

Forest Hall Primary School

Address: Delaval Road, Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE12 9BA

Unique reference number (URN): 108605

Inspection report: 2 June 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.

Expected standard

Early years

Expected standard 

Warm relationships are at the heart of the early years provision. Staff provide nurturing, well-designed learning activities that help children begin school confidently and happily. They work closely with parents and carers to keep children safe and meet their needs.

Staff know children well, and have high expectations and a sharp focus on children's language development. They model vocabulary and share a range of stories, songs and rhymes, positively encouraging children to join in. As a result, children become increasingly articulate.

In the Reception Year, children build secure phonics knowledge and develop essential reading and mathematics skills. Staff reinforce early writing skills by emphasising physical development and support children with their pencil grip.

The outdoor activities, including 'woodland Wednesdays' are highly engaging. Children develop teamwork, independence and resilience. Staff support children in their decision-making, for example deciding which routes to take in the wildlife area. Children learn about water safety and risks in the environment.

Children make positive gains in their learning from their individual starting points. Staff adapt teaching for disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They check learning carefully and provide targeted support so children can keep up with the curriculum. Children are well prepared for Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

This is an inclusive school. Teaching is typically adapted well to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. Staff receive suitable training to identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Leaders have high expectations for these pupils and they are included in all aspects of school life. When needed, additional teacher input and the use of bespoke resources to support pupils are highly effective.

Leaders work closely with parents and carers to ensure that support is designed to meet pupils' individual needs. When required, the school uses external professionals, such as speech therapists, to provide advice and additional support for pupils' development. Leaders check and review pupils' individual learning targets thoroughly throughout the school year. Pupils are involved in planning their next steps and contributing their thoughts on what they need to be successful.

Leaders use evidence-informed strategies to support disadvantaged pupils. The additional pupil premium funding contributes to a suitable enrichment offer and initiatives which benefit pupils. This includes participation in field trips such as the residential experience in Years 5 and 6.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Inconsistencies in teaching mean that current pupils make uneven progress through the curriculum. In some instances, teachers do not ensure that pupils secure important knowledge. For example, where teachers do not support pupils well to develop the skills they need in reading, mathematics and handwriting, pupils lack important knowledge and their work is of varying quality.

Some pupils, for example in younger year groups, benefit from a focus on foundational skills such as pencil grip and letter formation. However, these are not addressed consistently. In older year groups, inconsistencies in letter formation and spelling are present within pupils' work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) generally make appropriate progress from their starting points, particularly those with the highest levels of need. However, pupils with SEND experience the same inconsistencies in teaching as their peers, which impacts their progress through the curriculum.

Published outcomes in national assessments are largely positive. In the end-of-Year-6 tests in reading, writing and mathematics, typically, pupils' results are close to national averages over time. Similarly, in the Year 1 phonics screening check and Year 4 multiplication tables check, pupils' achievements are close to or above the national average. Some more able pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Over time, pupils' overall attendance has been in line with national averages. However, this has recently declined. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is stubbornly high. Leaders track which pupils are absent from school but the strategies to promote good levels of attendance are not effective enough in bringing about a positive change. There are a number of pupils who arrive late to school each morning. This is disruptive to their learning and the learning of other pupils in class. The governing body has reviewed the school attendance policy and is planning to bring in changes to improve attendance. There is more to do to ensure that all groups of pupils have high levels of attendance and attend school on time.

Most pupils usually behave well in class, but there are times when some pupils are not fully engaged in their learning. Pupils usually treat each other with respect. However, some pupils occasionally use hurtful names towards others. Any instances of unkindness are dealt with by staff, but they do sometimes reoccur. Pupils fully understand the behavioural reward system and are able to explain rules and consequences. Many save up their 'tree points' for half-termly treats and aim to represent their 'tribe' well.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

The curriculum is broad and reflects the ambition of the national curriculum. Leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn in different subjects, with clear end points for pupils to reach at the end of each stage. Early reading is largely taught well, through daily phonics sessions. However, variable teaching means that some pupils do not develop important knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders' expectations for some pupils who are more able are not ambitious enough.

Inconsistencies in the implementation of the curriculum limit how well some pupils learn. Some teachers do not use checks on learning effectively to identify misconceptions and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes and gaps in their knowledge persist. This hinders their progress through the curriculum. Some lessons are highly memorable for pupils, but others are not. As a result, pupils struggle to recall too much of their learning in some subjects. For example, pupils can recall many facts from their history and geography studies but much less so from religious education.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) generally receive effective support through targeted teaching. Staff make effective adaptations so that all pupils can access the curriculum.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders are planning for a merger with another local school and the move to a new school site. This will come into effect from September 2026. Considerable time and resources have been committed to this activity.

Governors, leaders and staff understand the school's context and the needs of its community well. They ensure that all pupils are included in the life of the school. Governors carry out their statutory duties and provide regular support and challenge to the school. Leaders are broadly aware of the aspects of the school that need improving but their checks on school improvement work have lacked the rigour required to improve these aspects quickly enough. However, leaders have not identified with sufficient precision the current inconsistencies in curriculum and teaching. They do not ensure that the school's work to secure consistently high expectations for pupils' achievement is effective, although they recognise that further work is needed in this area.

