

Forest Way School

Address: Warren Hills Road, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 4UU

Unique reference number (URN): 137905

Inspection report: 24 March 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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

The curriculum and wider opportunities help pupils to achieve well both academically and personally. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their lives.

The vast majority of Year 11 pupils continue their education in the school's post-16 provision. Students, for whom it is appropriate, gain a range of qualifications before they leave the school. All pupils are supported to move on to appropriate destinations when they leave the school.

Pupils in all pathways make substantial progress from their starting points throughout the school. The quality of the work that they produce improves over time. For example, pupils who begin with mark making are supported to quickly be able to write their own name. Pupils consistently develop the foundational knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics that they will need for the future.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff consistently promote the importance of high attendance. They work with pupils, families and external agencies to tackle barriers to regular attendance. Consequently, most pupils have excellent attendance, and others have greatly reduced rates of absence. Leaders and staff analyse attendance information closely, at whole-school level and for different groups. They use this information to acknowledge pupils who attend well and support those who require additional action to reduce absence.

The school is a calm and orderly place. Leaders have established a respectful and positive culture that is conducive to learning. Pupils show dedication to their education and self-discipline. Pupils know how to manage their emotions. Staff use a range of appropriate strategies to help pupils to behave appropriately. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have established clear routines that pupils understand well. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Staff have the necessary expertise, support and confidence to adapt behaviour policies and practices to maintain these standards. They use timely and well-chosen interventions to support pupils who need additional help to sustain the school's high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning. Staff make appropriate adjustments to strategies to meet individual pupils' particular needs. This is an inclusive school. No form of discrimination, harassment, abuse or violence is tolerated.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They constantly review what is taught and how it is delivered to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils with varying starting points. The different pathways help to ensure that the high-quality curriculum is appropriate for all pupils.

The curriculum is ambitious and gives pupils the knowledge and skills that they will need for their next steps. Pupils study an appropriate range of subjects to help to prepare them for future learning and adult life. Learning is carefully sequenced. Key knowledge and skills are revisited regularly to help pupils to remember important information.

Pupils receive highly effective teaching that ensures that they secure foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is purposefully designed to extend pupils' communication skills, including language and vocabulary.

Staff consistently deliver the curriculum well. Teachers and teaching assistants work most effectively as a team to help pupils to achieve highly. Staff have secure subject knowledge and know how to make key knowledge accessible to pupils with different starting points. They use assessment well to check pupils' understanding and amend their teaching accordingly.

Early years

Strong standard 

Children benefit from an excellent start to their education at Forest Way School. Staff maximise opportunities for children to engage in high-quality interactions throughout the day in the early years classes. Language development is at the forefront of activities. This helps children to develop their communication skills, including language, vocabulary, reading and phonics. Staff give appropriate support to children whose communication is less well developed than others or who do not readily engage with adults.

Staff quickly and accurately identify children who face additional barriers to their learning and wellbeing. They are skilled at meeting children's identified needs and respond swiftly to any changing or emerging needs.

The curriculum is designed to give children the knowledge and skills that they will need for future learning and life beyond the school. Children gain an understanding of the wider world. Staff work most effectively together to ensure that the curriculum is taught well. Children make effective progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.

Daily routines are embedded, and children are well cared for. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices and develop their independence. Staff work in close partnership with families, other settings and external agencies to help children achieve, belong and thrive.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

An inclusive culture is embedded across the school. Leaders and staff share their very effective practice with other schools, networks and professionals both locally and nationally.

Leaders and staff know their pupils as individuals. They quickly identify, assess and meet the needs of all the pupils who attend Forest Way School. Leaders and staff reduce barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing through targeted support, careful adaptations and inclusive practices. Staff monitor pupils' progress closely and adjust the support they provide to meet pupils' emerging or changing needs. As a result, vulnerable pupils achieve well.

Staff are well trained to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points, needs and abilities. They work very effectively with pupils, other staff, families and external agencies to help pupils to realise their potential.

Pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported and challenged effectively. They access an adapted curriculum that broadens their knowledge and experiences. The curriculum enhances each pupil's communication skills. Pupils who are able to do so develop the reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills that they will be able to use in the future.

Leaders ensure that their strategy for the use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is implemented effectively and monitored well. Staff are well trained to help disadvantaged pupils to succeed. Children known, or previously known, to social care are supported highly effectively to thrive in school and beyond.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders use their detailed and accurate analysis of the school's performance to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. Leaders, and those responsible for governance, know the school's strengths and have prioritised appropriate strategies to develop provision further. They take decisions in the best interests of the pupils. Leaders take effective action to sustain consistent standards across the school. They consistently enhance pupils' experiences and remove any barriers to learning or wellbeing.

Leaders have established a culture of high expectations for all. They have implemented an evidence-informed professional learning programme as a mechanism to drive further developments. Staff, including early career teachers, access the high-quality and coherent professional learning programme. Leaders collaborate with other schools, organisations and professionals to enhance the provision in school and beyond.

Leaders promote staff wellbeing and are considerate of their workload. Staff feel involved in decision-making and the strategic direction of the school. Those responsible for governance understand their role and help to ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined. They use their knowledge and experience to offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders.

