



*Vision: To create relevant opportunities to build skills and knowledge through an aspirational and personalised curriculum, inspiring meaningful experiences and connections with the wider world.*

**Engage, Enrich and Inspire**, together for now and the future

# SEF: 2023-24

## Heart of the Forest Community Special School



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SEF: 2023-24

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Chair of Governors



## Heart of the Forest Community Special School Self Evaluation

Last Updated: April 2024 – S.Withington & C. Ashby– Shared with Full Governing Body 15/05/24

NOR: 130	LAC: 4	EAL: 0	Reception: 3	Primary: 60	Attendance average: 87%
FSM: 55	CIN/CP: 9	Agreed part time: 2	Post 16: 10	Secondary: 57	Fixed term/perm exclusions: 0

**Overall Effectiveness: Good**

### S8 Ofsted Inspection May 2023

Pupils are clear that they are happy at this school. They trust that adults will keep them safe. Pupils understand the importance of being kind to one another and comment on how staff teach them to 'look after each other and to respect other people.' Pupils behave well. They know what is expected of them and fully understand the 'behaviour zones.' Pupils always strive to behave well in class and during social times. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. However, leaders recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. For example, teachers do not check carefully enough what pupils have learned. This means pupils' errors and misconceptions are not always identified and corrected and so persist over time. Pupils are keen to be involved with the wider responsibilities on offer. They enjoy the election process of being voted onto the school council. They welcome the opportunities they have to support decisions made in school. For example, by leading on the design and selection of the strip for the football team. Such activities help to develop pupils' social skills and prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to receive a high-quality education. Leaders are determined they, 'do not have a lid on what pupils can achieve.' However, they are aware that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This means that pupils do not gain the knowledge and skills they need to enable them to succeed in the future. Leaders aspire that, where possible, pupils will become, at the very least, functional readers. However, some staff lack the knowledge and skills to teach phonics and early reading effectively. Pupils in the early stages of reading do not get sufficient opportunities to practise the sounds that they are learning. Books used to teach and practise reading are not always matched closely enough to pupils' stage in the phonics programme. This limits their reading fluency and accuracy. Staff do not consistently read stories to pupils. Consequently, pupils do not always encounter a wide enough range of books over their time in school. The mathematics curriculum sets out what pupils need to learn. However, this is new and not yet securely embedded. The planned curriculum builds' learning over time but is not sufficiently challenging.

Additionally, staff do not routinely check that pupils have understood or secured important knowledge. As a result, some misconceptions are not identified or corrected. Pupils' personal development is well considered. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to understand more about the wider world they live in. For example, pupils experience a wide range of activities beyond the school, such as trips to the Big Pit in Wales, the Willow boat ride on the river and a visit to a recording studio in Gloucester. Pupils enjoy the additional activities and events available to them in school. Clubs such as circus skills, sports and forest schools are available for all pupils and well attended. 'The Heart of the Forest Got Talent' event held for charity was a firm favourite with pupils. Pupils took delight in the opportunity to entertain each other as poets, stand-up comics, singers or being member of the rock band. Such opportunities inspire pupils and help build their confidence and self-esteem. Students have access to high-quality and impartial careers guidance. For example, they visit a local business park to experience the application and interview process. This helps them in preparation for applying for jobs and colleges when they leave the school. Parents have mixed views about the school. Some are unhappy with the leadership of the school. They do not feel that leaders are approachable or listen to their views. However, other parents have confidence in the school and feel their children are thriving and the school meet their needs well. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are committed to working with school leaders to make the necessary changes to ensure pupils receive a high-quality education. Safeguarding The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders keep pupils safe in this school. They respond in a timely manner to support pupils in need of help. Staff carry out the required checks on staff suitability.



**Recommendations at the last Ofsted inspection in May 2023 were:**

<p><b>Leadership and Management</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff respond to safeguarding concerns swiftly. However, sometimes, the information leaders record about safeguarding incidents lacks sufficient detail. Therefore, leaders could miss vital information. Leaders need to make sure that records clearly and consistently demonstrate the action taken in response to any safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>2. Some parents expressed concerns about the limited communication and availability of leaders to share their views. This results in some parents being unhappy with the school. Leaders need to strengthen links with parents to deal with any concerns quickly.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Quality of Education</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. In some subjects, leaders are not clear enough about the knowledge and skills they want pupils to know. This means that some pupils cannot remember the key knowledge taught across the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that they identify the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn in all subjects as they progress through the school</li> <li>4. Some staff do not have a strong understanding of how to teach phonics or how to support pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read. This means that pupils do not gain the phonics knowledge they need to help them to read with accuracy. Leaders must ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the knowledge and skills they need to support pupils to read.</li> </ol>

