

# The Forest School

**Address:** Robin Hood Lane, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 5NE

**Unique reference number (URN):** 139853

## Inspection report: 9 December 2025

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 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 ●

### Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils are extremely well supported in their personal development. Staff encourage all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, to explore their talents and interests. Pupils are offered a very broad and rich set of opportunities to enable them to discover activities and cultural experiences they may not be familiar with. Pupils value this offer highly. They recognise that participating in clubs, trips, competitions and performances enhances their school life and helps build character. Pupils are particularly positive about the range of opportunities they have in sport, alongside the expressive and performing arts.

Pupils show a consistently mature understanding of the importance of inclusivity. They appreciate the similarities and differences across cultures and religions. Pupils recognise that discrimination of any type is unacceptable. They understand how fundamental British values, such as democracy and individual liberty, contribute to an equitable and safe society. Pupils know why it is important to be an active citizen. They contribute positively to their local and wider community. Pupils value the many leadership opportunities that allow them to support others and to improve their environment. Pupils are highly considerate of others and of the impact that kind words and actions can have in building a harmonious society.

Pupils learn very effectively about how to keep themselves safe and the signs of risk they should be alert to. They have detailed knowledge about online safety and healthy relationships. Leaders ensure that this important learning is prioritised and regularly revisited across the curriculum.

Pupils receive thorough and helpful careers advice throughout the school. Staff ensure that pupils access detailed guidance about future pathways. This enables pupils to make ambitious and informed choices. Support is tailored and adapted where necessary, to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are thoroughly considered when preparing them for their next steps.

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## Expected standard ●

### Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils typically achieve well across the curriculum. They develop secure foundations in reading, writing, oracy and mathematics. This allows pupils to be more successful in other areas of their learning where they need to use these important skills. Sometimes, pupils who need additional help with reading do not catch up as quickly as they could. Leaders have made recent improvements to the reading support programme. These are beginning to have an impact but are still being refined.

Typically, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make positive progress from their starting points. Leaders make effective use of assessment information to understand where pupils are achieving less securely. They take appropriate

steps to address this and provide pupils with additional support when needed. Pupils develop the knowledge and skills that prepare them well for the next stages in their learning. In key stage 4, pupils achieve appropriate outcomes in national tests and examinations.

## **Attendance and behaviour**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of positive attendance. The school is a welcoming and aspirational environment where pupils enjoy learning. As a result, the vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and punctually. Leaders understand the barriers to attendance that some pupils face. They are adept at providing tailored support to remove these barriers, particularly for the most disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are ambitious to improve attendance even further and are taking appropriate steps to achieve this.

Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. There are positive and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are clear about the high expectations that staff have of them, which they generally meet. Mostly, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning.

Leaders ensure that all staff understand any potential barriers that pupils may have in managing or adapting their own behaviour. Leaders provide helpful information and training to staff that allow them to support pupils well in managing their emotions and choices. As a result, poor behaviour, including bullying or other discriminatory behaviour, is rare. There are effective systems in place for managing incidents of more-challenging behaviour when they do occur. This supports pupils in making better choices in future.

## **Curriculum and teaching**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders have developed a well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum. This allows pupils to build knowledge and skills over time in a broad range of subjects. Pupils enjoy the variety in the curriculum. For example, in physical education, pupils learn about a wide range of sports. This helps them to develop transferable skills between sporting disciplines.

Teachers know their subjects well. They teach in a way that enthuses pupils and captures their interest. Typically, staff use assessment well to check what pupils have understood. This allows them to address any misconceptions that pupils may have. Leaders have clear oversight of where teaching is sometimes less secure. They provide effective support to help develop staff expertise. This ensures that pupils are taught well across the curriculum.

Staff are knowledgeable about the pupils they teach and any barriers to learning they may have. As a result, staff provide helpful adaptations where needed to ensure that pupils can access their learning.

Leaders recognise the importance of the early foundations in reading, communication and mathematics. They ensure that pupils have tailored support if they need to catch up on these important skills so that they do not fall behind in their wider learning. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly.

