

Forest Way School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120354
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	358743
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	David Muir HMI

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Norwell
Headteacher	Lynn Slinger
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 21 lessons and 20 teachers were seen; meetings were held with three groups of pupils, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, and a range of staff, including those in newly created management positions in the school. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, school improvement partner reports, a variety of action plans and monitoring and evaluation documents, and 130 parental questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The accuracy of the school's monitoring of pupils' progress across all areas and key stages of the school.
- How well the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils in all key stages, including the sixth form, so that they are ready to transfer to the next stage of their lives.
- How well the management raises and maintains expectations and aspirations across the school.
- How well the teaching meets the needs of all pupils taking into account their special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

Forest Way is an area special school for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities including, severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Many pupils also have additional needs, such as deafness or visual impairment. The school relocated to its current site in 2009 and is now situated in an award-winning building. The school is co-located on a campus with three mainstream schools and a children's centre. The school is oversubscribed and increasingly popular. There are currently six children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All students have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing statutory assessment. The school takes students from Leicestershire and three other local authorities. The student population is predominantly of White British heritage and there are twice as many boys as girls. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average.

The headteacher is a National Leader in Education (NLE) and the school is a National Support School (NSS), providing support to a range of schools. The school holds specialist status for communication and interaction and has received a number of awards, including Inclusion Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award, Football Charter, Sports Mark, Active Mark, Investors in People and ICT Becta.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The highest of expectations are evident in all aspects of the school's work and it is conspicuously successful in all that it does. The new building has been designed in meticulous detail to ensure that it functions as both an impressive resource and inspiring backdrop for the outstanding work of the school. The school places the pupils at the heart of every decision made and every lesson taught. All lessons seen during the inspection promoted at least good learning and progress, with a significant majority being outstanding. Nevertheless, the leadership and staff of the school strive for ever higher standards in all areas of their work. Staff who responded to the questionnaire unanimously agreed that they were proud to be a part of the school. This is confirmed in the high levels of commitment and professionalism from all staff, which enable the school to set and achieve ambitious targets in all aspects of its work. A superb network of well thought out partnerships contributes outstandingly to the level of education and care evident.

The impressive headteacher and deputy headteacher provide motivating drive, passion and vision which permeate all areas of the school community. Relationships with parents are outstanding. The overwhelmingly positive response by parents to the inspection questionnaire shows that parents profoundly value the work the school does in maintaining a high quality education for their children. There are no weak links and every stakeholder plays a part in providing the best for the pupils. Staff and the outstanding governing body play significant parts in devising, monitoring and evaluating the school improvement plan. Pupils' views are taken very seriously, through the school council, the annual review process and other systems, and they play an integral part in making the school the success that it is.

Pupils' excellent progress reflects the outstanding teaching seen throughout the inspection. Strong systems support the professional development of staff, so that good teaching moves rapidly to outstanding. Staff know pupils well so that their needs are met in a very precise and focussed way, both in lessons and in other activities around the school. Work is adapted through careful modification of resources, tasks, expected outcomes and the exemplary support provided by all staff in the class. Managers at all levels monitor the performance of the school in painstaking detail and use this information to inform improvements in the quality of the provision. All aspects of pupils' personal outcomes are outstanding except for attendance, which is in line with the national average for all schools. However, nearly all absences are the result of the pupils' medical needs and everything is done to ensure that attendance is as high as it can possibly be. This is confirmed by the 85% of parents who 'strongly agree' that their child enjoys coming to school. All aspects of safeguarding are excellent, with some examples of exemplary practice such as the recently revised pro-forma which supports evaluation in this area and is used to provide detailed feedback to the governing body to ensure that they are meeting statutory requirements.

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The school's specialism has already made an impressive impact through the implementation of programmes to develop language skills for targeted pupils. The outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children receive the best possible start to school and the exciting work of the sixth form ensures that the high standards are maintained as students prepare for the next stage of their lives. The accurate in-depth knowledge that leaders have, together with the significant improvements since the previous inspection, demonstrate that there is outstanding capacity to make sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- No areas for improvement were identified of which the school is not already aware, planning for and addressing successfully.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The leadership's meticulous monitoring ensures that all groups of pupils make equally outstanding progress. The courses and accreditations available are continually reviewed to ensure that they are sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils. A thorough, ongoing analysis of needs has resulted in the number of accredited courses being increased in partnership with a local mainstream school. Although the range of accreditation is currently suitable for all pupils in the school, there is flexibility to allow further choice as needs vary over time. As a result, all pupils leave school with externally accredited qualifications and go on to continue in full-time education, training or meaningful employment. The outstanding learning and progress made by pupils in lessons is the result of the outstanding teaching in all key stages. Data also supports the outstanding judgement for excellent progress over time.