**Since the last S8 inspection May 2023, the recommendations have been addressed by the following actions:**

[\(see appendix for Rapid Action Plan 23/24\)](#)

**ACTIONS**

- Full external & school audit of safety/safeguarding + review cycle to maintain effective safeguarding **GCSP (Appendix, Item 1)**
- Full external audit of governance identify further development strengthening strategic oversight **GCC (Appendix, Item 2)**
- Full external audit of whole school communication systems and processes; reviewing effectiveness **Andy Lole (SIP & Lead OI) (Appendix, Item 3)**
- Full external review of the Early Years (Foundation & KS1) provision **Caroline Jewell, Special Partnership (SEND SIP)**
- External audit of KS5 provision; environment, curriculum & opportunities – **Deirdre Fitzpatrick SIP & Lead OI & Gina Briggs (SEND SIP)**
- Full internal audit of pupil learning environments, curriculum & support, informing performance management and CPD needs
- Full review of timetable subject allocation according to age phase and pathway to ensure breadth of coverage and appropriate less structured/social time
- Full external audit of phonics and early reading, ensuring accurate book matching, phonics groupings, assessment, intervention and progression
- Whole staff CPD on phonics provided externally and internally by Mangotsfield Phonics Hub and in school directed training + weekly drop in sessions



- Whole school staff CPD on appropriate detail to be used when reporting behaviour/safeguarding incidents. This is monitored and reflected back along with actions
- Performance management aligned to curriculum development to support the development in differentiation of learning objectives and appropriate grouping/support
- An in school virtual coaching model has been developed to deliver effective teacher CPD on differentiation, pupil grouping and staff allocation within lessons
- Subject leadership development has taken place in school, embedding an understanding of the role, policy, planning and monitoring
- Subject leaders have reviewed the sequence of learning for their subject and made adjustments to ensure each stage of learning prepares pupils for the next stage
- Development of aspirational sequential 4-19yr curriculum & pathway, planning for building and rehearsing knowledge and skills across the chronological journey
- Developed 14 year journey of identified skills and knowledge endpoints for pupils who access discreet curriculum subjects [Overview and Intent - Heart of the Forest \(heartoftheforestschool.co.uk\)](https://heartoftheforestschool.co.uk)
- Development of sequences of learning for each subject area, through 'sequence wheels' within a topic that incorporate a rehearsal/embedding element
- Embedded 4 clear age phase curriculum intent journeys, which link to inform each next stage of learning ([Appendix, Item 4](#))
- Pupil learning has been mapped and linked across subjects for the academic year. Pupils have this map in their books to ensure agency over their learning
- Embedding of an ASD approach to teaching and learning based on TEACCH CPD and resources, routines and structures
- Embedding of the Engagement Profile for pupils with PMLD needs
- Development of a personal development programme, recognising engagement in learning and school values, linked to wider SMSC opportunities beyond curriculum
- Embedded early reading & fully de-codeable synthetic phonics programme, extending across all age phases
- Embedded of a breadth of texts that reflect the diversity of modern Britain and embed personal development age appropriately, daily reading incorporated
- Introduction of Adventure Sports to the curriculum, optimising the pupil opportunities in the local area ([Appendix, Item 5](#))
- Embedding of a culture of daily reading for pleasure, modelled through key texts aimed to engage
- Embedding of White Rose maths resource for consistent approach across the school
- Development of displays to showcase and celebrate pupil success, using a consistent visual approach to minimise sensory overload
- Development of assessment annotation and evidencing within pupil books to identify and address pupil learning misconceptions at the earliest point
- Appointment and integration of 2 family liaison workers to respond to parent/carers concerns at the earliest point, building relationships proactively
- Development of a Pastoral Support Team, supporting pupils experiencing increased dysregulation and providing identified therapeutic interventions
- Embedding of a consistent behaviour and attitudes expectation through policy, rules, values, routines, visual schedules ([Appendix, Item 6 & 7](#))
- Development of whole school learning behaviour culture – 'Thrive,' focussing the words that are used when supporting pupils and baselining pupil emotion levels
- Embedding of clear and effective incident reporting systems linked to specific pastoral, family liaison, DSL and leadership roles, ensuring an escalation route
- Development and communication of clear routes of communication for both families and staff seeking information or raising concerns, ensuring an escalation route
- Embedded information sharing on curriculum, events and information, through weekly newsletter, termly Learning Fayre's and effective electronic/home diary use
- Development of school partnership with Worcester University, identifying a succession planning route to recruit future SEND teachers