## **Inclusion**

**Expected standard** 

There are high aspirations for all pupils, particularly those with additional needs. Leaders are determined to ensure that any barriers to achievement and wellbeing are swiftly addressed. There are effective systems in place to ensure that pupils' specific needs are identified and communicated to staff. In turn, staff are well trained to understand how best to support pupils and meet their needs.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are regularly assessed so that their provision can be adapted where required. This enables effective adjustments to be put in place, allowing pupils with SEND to learn and achieve well. Staff begin building positive relationships with families and other professionals before pupils join the school. This ensures that effective support commences as soon as pupils start.

Pupil premium funding is used effectively to enable enrichment opportunities and curriculum support. This has helped more vulnerable pupils to improve their achievement and attendance.

Leaders collaborate effectively with outside agencies, such as the virtual school, to ensure that the needs of pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care are well met.

The school uses alternative provision appropriately and only where it is in a pupil's best interests.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders understand the context of their school extremely well. They are committed to ensuring that there is an ambitious and inclusive culture where all pupils 'aspire to become elite'. This ethos is widely understood across the school community. Pupils value their education and recognise how leaders and staff support them to become the best versions of themselves. Leaders are proud of the successful transition they have made from being a single-sex to a mixed school. This change has been well managed and has further strengthened the school's inclusive culture.

Leaders are accurate in their assessment of the strengths of the school and where they need to continue to work to improve standards. Trustees are knowledgeable about the work of the school. They hold leaders to account effectively so that improvements continue to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and experiences. Leaders and those responsible for governance clearly understand and fulfil their statutory duties. They are diligent in the way they set about meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or other barriers to their learning or wellbeing.

Staff are consistently positive about working at the school. They feel valued as members of the community and know that their wellbeing is prioritised. Staff benefit from professional learning opportunities that help them to fulfil their roles effectively. This includes early career teachers, who are well supported in their development. Leaders are continually reflective

about where expertise or school systems need to be sharpened. They respond to these emerging priorities in a timely manner.

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## Needs attention

### Post 16 provision

Needs attention 

Students in the sixth form have historically not achieved as well as they should. This is more the case for students on A-level pathways. Those pursuing vocational qualifications achieve more securely in national examinations. Leaders recognise the reasons for this and have started to take appropriate action. They understand that students have not necessarily been matched to the most suitable study pathways in the past. Leaders ensure that students are now far better supported in accessing the right subjects, to allow them to be more successful in their studies. The impact of this work is starting to show in the progress students make from their various starting points. Leaders have also begun to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the sixth form. The impact of this can be seen through some highly effective practice in some subject areas. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects.

Students are supported in their personal development very effectively. They are very clear about the future avenues available to them and receive clear, helpful and impartial advice that allows them to choose the most appropriate next steps. Students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, have a wide range of opportunities to enrich and enhance their learning.

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

Pupils blossom in this happy and welcoming school. Staff know all pupils well and understand their needs. The school has recently changed from being a single-sex boys' school to a mixed school. Leaders are rightly proud of how successfully this transition has been managed. Girls have settled into the school extremely well and value how swiftly they have become included in all aspects of school life. All pupils benefit from a wide range of appropriate enrichment opportunities.

Pupils enjoy learning and the broad range of subjects that are available to them. They have high aspirations and understand the importance of working hard. Pupils want to be successful in their studies and appreciate the thoughtful support they receive from staff to help them achieve well. Pupils develop particularly secure knowledge about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They understand the importance of equality and are respectful of one another's differences.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their education. They attend school regularly and behave well. Pupils feel safe. They know that bullying is rare. They trust staff to manage any poor behaviour or unkindness effectively. As a result, pupils collaborate with one another harmoniously. Pupils are highly courteous in their interactions with staff and visitors.

