

Forest Way School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120354
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313587
Inspection dates	10–11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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
Number on roll	
School	98
6th form	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Norwell
Headteacher	Lynn Slinger
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Waterworks Road Coalville LE67 4HZ
Telephone number	01530 831899
Fax number	01530 814069

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Forest Way School provides for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. Almost all other pupils have either moderate learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) as their primary need. There is also a wide range of additional needs. There are twice as many boys as girls. Pupils are mainly from White British families. There are, however, a small minority of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, including a very small number who speak English as an additional language. About one in every five pupils is entitled to free school meals. The pupils and staff will relocate in 2009 to a newly built school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Forest Way is an outstanding school, which continually strives to improve the provision for all its learners. Because of their learning difficulties, the standards reached by pupils are exceptionally low but all pupils do well in their studies and many make outstanding progress. The pupils love coming to school and parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing they will be safe, that they enjoy their lessons and that the school has high expectations of their progress. One parent's comment was typical: "My daughter loves school, it's fun and caring!" All the pupils make excellent progress in their personal development.

The quality of teaching is excellent. The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. Lessons are very well planned and are characterised by the high quality of support given to the pupils by the well-trained learning assistants. The school's monitoring and tracking of pupils' overall achievement is excellent. The curriculum is outstanding because it is so well tailored to pupils' needs. It is enriched by the exemplary provision to develop pupils' communication skills and by the excellent procedures to enable pupils to learn and mix socially with pupils at a number of local mainstream schools. The pupils thrive within the caring and supportive ethos of the school. They feel safe and well supported. There is a strong emphasis on the pupils' personal, health and social education (PHSE). As a result, their personal development is outstanding. They learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave well. Pupils value the school and this is evident through the good relationships they have with staff, their very good attendance, and the way they all proudly show their work to visitors.

Provision in the post-16 part of the school and in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Post-16 students make excellent gains in their level of maturity and self-confidence, helped by an outstanding programme of work experience. Foundation Stage pupils quickly settle in the school through excellent teaching and care.

All this is driven by exceptional leadership and management. The headteacher is highly regarded by staff and her work is outstanding in maintaining and continually improving standards. She is supported by a very able deputy. The management team has been very effective in leading and monitoring staff in the drive to improve pupils' achievements. A strength of the school lies in the confidence staff feel that they will be supported and encouraged to continually extend their knowledge and skills. The school evaluates its work extremely well but recognises that there is further scope to refine its already robust review procedures to make them even more effective in focusing on areas for improvement. It seeks and acts on the views of all connected with the school, not least the pupils themselves. The governing body is very supportive and monitors aspects of the school's work robustly. The school has made substantial improvement in its performance since the previous inspection and has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development because of excellent procedures to help them gain experiences of adult life. They are encouraged to take as many opportunities as possible to make their own choices and to seek independence. The staff effectively promote an adult ethos and mature behaviour. Excellent teaching results in many pupils making outstanding progress. The school has developed good links with local colleges and almost all

pupils leave at 19 years for further education courses. The pupils are able to achieve their potential through a range of accredited qualifications. The leadership and management of the provision are of a very high quality.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Although there is only one pupil at present in Foundation Stage, the records in the department clearly show that pupils make exceptional progress, particularly in their communication and behaviour. Assessment is rigorous and work is very well matched to appropriate small steps in learning. The staff know their pupils very well and this is demonstrated by the calm and friendly hand-over in the morning, with big smiles and immediate involvement in activities being typical features at the start of the day. The teacher and support staff are skilled in creating many opportunities for communication, whether by speech or by signing. The curriculum is very well adapted to provide for each pupil's learning needs and the emphasis on the pupils' personal development provides a very good basis for their future success in the school. The department is very well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate and refine management procedures to ensure further school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

All the pupils achieve well and many make outstanding progress. Pupils making this excellent progress are from all sections of the school population, including those with PMLD, those with autistic conditions and pupils in both the post-16 provision and in the Foundation Stage. The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in the acquisition of basic skills is exceptional, and this has a significant impact on their achievement. Teachers capture each small step in progress which pupils make, and this leads to well-focused targets for each pupil's further improvement. Many pupils make excellent progress in meeting challenging individual education plan (IEP) targets. Pupils from Year 11 to Year 14 are able to demonstrate their potential through nationally accredited qualifications.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's strong management of behaviour and emphasis on moral and social values. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils gradually develop a strong awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles through the many opportunities to take part in physical activity during the day and at lunchtimes. They make excellent gains in their social skills through the many communal activities. Similarly, post-16 pupils make excellent gains in acquiring valuable life skills through work experience and effective careers provision. Pupils feel safe and confident and know what is expected from them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. Behaviour and attendance are outstanding because pupils enjoy school so much and love to be there. Pupils were emphatic that they felt free from bullying or unpleasantness and that

they really looked forward to coming to school. The many parents who returned questionnaires were unanimous in their unqualified praise for the school and its impact on their children's lives. One parent wrote, "I have the greatest confidence in the staff of Forest Way School as they have proved themselves over and over...".