- Implemented professional CPD through NPQ qualifications and apprenticeships at site, admin, TA and Teacher and Leadership level
- Implementation of coaching approach to developing classroom management, pupil grouping, objective differentiation and staff support allocation
- Embedding of efficient whole school systems and processes for finance, site management, administration, safer recruitment & HR
- Embedding of efficient governance committees & processes – new Clerk appointed & LA appointing 3 additional governors to current board of 6
- Staff Council has been implemented to create a voice to inform operational and staff wellbeing issues

### The Quality of Education: Good

**Our significant strength lies in our understanding of our pupil needs and the requirement to tailor an appropriate and relevant curriculum for our learners across all key stages of the Heart of the Forest learning journey. Preparation for life beyond school is always within our curriculum decisions. School Leaders have worked with a sharp focus to develop a personalised sequential curriculum alongside therapeutic provision and extended personal development opportunities for all pupils. The whole school curriculum has been reviewed with rigor and strategically planned through identification of intended endpoints, the teaching links sequence learning to build on knowledge and skills. Opportunities to develop independence and pursue individual interests are embedded.**

**The provision is organised into 3 distinct pathways of pre-formal (1), semi-formal (2) and formal curricula (3). A curriculum model for each pathway has been designed with systems for planning to endpoints, differentiation of objectives, annotation of outcomes, missed learning and misconceptions and assessment linked. (Appendix, Item 8)** Within all three pathways teaching & learning is sequenced based on clearly intended and identified endpoints, previous knowledge and skills of each individual pupil and appropriate assessment for learning. Professionals understand that this sequence may not always be linear, therefore learning may be revisited to embed within long term memory through practice supporting information accommodation and assimilation through schematic development. Overlearning aims towards application of new skills and knowledge across a variety of contexts to develop transference and generalisation. Our curriculum is organised into six purposeful learning areas, which group discreet subjects purposefully to ensure that the National Curriculum and a broad and ambitious education is planned and delivered with appropriate relevance to our learners with SEND. Leaders plan for each identified end point through the identification of a journey towards effective communication & independence at an optimum level.

The curriculum has been developed and planned by senior leaders who have produced whole school overviews, in partnership with subject co-ordinators, ensuring use of their subject areas to show a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum. Subject areas for study are positioned and ordered to enable purposeful cross curricular links, encouraging meaning to learning. Subject co-ordinators have developed endpoints and an approach to sequencing them to ensure learners are building knowledge and skills progressively as pupils move through each age phase. The curriculum overviews have been used to produce our new long term planning which class teachers then use to inform their medium term planning sequences. Sequence wheels have been developed to show the sequence/ order of learning to build knowledge and skills within pupil books. These are accompanied by annotation sheets which enable teachers to identify misconceptions and lost learning at the earliest point.

Each pupil follows a personalised pathway underpinned by the intended outcomes of the statutory EHCP. This pathway maps out progressively towards age appropriate destinations, systematically incorporating the steps required to achieve this, ensuring that developmental 'next steps' are identifiable and a pedagogical approach to reach these is implemented. Alongside the development of our curriculum, we developed maps to provide pupils with agency over their learning. The maps provide Pathway 3 pupils with a visual representation of their learning as they move through each age phase. The maps show the linear progression of pupils learning journey as well as identifying links between subjects.

The use of engaging texts that reflect modern Britain and opportunities for rehearsal within different contexts across the age phases facilitates purposeful links that provide generalisation, consolidation and extended mastery of concepts, skills and knowledge gained within pathway learning. The curriculum within our school has been



developed to account for reading at cognitive and neurologically appropriate level across the three pathways. We are able to demonstrate what reading looks like at a non-chronological yet developmental age and how pupils can utilise their reading skills to have an effect on their environment and make informed choices. Life-skills and communication are priority areas of pupil learning. The intention of the formal curriculum pathway is to offer ambitious accreditation and qualification. The semi-formal curriculum ensures that learning is through tangible experiences and supported by systematic routine and re-visiting. The pre-formal curriculum is sensory based and incorporates the therapeutic provisional needs of learners to ensure that a holistic approach to learning is planned, delivered and reviewed. The engagement model and profiling is integral to the pre-formal (Pathway 1) provision. Our curriculum is shaped by a set of school values that embed the qualities of citizenship required in a fluid and modern society. The curriculum prepares each pupil for their next stage in their educational journey by ensuring that well-supported communication is integral to their curriculum offer.