The school is an exceptionally harmonious and welcoming community. Behaviour was outstanding in all lessons seen and in all areas around the school at lunch and break times. This agrees with the school's judgment of behaviour. Pupils' work in the school and the wider community is exceptional. They are fully involved in planning for their own futures through the annual review processes and the school council, which is fully inclusive and representative of all pupils. They play a significant part in the development of the school and were an integral part of helping to design the layout of the new building to ensure that it meets their needs. Pupils also work in such places as the local National Forest visitor centre, known as 'Conkers', and they help raise money for local charities and causes. Many take part in local sports competitions and several pupils participate at regional and national representative levels. Pupils are regular participants in many community activities, such as carol services and harvest festivals. Very strong partnerships with local employers, alongside enterprise activities and theme days, mean that pupils develop workplace skills to an outstanding level. The school works actively to provide opportunities to meet people from other cultures and backgrounds, using diversity within the school community to support this. This has helped to promote an excellent awareness of cultural issues, alongside activities related to such diverse themes as Diwali, Japanese art and jazz music. Pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong and are given ample opportunities to develop an awareness of themselves and others, which they embrace readily.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teaching seen during the inspection was unequivocally outstanding. In nearly three quarters of the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was outstanding and none was less than good. This is the result of the coaching and training which takes place to make sure that new teachers rapidly assimilate the knowledge and specialist skills they need to teach pupils with specific needs. In the best lessons, teachers are aware of the levels and abilities of all pupils, and employ a good range of teaching styles so that lessons are exciting and engaging for them all. Pupils are well motivated as the lessons capture their imagination and engage their interest. Behaviour management is subtle and focused on pupils developing awareness of their own behaviour. This is very effective, resulting in pupils managing their own behaviour outstandingly well. Learning is enhanced by a highly skilled staff who support groups and individuals very effectively. The best examples of feedback provided to pupils show clearly how to improve work and how more progress can be made. The strengths of the outstanding curriculum are the imaginative and creative range of opportunities and the range of personalised activities for all pupils. The imaginative use of the school's grounds has allowed the curriculum to be extended so that pupils have well-planned opportunities to interact with their environment and to learn about the natural world around them. This includes the developing 'Forest Schools' areas,

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which comprise well landscaped and fully accessible areas with a pond, raised beds and a hide for bird watching. The school's specialism has also significantly enhanced the curriculum through the creation of many positive links with other local schools and colleges.

The school organises residential visits in which all pupils participate. A variety of visits and visitors also support the curriculum very well in providing additional, high quality experiences for pupils. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support is a particular strength of the school. Excellent use is made of the multi-agency support which is available, including strong partnerships with support services and local schools and colleges. Support provided for families is outstanding and this helps them to support and manage their children more effectively than would be possible otherwise. Pupils are provided with high quality information, advice and guidance when it comes to transition to the next stage of their lives. This results in pupils making successful decisions about their futures.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding senior leadership team has developed a clear vision and climate for success which is shared, promoted and valued by all members of the school community. This has led to exceptionally high expectations for all. Managers monitor pupil progress rigorously and use this information to give teachers the confidence to extend pupil learning further. Staff morale is high and teachers are inspired to provide lessons of the highest quality. Support staff are a key element in ensuring that the focus on high quality learning does not waiver and that pupils are exceptionally well supported according to their individual needs. However, despite their continued success, the school staff and leadership show great humility and remain aware of the need to work hard to maintain standards at as high a level as possible. Senior leaders and other staff have a good understanding of the strengths within the school and the newly appointed middle leaders have clear plans for further improvement. Equality of opportunity is the starting point of all that the school does. Community cohesion is outstanding through a thorough knowledge of the school's context and the impact of its work on the school and wider community. Safeguarding procedures and policies, including child protection, are outstanding and show that all adults working with pupils are appropriately recruited and vetted. The governing body provides very effective challenge and robust monitoring systems, for example in the discharge of their safeguarding duties. Members of the governing body are an active presence in the school, are easily accessible to parents and carers, and are