Some of the school's strategic approach to allocating resources has, to a certain extent, had a negative impact on staff workload and, at times, on some standards in education. For example, some leaders do not currently have the time needed to lead their areas of responsibility effectively, carry out strategic decision-making and/or monitor the quality of some aspects of school life.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. They consider staff to be approachable and appreciate that they listen carefully to any concerns parents raise.

The school's approach to promoting pupils' personal development is mixed. The relationships and sex education that pupils experience at school is effective. Pupils are well prepared for the changes that will happen to their bodies as they grow older. Elsewhere, pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and knowledge of individual differences is not well developed. This is also true of their recall of different cultures and faiths. Pupils are not as well prepared as they should be to embrace and celebrate differences between people in modern British society.

Pupils have a varying understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know how to stay safe when online. Pupils recognise times when they should tell trusted adults about safeguarding concerns. However, they are less sure about other aspects of personal safety. This includes how to stay safe in the community in settings such as the local park, and how to deal with peer pressure.

Pupils value the many sporting opportunities that they have at school, delivered by external coaches. Through these sessions they take part in regular exercise and learn how to be healthy. Many attend a range of extra-curricular clubs, trips and other experiences to broaden their skills and talents. These activities help build pupils' confidence. The young carers are well supported in their club and benefit highly from socialising with others who understand their situation.

Pupils in Year 6 enjoy their leadership responsibilities, especially being 'tribe leaders'. They motivate other pupils in their tribe to succeed in school. Year 6 pupils have a pivotal role in welcoming children to early years and being their buddy. This promotes friendship and helps embed the school routines.

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

Relationships between pupils and members of staff at Forest Hall Primary School are very positive. As a result of this, pupils feel safe in school. Pupils know and carry through the school routines well, for example going straight to their cloakrooms and hanging their coats and bags independently, before going into class. However, there are too many pupils who arrive late to school and disrupt the start of the school day for others. There are also too many pupils missing out on their learning due to absence from school.

Behaviour is calm and pupils are considerate to one another in class. Bullying is not an issue, but some pupils occasionally make hurtful comments to others. Pupils are confident that members of staff will deal with this. Pupils benefit from the cosy areas where they take time out to readjust their behaviour before returning to their learning.

Variability in teaching and the delivery of the curriculum means that some pupils do not learn foundational skills well enough. There are high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. However, teachers' expectations differ, and some pupils are not routinely stretched to extend their learning.

Pupils learn about life in modern Britain through assemblies and some curriculum experiences. However, this work is not consistently embedded. As a result, pupils' understanding of diversity, equality and inclusion is underdeveloped and varies across the school. Pupils enjoy the sporting clubs which are available to them and other enrichment activities. They enjoy being part of the dramatic productions that they appear in at Christmas. Young carers are well supported and they value the time that they have together in their special club.

Children in the early years are well supported. They relish 'woodland Wednesday' when they learn about the natural environment and develop their confidence, social and motor skills.

Next steps

- Governors should ensure that senior school leaders have the capacity in their roles to enact strategic plans and develop secure oversight of school performance and/or their key areas of responsibility.
 - Leaders should strengthen the consistency and quality of curriculum delivery across all subjects and year groups. This includes ensuring that all staff have a secure understanding of curriculum expectations and what all pupils can achieve, including the most able.
 - Leaders should develop pupils' understanding of, and respect for, each other, fundamental British values, the protected characteristics and cultural diversity in modern Britain.
 - Governors should support leaders to implement and embed the school's revised attendance strategy, to ensure that pupil absences reduce and punctuality increases.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jackie Sparkes.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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 headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, staff and pupils. They also met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke to some parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school is due to merge with another local school and transfer school sites from September 2026.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Carmel Parker

Lead inspector:

Mary Cook, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Angela Vear, Ofsted Inspector

Samuel Donaldson, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

157

Below average

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.

National average: 272

School capacity

210

Below average

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.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

44.06%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 26.3%

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

0.00%

Well below average

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.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

20.38%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

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)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

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

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	48%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	62%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	26%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	56%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	79%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	78%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	66%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	78%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	76%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	70%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	37%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	54%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	20%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	40%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	77%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	33%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	62%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	33%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	37%	68%	-30 pp
2024/25 (final)	54%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	20%	67%	-47 pp
2022/23 (final)	40%	66%	-26 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	80%	-24 pp
2024/25 (final)	77%	81%	-4 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	80%	-46 pp
2022/23 (final)	60%	78%	-18 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	78%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	78%	-38 pp
2022/23 (final)	67%	77%	-11 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	80%	-29 pp
2024/25 (final)	62%	81%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	33%	79%	-46 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	60%	79%	-19 pp

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	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.6%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.4%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

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

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	17.2%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.4%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	12.7%	16.2%	Close to average

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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