Communication barriers are overcome through personalised aids to learning which lead to positive learning behavior and good outcomes. Extended curriculum opportunities are managed to ensure enrichment opportunities ensure learning is relevant and memorable for increased mastery. Teachers show consistently strong skills in recognising and planning learning links that transfer knowledge and skills across contexts. This has been clearly exemplified in the introduction of Forest School for ambulant learners, who transfer their knowledge and skills in numeracy and literacy into the natural setting that we are immersed within. The forest commands its own set of rules and expectations that lead our learners to adapt to manage their own risks and achieve PSHE outcomes through co-operation and exploration with their peers. Equally non-ambulant learners explore sensory experiences within class and similarly to their peer, across contexts within Rebound Therapy, Hydrotherapy and the Sensory Room. The trampoline bed, pool water and sensory lights, sounds, images and motions, providing stimulus and communication opportunities to encourage independence in making personal choices, encouraging an important 'voice' to empower learners for wider life beyond school. In 2023 leaders introduced Adventure Sports into the curriculum offer, maximizing the physical and cognitive learning opportunities readily available within the Forest of Dean.

Senior leaders are strategically developing subject leadership expertise to ensure that our staff have the highest knowledge to extend the learning of our most able-pupils within the formal curriculum. This is done through collaboration with local mainstream schools within a partnership of support that ensures curriculum content is current and relevant. Accreditation has been widened encompassing ASDAN Transition Challenge, linking the learning within Key Stage 4 & 5 purposefully. Examinations in Life & Living, Functional English, Maths and ICT ensure skills and preparation for life. Post 16 Options in the Arts & Outdoor Learning have been extended in 2023, with Sports Leaders now integrated into the KS4 Options programme. An inspiring post 16 & KS5 programme of study ensures that pupils are engaged and prepared for life beyond school and successful transition to their next destination.

Early reading and phonics is prioritised by leaders through CPD, resources and timetabling. Staff consistently use the Essential Letters and Sounds scheme to develop pupil acquisition on synthetic de-coding of sounds. An appropriately resourced school library has been developed in 2022 to maximise reading opportunities through ICT, e-books and hard & paper backs within a purposeful environment that encourages literacy engagement. In 2023 a similar Early Years and KS1 facility has been developed. Both libraries meeting the needs of all 3 pathways. Writing transcription and composition is taught alongside phonics in addition to cross-curricular opportunities. Key texts have been identified across the school to ensure knowledge of authors is developed and breadth in genres provides comparative opportunities.

The Early Years provision is incorporated within the KS1 provision and curriculum planning supports the Early Years Goals and links to KS1 and end points throughout the later age phases. Opportunities for fine and gross motor skills, knowledge about self, the wider world, relationships, language, communication and problem solving are embedded within the curriculum. Learning of safety within the environment and relationships begins in EY and continues to KS5 through a detailed PSHE delivery. Quality of education is monitored through ongoing review of curriculum intent by subject leaders, implementation and impact by middle leaders and co-production of EHCP's through the annual review process, involving multiagency professionals and families. The outcomes inform the personalised planning for each pupil. Bi-annual evidence based data drops ensure Autumn term target setting can be measured along an adjusted trajectory according to pathway. Where pupils are identified at the earliest point of needing additional support, interventions are implemented in a timely approach to ensure pupils can catch up and keep up.



Teachers have good understanding of their subjects and share their skills, knowledge and experience within school through a programme of CPD alongside external subject networks with both mainstream and special schools. Quality of Education is externally reviewed each term through a School Improvement Partner (Lead OI). Care & consideration is taken to support the management of staff workload when introducing new provision direction, in particular curriculum planning & assessment.

Across the school the learning environment is calm and clear of distraction, Displays reflect language prompts, scaffolding and support to engage learners and develop independence. Clear timetables and learning schedules support pupils to manage what is expected of them and also access resources needed to complete learning. The school is purposeful in appearance, yet welcoming and where possible celebratory of achievements to ensure that each pupil has an identity and belonging.