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teachers know their pupils very well and this enables them to plan interesting, well-paced lessons. There are very good relationships between classroom teams and between staff and pupils. Teaching assistants support pupils very effectively. Pupils like their teachers and the support staff. They enjoy their lessons and try their best. There is a very effective emphasis on the development of communication skills and this significantly enhances their involvement in learning activities. All classroom staff play a full part in assessing and recording each small step in pupils' progress. As a result, teachers are able to plan challenging activities for each pupil, so enabling them to make good and often outstanding progress. For example, in a post-16 mathematics lesson pupils made excellent progress through working on number problems matched to their own precise learning targets. The management of behaviour is excellent. Pupils understand and respond to clear routines. When a pupil's behaviour becomes unacceptable it is dealt with calmly and with understanding and support for the pupil involved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils enjoy a carefully constructed curriculum, which is very well adapted to their needs. The curriculum is rigorously monitored for its effectiveness. There is a range of very good programmes for post-16 pupils and particularly good provision for work-related learning. Programmes in PHSE underpin much of the school's work and these have a significant impact on the pupils' achievement in personal skills, their knowledge about the advantages of a healthy lifestyle and about their own safety. The school's exemplary provision for the development of pupils' communication skills is extremely effective in promoting the pupils' confidence and their access to learning opportunities. There is a wide range of activities to take pupils out of the classroom, teaching them to behave appropriately in the community. The school provides an excellent range of opportunities for pupils to experience mainstream school provision and to socialise and work with mainstream students. This adds substantially to the pupils' social skills, their self-confidence and their interest in learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides a very high standard of care for all of its pupils. It maintains excellent links with outside agencies to help ensure that all needs are fully addressed. Child protection procedures are effective. There are appropriate procedures for risk assessments and the necessary checks on staff are in place. Governors regularly monitor health and safety policy. The generous

staffing means pupils have many opportunities to talk to adults and there are very supportive relationships. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of their personal development targets. They are proud of their successes and they like the way staff tell them how well they are doing in both their work and personal development, and reward them with stickers and certificates. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in assembly at the end of each day. The information given to parents for Annual Review meetings is of a very high standard. Parents report a high degree of satisfaction with their level of involvement in their child's education. Pupils receive very good advice and support as they are about to leave school. There are good links with local colleges, which results in almost all pupils taking advantage of further education courses when they leave school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher shows outstanding leadership through her determination to maintain the highest standards of teaching and care. She is supported by a strong senior team. A strength of the school lies in the rigorous and effective way managers monitor, evaluate and improve on every aspect of both the school's performance and the pupils' achievements. There are very effective procedures, for instance, to measure and improve staff performance. Communication within the school is excellent. Staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. There are excellent procedures to support new staff and the quality of professional training is outstanding. This makes a significant contribution to sustaining pupils' outstanding achievement. The school recognises that procedures overall could be further refined to focus even more closely on areas for improvement. Governors provide effective support to the school, work closely with individual staff and rigorously monitor the school's strengths and areas for development. Relationships with parents are extremely good. The communication between home and school is very well organised and parents are actively encouraged to be involved with their child's education. Excellent leadership and management have enabled the school to maintain rapid and consistent improvement since the previous inspection and give the school an excellent capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Forest Way School, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4HZ

Not long ago my colleague and I came to the school to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the school better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom and at lunchtimes. Thank you and well done. I was with you for two days and my colleague for one day. That was long enough for us to realise that Forest Way is an outstandingly good school. We could see that you all enjoy school very much. There were lots of things that we liked. Here are a few:

- You work hard and make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development.
- The many different people at the school look after you very well.
- You are given an excellent range of activities, including those that help you become independent, make choices and mix with other pupils from different schools.
- Your teachers and other staff are very good at helping you to communicate in your own way and in recording all the progress you make.
- Your school is extremely well run by your headteacher, who is very well supported by everyone else, including your parents.

We think the school could improve even further if all the staff were to think, all the time, about how they can keep helping you to do even better! You can help too, just by going on working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for all the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes and good luck,

Yours sincerely,

Mel Blackband Lead Inspector



12 September 2007

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Mel Blackband
Lead Inspector