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vigorous in ensuring the best arrangements for the school, for example in securing best value for money in contract procurement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with knowledge and skills which are below national expectations due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities and they remain low throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Despite this, the outstanding quality of the provision and teaching in this stage, alongside an extremely effective curriculum and excellent care, results in outstanding progress being made. Children's individual qualities are highly valued by staff and this makes an extremely positive contribution to children's excellent behaviour, their growing independence and increasing sense of responsibility. The excellent provision promotes successful learning with the children benefitting from a rich and varied curriculum and a wealth of stimulating activities across the six areas of learning. The curriculum is flexible in response to children's interests and visits in to the local community help to broaden children's experiences. Outstanding use of assessment identifies well the next steps on learning for each child. There is a major emphasis on the development of communication, promoted through the school's specialism, and personal and social development. There are very strong relationships between the staff and children, and the teaching assistants provide very effective, targeted support that promotes very effective learning. The well-planned use of the outside area provides highly stimulating activities to support learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well led and managed and the lead teacher has an exceptionally good understanding of children of this age who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnerships with parents and other professionals

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are impressive and well planned, contributing very well to the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

The sixth form is outstanding in all areas of its work. It is a very well planned and executed provision providing an increasing range of accredited courses. The newly established partnerships with the local mainstream schools have helped to expand the number of courses available to now include among others, a BTEC course in Hair and Beauty, in addition to the well-established OCR courses in life skills and the local college links which include courses on motor vehicle maintenance, construction, painting and decorating, and hair and beauty. In addition to the courses available, the school also focusses on developing students' independence skills. Students can use the school's 'Life Skills Flat' to practise and develop their personal skills in areas such as home security, making a hot drink and snack, bed making, laundry skills. The range of accreditation provided offers genuine and realistic qualification, and opportunities to enhance students' prospects of positive progression routes when they leave school. The school provides a range of work experience opportunities during their time in the sixth form. These include working within the school with younger pupils, or external work in local businesses or at 'Conkers'. The school also promotes community skills whereby students develop independence skills in the local community.

All sixth form lessons seen during the inspection were of a high quality, promoting at least good, and often outstanding, progress. Students were very well engaged in their learning, and had developed the skills to evaluate their own work and that of their peers. The school plans extremely well for transition. The outstanding quality information, advice and guidance, and effective links with the Connexions service and local colleges provide a sound base from which students are able to move to the next stage of their lives. The school has a strong tradition of all of its students moving on to the next stage of full-time education, with no students being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs).

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and these were overwhelmingly positive in all areas. Their responses and comments reflected the inspectors' judgements. Some typical comments from parents, about their child's education were: 'My child has progressed tremendously since starting Forest Way. The school has supported the whole family', 'Staff go well beyond their duties to support children and families' and 'Excellent school and I feel privileged to have my son attend.' The findings of the inspection support the positive view of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Forest Way School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 164 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	110	85	19	15	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	116	89	14	11	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	99	76	28	22	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	72	32	25	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	106	82	22	17	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	94	72	33	25	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	99	76	30	23	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	74	57	37	28	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	101	78	27	21	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	97	75	29	22	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	93	72	33	25	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	113	87	16	12	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	114	88	15	12	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forest Way School, Coalville, LE67 4UU

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for making our visit extremely interesting and enjoyable.

We found that your school is outstanding. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, the leadership team and staff all work very hard to make your time in school as successful as it could possibly be. Your personal development is outstanding and your behaviour at all times made an outstanding impression on us. We were also very impressed by the way you are prepared for your future lives and the work that you do within the local community. You all work very hard in your lessons, which means that the progress you make in school is outstanding. The care, guidance and support which you receive are outstanding. You have fantastic attitudes to learning and it was inspiring to see how everybody in the school contributes to making it so successful. Your contribution to the school's work is especially strong and is a key element in making the school as successful as it is.

During our time in the school, we could not identify any areas which needed to be improved which the school was not already improving significantly. We have therefore left the school with no recommendations to improve as we are so confident in the school's leadership and other staff to continue to work at the same high standard as now.

Once again, thank you very much for the time you spent with us during the visit and we would like to wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

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