Pupils facing additional barriers to their learning are effectively supported. They progress well in their GCSE examinations and from their various starting points. They are typically ready for their next steps. Pupils receive valuable advice and guidance to help ensure that they understand the range of future pathways available to them. In the sixth form, students' achievement is less secure. Leaders recognise that there is further work to do in embedding the curriculum to ensure that students achieve as successfully in the sixth form as they do lower down the school.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed improvements in the post-16 provision so that students consistently achieve well.
  - Leaders should continue their work to embed consistently high-quality teaching across the curriculum.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of The Forest School Academy Trust. There are no other schools that are part of this trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alison Lovland.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the school leadership team, members of staff, groups of pupils and representatives from the board of trustees during the inspection.

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:

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The school was previously a single-sex school for boys aged 11 to 16 years old, with a mixed sixth form. The school is now a mixed school for pupils aged 11 to 18 years old. There are currently girls in Years 7 and 8 and in the sixth form.

The data shown in the section 'Facts and figures used on this inspection' is taken from a number of sources at different points in time throughout the academic year. Data on pupil population is taken from the January census. This data was updated in January 2025. Since

this time, the pupil population has increased significantly to 1,046 pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support has also risen significantly. As a result, the proportion of pupils with SEN support was above the national average at the time of inspection.

Headteacher: Shirley Austin

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**Lead inspector:**

Tash Hurtado, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspectors:**

Marian Feeley, His Majesty's Inspector

Ed Mather, His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Newberry, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Grundy, His Majesty's 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 9 December 2025

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**927**

Close to 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: 1,067

### School capacity

**1,450**

Above 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: 1,153

## **Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**12.64%**

Well below average

## **What does this mean?**

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

National average: 28.9%

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

**1.19%**

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: 3.09%

## **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**5.07%**

Well below average

## **What does this mean?**

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

National average: 13.4%

## **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

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

| Year                  | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (provisional) | 59.5%       | 45.2%            | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 50.4%       | 45.9%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 54.3%       | 45.3%            | Close to average               |

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

| Year                  | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (provisional) | 50.6        | 45.9             | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 49.1        | 45.9             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 48.1        | 46.3             | Close to average               |

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | -0.12       | -0.03            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | 0.25        | -0.03            | Above                          |

## 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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

| Year                  | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (provisional) | 33.3%       | 25.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 27.8%       | 25.8%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 33.3%       | 25.2%            | Close to average               |

### Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

| Year                  | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (provisional) | 40.0        | 34.9             | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 36.4        | 34.6             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 38.9        | 35.0             | Close to average               |

## Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

| Year            | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023/24 (final) | -0.70       | -0.57            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final) | -0.12       | -0.57            | Above                          |

## 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' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

| Year                  | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2024/25 (provisional) | 33.3%       | 52.8%                            | -19.5 pp                |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 27.8%       | 53.1%                            | -25.3 pp                |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 33.3%       | 52.4%                            | -19.1 pp                |

## Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

| Year                         | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>2024/25 (provisional)</b> | 40.0        | 50.3                             | -10.3                   |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 36.4        | 50.0                             | -13.6                   |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 38.9        | 50.3                             | -11.4                   |

## Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

| Year                   | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b> | -0.70       | 0.16                             | -0.86                   |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b> | -0.12       | 0.17                             | -0.28                   |

## 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 | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>2023 leavers (provisional)</b> | 89%         | 91%              | Average                        |
| <b>2022 leavers (revised)</b>     | 93%         | 93%              | Average                        |
| <b>2021 leavers (revised)</b>     | 99%         | 94%              | Above                          |

## 16 to 18 performance

## A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

| Year              | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (revised) | 28.74       | 34.99            | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (final)   | 28.01       | 34.38            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (final)   | 28.25       | 34.16            | Below                          |

## A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

| Year              | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2024/25 (revised) | -0.1        | 0.0              | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (revised) | -0.3        | 0.0              | Below                          |

## 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 (2 term) | 6.0%        | 8.1%             | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 6.2%        | 8.9%             | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 7.4%        | 9.0%             | Below                          |

### 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 (2 term) | 15.4%       | 21.9%            | Below                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 17.6%       | 25.6%            | Below                          |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 21.7%       | 26.5%            | Below                          |

## 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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