

Inspection of Forest Moor School

Menwith Hill Road, Darley, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 2RA

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Dave Roberts. This school is part of Wellspring Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Cheryl Hobson. There is also an executive headteacher, Scott Jacques, who is responsible for this school and four others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils develop socially and academically at this much-improved special school. Pupils have a range of complex social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Staff at the school understand these needs extremely well. Pupils experience learning and enrichment that are well matched to their individual profiles. Pupils are kept safe in this nurturing environment.

Pupils learn a broad curriculum. Central to this are their SEMH targets. English and mathematics are prioritised. All pupils leave with a qualification in these important subjects. This helps pupils secure important next steps in learning and employment.

Pupils place trust in the adults around them. Bullying can happen at the school. However, most pupils have confidence that staff will resolve it quickly. Pupils benefit from the school's clear five-step plans for resolving bullying or discriminatory behaviour incidents. These plans help ensure this behaviour does not spread. Staff ensure pupils learn from their experiences.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities for outdoor learning that the school provides. They particularly enjoy caring for the school's animals. These include goats and chickens, as part of the developing school farm. Pupils enjoy taking part in activities during lunchtime with staff and with their peers. For example, focused sports or art help them increase or decrease energy levels. Pupils use the time to talk to staff about their day.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has made significant improvements in recent years, with support from the academy trust. In mathematics, the school has carefully chosen and adapted high-quality resources. This ensures an increased number of pupils achieve formal qualifications before they leave school. In English, the curriculum is text-rich and adapted to the needs of the pupils. For example, Year 10 pupils enjoy learning about 'Of Mice and Men'. They show their understanding of influences on the writer. This includes the Wall Street Crash and the American Dust Bowl. The sensory room brings the text to life. Images, lighting and sound help pupils picture the setting. However, in some subjects, the curriculum plans are not precise enough. The school has not made clear the most important knowledge pupils need to know. Some pupils do not close gaps in learning rapidly enough. In subjects such as history and geography, pupils lack subject-specific knowledge. This limits their progress.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Pupils enjoy dedicated time every day for phonics and reading development. Trained staff help pupils to develop fluency and confidence in reading. Daily 'drop everything and read' time enables pupils to enjoy reading for pleasure. Throughout the school, staff read aloud from carefully chosen texts. These books also support pupils' personal development. Through reading, pupils explore themes of identity that are relevant to them.

Forest Moor is a special school for pupils with SEMH. Pupils can find it challenging to manage their behaviour within social norms. The school has well-established systems for supporting pupils when this happens. Staff are highly trained. They ensure that a calm and caring approach is the basis of any interventions. Instances of dysregulated behaviour are responded to consistently. Restorative practice helps pupils develop coping strategies over time.

Many pupils travel long distances to get to school. They begin the day with nourishing food in 'nurture breakfast'. This provides the opportunity to prepare for the learning ahead. They also discuss their personal goals with staff. For some pupils, the journey to school can be a factor in their low attendance. The school's attendance figures are lower than national and local averages. Staff ensure that attendance improvement strategies are in place across the school and community. As a result, some pupils' attendance has improved. However, too many pupils still miss too much time at school.

Pupils enjoy a personalised SEMH curriculum. This is underpinned by their education, health and care plan. The curriculum helps prepare pupils for life after Forest Moor School. Well-planned careers education supports their next steps further. Pupils achieve well-matched destinations at a range of post-16 placements.

The school has been on a rapid journey of improvement. Leaders across the trust and school have raised standards and expectations. Staff recognise this change. They feel proud to work at the school. One staff member echoed the views of many, saying they are 'invested in' by the school. Parents value the personalised learning that helps meet their child's needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' attendance has been consistently low over time. Pupils miss out on important learning and experiences too often. The school should intensify its work with parents and carers, as well as other agencies, to rapidly improve engagement in school so pupils can achieve the very best outcomes.
- In some subjects, the school has not precisely set out the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need to acquire. This means that, in these subjects, learning is not focused enough to help pupils secure the subject knowledge they need to close gaps and support future learning. The school should continue its cycle of curriculum review to ensure that pupils have the knowledge they need to succeed well in all curriculum areas.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148332
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10323125
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Hobson
CEO of the trust	Mark Wilson
Principal	Dave Roberts
Website	www.forestmoor.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Forest Moor School is a special school that caters for pupils aged 9 to 16 with SEMH. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The principal took up post in September 2022.
- The school educates pupils from multiple local authorities over a wide geographical area.
- The school uses eight alternative providers of education for its pupils. These providers are all unregistered.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships. This information is tailored to the context of the school.
- Forest Moor School converted to become an academy in July 2021. When its predecessor school, Forest Moor School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the executive principal and other senior or trust leaders over the course of the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with the deputy chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the school's governing group. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governors' meetings.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following curriculum areas: English, mathematics and the SEMH curriculum. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also discussed the art curriculum with leaders.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with leaders responsible for personal development.
- The lead inspector made a telephone call to an alternative provider of education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Birch

Ofsted Inspector

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