum. Pupils discuss trips from their time in school with pleasure.

Pupils are highly prepared for their next stage of education and future lives. Pupils are confident and independent. Leaders provide opportunities for them to develop a range of talents and interests. This includes pupils learning rugby to widen access to local sports clubs. Pupils have detailed knowledge about protected characteristics and British values. For instance, they learn about mutual respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs by visiting various places of worship and through school events like the community Iftar. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND or those who face other barriers to learning. Pupils' knowledge in PSHE develops and deepens over time. Pupils are clear about the importance of online safety, especially around sharing of images. This is also true for the relationships, sex education and health education programme. The pastoral support programme is extensive. Leaders strategically track and measure the impact of these interventions, ensuring that the support is highly effective.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Forest Academy experience a culture where staff have the highest aspirations for them. This is because leaders ensure that all staff expect the best from pupils from the moment they enter the school door. Pupils receive a warm welcome every day. They benefit from staff expertise and impressive leadership. This includes pupil leadership, with pupils taking great pleasure in their roles on the 'Junior Leadership Team'. They support and listen to other pupils, for example through the 'help and feedback desk' every lunchtime. This leads to pupils having a voice in their school and making meaningful change, such as proposing new pupil leadership roles themselves and writing job descriptions about what the role would include. Attendance is an ongoing school priority. This means that pupils know the importance of being present in school and attend regularly. Regardless of starting points, pupils make rapid progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve incredibly well, including disadvantaged pupils.

The school places a clear emphasis on being at the heart of the community. This begins with home visits for all pupils starting at the school, regardless of age. Leaders are quick to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing, including for those with specific vulnerabilities. Pupils and their families receive an extensive range of pastoral and wider support as

needed. Pupils know they can talk to any member of staff. School is a place where pupils want to spend time. Staff celebrate pupils' learning and display their work in abundance.

From Reception through to Year 6, pupils behave with maturity and this creates orderly classrooms where learning is rarely interrupted. Pupils access an ambitious curriculum, where revisiting key learning from previous years is prioritised. A wide range of linked trips, visitors and experiences enhances pupils' learning. Pupils have extensive club choices, purposefully chosen to challenge stereotypes and raise ambition.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed their high-quality work to further enhance written outcomes and vocabulary development in the wider curriculum for all pupil groups, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Inspire Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rob Carpenter, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Lawrence.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place from 14 to 15 July 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and other senior leaders in the school and the trust. Inspectors also spoke with the CEO, the chair of trustees and the interim chair of the local community council.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The headteacher took up post in April 2022.

Headteacher: Swabra Lloyd

Lead inspector:

Verity Lambert-Dale, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Mark Rivers, Ofsted Inspector

Sam Carnegie, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 14 July 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

190

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

656

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

61.05%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.58%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.58%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	61%	Above
2024/25 (final)	73%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	71%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	82%	74%	Above
2024/25 (final)	77%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	82%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	83%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	82%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	85%	73%	Above
2024/25 (final)	77%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	93%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	46%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	75%	46%	Above
2022/23 (final)	71%	44%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	62%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	81%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	83%	59%	Above
2024/25 (final)	86%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	75%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	83%	60%	Above
2024/25 (final)	76%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	88%	59%	Above
2022/23 (final)	86%	59%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	74%	68%	7 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	69%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	67%	8 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	66%	5 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	79%	80%	0 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	81%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	81%	80%	2 pp
2022/23 (final)	81%	78%	3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	83%	78%	5 pp
2024/25 (final)	86%	78%	7 pp
2023/24 (final)	75%	78%	-3 pp
2022/23 (final)	86%	77%	8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	83%	80%	3 pp
2024/25 (final)	76%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	88%	79%	8 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	86%	79%	7 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.4%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	12.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.6%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	16.0%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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