Since the school joined the Open Thinking Partnership multi-academy trust, leaders have continued to be held to account in relation to how they manage resources and provide high-quality education for all pupils. Leaders value the support that the trust provides.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The programme to support pupils' personal development is extensive and is an entitlement for every pupil. It is carefully tailored to the school's context as well as pupils' needs and aspirations. The school supports all pupils to participate fully.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and experiences. They learn to respect others' values and understand right and wrong. Pupils learn to develop their cooperation and communication skills and to appreciate fundamental British values. Staff consistently

promote respect, independence and resilience as positive characteristics of how to behave. Pupils have a wide range of creative and cultural opportunities. They mix with people who are different from themselves. This broadens their experiences. For example, they attend the theatre, take part in musical events, visit a farm, enjoy residential visits and go to the shops.

Staff deliver a suitable and age-appropriate relationships, sex and health education programme effectively. It encourages pupils to use the correct terminology and deepens their knowledge. Pupils' wellbeing is promoted across the different pathways. Staff know the pupils very well and provide highly effective additional pastoral care when required. Pupils who require physical or emotional support receive it without question. Care packages are in place for pupils who need them.

Pupils receive appropriate careers education. They know about colleges and are helped to understand the world of work. Some experience the workplace in person. Transition arrangements for college, training, independent living or supported living are robust. Preparation for adulthood is a key part of the school's curriculum.

The impact of the personal development programme is clear in the outcomes and experiences of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. It develops their talents and interests and provides them with new and exciting opportunities.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

Leaders have a thorough understanding of the quality and suitability of the post-16 provision. The post-16 programme of study is carefully designed to meet students' needs and aspirations. Students follow appropriate pathways to help them prepare for their next steps and adulthood. Each pathway builds upon prior learning and promotes community inclusion, independent living, employability and health. Staff continue to help students to develop their ability to communicate, and there is a strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics. The provision also promotes students' personal development and provides them with high-quality careers and relationships, sex and health education.

The curriculum in each pathway is well taught. Students make substantial progress from their starting points. They are helped to develop their life skills, and many gain qualifications that they can build upon when they transition to college.

Post-16 students experience local workplaces, participate in community action projects and contribute to the school and the local community. They participate in a range of trips, including residential visits, and some complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Students feel safe and understand the notion of consent. They value the opportunities the post-16 setting provides.

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

Pupils with different abilities, needs and starting points thrive at Forest Way School. They follow tailored pathways through an appropriately adapted curriculum to prepare them for life beyond the school and their adulthood. Communication is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils learn how to express their thoughts in a variety of ways.

Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. All pupils, including children in the early years, develop the key knowledge and skills that they will need for future learning. Post-16 students gain the qualifications and experiences that will help them once they leave the school. These activities are carefully tailored. All pupils enjoy residential visits, and some post-16 students are regularly in a local workplace. These experiences broaden pupils' horizons.

Pupils achieve well both academically and personally. Staff skilfully remove barriers to their learning and wellbeing to help pupils to succeed. Pupils' learning in the classroom is enhanced by a vast range of enrichment activities. All pupils have access to a wide set of experiences, including trips, clubs and outdoor learning. All pupils have the opportunity to experience a residential trip. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Staff also promote pupils' emotional wellbeing.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They feel happy and safe. Pupils are considerate of others. They are confident that staff would resolve any instances of unkindness that may occur. Pupils know that staff listen to them if they have any concerns. Pupils and staff have positive and productive relationships.

Most pupils have high attendance. The school helps those who are absent more often to attend as regularly as possible. Pupils want to come to school to learn. They enjoy a range of subjects and understand how what they are learning now will help them in the future.

Next steps

- Leaders and governors should sustain the effectiveness of their work, and that of their staff, in all areas to maintain their focus on securing continued development of the school's high-quality provision, including its post-16 offer, to drive a transformational impact for all pupils.

About this inspection

The school is part of Open Thinking Partnership, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Janet Thompson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris White.

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

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 executive headteacher, the 2 heads of school, other leaders, trustees including the chair of the board of trustees, governors including the chair of the local governing body, other staff and pupils.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The primary needs identified are: visual impairment; hearing impairment; speech, language and communication; autistic spectrum disorder; multi-sensory impairment; physical disability; moderate learning difficulty; severe learning difficulty; and profound and multiple learning difficulty.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

The school has undergone significant changes since the last inspection, including changes in leadership. The school joined the Open Thinking Partnership multi-academy trust in June 2025. The executive headteacher was previously the headteacher. The head of school for secondary was previously the deputy headteacher. Both took up their current roles in April 2025. A primary head of school was appointed in April 2025.

Executive headteacher: Gail Seaton

Lead inspector:

Simon Mosley, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:

Julie Sheppard, Ofsted Inspector

Gayle Bacon, Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Long, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

283

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.

School capacity

265

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.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

38.75%

What does this mean?

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

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

100.00%

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.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0.00%

What does this mean?

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

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)

Resourced provision and SEN unit

What does this mean?

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

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

VI - Visual Impairment, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty, PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school
2023 leavers (provisional)	100%
2022 leavers (revised)	100%
2021 leavers (revised)	100%

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
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2024/25 (2 term)	7.5%
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2023/24 (3 term)	8.8%
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2022/23 (3 term)	9.0%
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Persistent absence

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

Year	This school
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2024/25 (2 term)	20.7%
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2023/24 (3 term)	28.1%
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2022/23 (3 term)	28.4%
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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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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