

Inspection of Forest Hill School

Dacres Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 2XN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are safe and happy. They achieve well. The school has put in place a carefully considered and ambitious curriculum. It goes beyond the scope of the national curriculum. Leaders are determined that this rich curriculum is accessed by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is further enriched with interesting and relevant educational visits. For example, pupils studying GCSE history visit an old operating theatre to help them visualise nineteenth-century surgery.

Pupils behave well around the school. They listen to their teachers and are polite to guests and to each other. Pupils feel safe in the school. They know they can talk to trusted adults if they have any concerns. As well as promoting academic achievement, the school makes sure that pupils are taught wider life skills. For example, there are workshops in place to help the boys grow into responsible and kind young men. There is a strong focus on celebrating diversity and promoting equality of opportunity.

This combination of academic achievement, strong pastoral care and wider personal development means that pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education or training.

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

Pupils study a broad and interesting curriculum. The school has carefully considered the important knowledge that they want pupils to study. In the sixth form, a wide range of A-level choices is supplemented by several different vocational qualifications. Within subjects, the chosen topics of study have been put together in a logical way. This helps pupils to build on their prior knowledge so they learn more and remember more over time. This means that, from the start, pupils are well prepared for the rigour of GCSEs and for sixth-form studies. Leaders also make sure that content is relevant and interesting for pupils. For example, in history, pupils learn about migration by studying the Silk Road. In mathematics, pupils learn real-life examples of how to calculate average pay for different professions.

The very well-resourced library in the heart of the building exemplifies the school's commitment to promoting reading. Pupils read widely and often. Pupils who need extra help to read with confidence and fluency are given additional support so they can keep up with their classmates.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Lessons follow consistent routines and teachers give pupils clear instructions. This means that pupils, including those in the sixth form, know what teachers expect them to do and how to approach the set tasks. Pupils with SEND follow the same rich curriculum as their peers. Teachers benefit from very clear information about these pupils, including how to help them access new knowledge. Teachers, therefore, make appropriate adaptations to their lessons so that all pupils can access the learning. However, occasionally the choice

of tasks in lessons is not focused well enough to help pupils learn the intended lesson content. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge in those instances.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. These are met through the consistent routines that are in place. This means that learning is not disrupted by pupils' behaviour. Sixth-form students are supported to be independent learners, and they develop effective study skills. Pupils know that unkind or discriminatory language is not tolerated. They are polite and considerate. Rates of attendance at school are high, supported by robust systems that are in place to address absence.

The school is ambitious to develop pupils beyond the academic. Pupils from Year 7 to Year 13 benefit from a carefully considered programme of personal, social and health education. This teaches pupils about healthy lifestyles and relationships in an age-appropriate way. Pupils are taught to stay safe, including when online and in the local community. From Year 7 upwards, pupils are taught about careers and the different future pathways available to them. Sixth-form students benefit from detailed advice and guidance to help them with university applications and other options, including apprenticeships. A range of clubs and activities, including a variety of sports, a school newspaper and musical instrument tuition, help pupils to develop new talents and interests.

Governors know the school very well. They share the school's ambition to provide inclusive education. They understand the school's strengths and areas for development. The school makes sure that staff have access to high-quality training and development. This includes teachers new to the profession, who are very well supported. Staff feel valued and said that their workload and well-being are considered by the school. Parents and carers value the ethos of the school. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are proud of their school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teaching activities do not help pupils gain the planned knowledge and skills as well as they could. This leads to some pupils having gaps in their knowledge. School leaders should continue to develop teachers' pedagogical skills so that they routinely set the most useful activities that help pupils to learn new knowledge securely.

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	100745
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10296573
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,098
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Knox
Headteacher	Michael Sullivan
Website	https://foresthill.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative education providers in the London Borough of Lewisham for a small number of pupils.
- The school runs the sixth form as a consortium with Sydenham School.
- 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.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, history, science, physical education and languages. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils. The inspectors talked to leaders and looked at curriculum information for other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the leadership team and members of staff, as well as with a range of pupils.
- 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 considered the survey responses from parents, pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with governors, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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