ACTIONS	EVIDENCE & IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of personalised learning from EHCP outcomes</li> <li>• Implementation on Personalised Curriculum Plans</li> <li>• Development of three distinct curriculum pathways, ensuring sequential learning of cumulative skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Development of an ambitious curriculum intent statement</li> <li>• Review of whole school curriculum thematic learning</li> <li>• Embedding of new assessment software to accurately measure impact</li> <li>• Implementation of pupil curriculum work books with annotated tracking</li> <li>• Development of long term curriculum plans through pathway journeys/maps</li> <li>• Management of national curriculum subjects into purposeful Hubs</li> <li>• Purposeful integration of therapies into curriculum provision</li> <li>• Development of Pastoral Leadership role</li> <li>• Introduction of Physical Drama through Open Theatre provider</li> <li>• Introduction and embedding of Adventure Sports into KS3 curriculum</li> <li>• Embedding of Forest Schools into EY, KS1 &amp; KS2 curriculum</li> <li>• Whole school communication external audit by outstanding teaching school</li> <li>• Whole school learning environment audit</li> <li>• Partnership with mainstream primaries on literacy project</li> <li>• West Gloucs School Partnership &amp; Gloucs Special School Curriculum link meetings</li> <li>• Curriculum Lead presentation to Curriculum &amp; Standards Governor Committee</li> <li>• Introduction of ASDAN Transition Challenge at KS4 &amp; 5 + Options in Arts &amp; Outdoor Education, Sports Leaders and Adventure Sports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher workload directed to precision teaching &amp; curriculum plan for <u>each pupil</u></li> <li>• <u>Every pupil</u> receives relevant and sequential curriculum learning from EHCP</li> <li>• <u>Every pupil</u> receives appropriate support to enable independent learning</li> <li>• <u>Every pupil</u> has short and long term outcomes mapped within school journey</li> <li>• Clear and shared understanding for <u>all stakeholders</u> of learning purpose</li> <li>• Relevant and appropriate, broad &amp; bold thematic curriculum <u>for all learners</u></li> <li>• Effective assessment for learning through tracking of <u>all pupil success steps</u></li> <li>• Celebration of <u>every journey to success</u> through assessment linked evidencing</li> <li>• <u>Every pupil</u> receives planned sequential, appropriate curriculum coverage</li> <li>• National curriculum subjects managed and delivered with relevance to <u>all pupils</u></li> <li>• <u>All ambulant pupils</u> receive <u>pupil-led learning</u> within own outdoor environment</li> <li>• <u>All pupils</u> receive an enriched curriculum with extended learning opportunities</li> <li>• Learning behaviour is monitored and <u>provision and support is fully responsive</u></li> <li>• Therapeutic curriculum fully integrated into daily provision from <u>EHCP outcomes</u></li> <li>• Enriched non-verbal curriculum delivery <u>overcoming all communication barriers</u></li> <li>• All communication barriers identified and supported to ensure <u>full learning for all</u></li> <li>• Environmental supports sensory learning needs of all, <u>removing identified barriers</u></li> <li>• <u>Community partnership</u> through adult expertise peer learning and enrichment</li> <li>• Pupils directly accessed live music and <u>developed own mastery</u> of instrument</li> <li>• <u>All curriculum subject leads</u> accessed current knowledge through external peers</li> <li>• Core curriculum subject action plans <u>challenged and developed by school leaders</u></li> </ul>



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of ELS phonics scheme across school to develop pupil skills and knowledge in synthetic decoding of sounds and words</li><li>• Environment review &amp; audit, implementing a purposeful &amp; engaging learning environment relevant for each pathway.</li><li>• Development of a post 16 curriculum that prepares pupils for life beyond school, introducing curriculum Options for the Arts &amp; Outdoor learning.</li><li>• A clear structure for delivering English introduced to Pathway 3 lessons</li><li>• Handwriting embedded into the daily timetable across Pathway 3 and Pathway 2 where appropriate</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• KS4 &amp; 5 curriculum accreditation broadened with key stage link implemented</li><li>• Wider opportunities available to pupils, in particular the disadvantaged and those impacted by the impact of the isolation resulting from the pandemic</li></ul> |
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**Quality of Education Next Steps:**

- **Further develop a bespoke 'bridging curriculum'** for Pathway 2 learners (Hazel & Osprey) that ensures meaningful phonics and transitional links from KS2, 3 & 4
- **Develop a bespoke assessment system** that matches and captures the achievements within the new curriculum model, overview & endpoints
- **Further develop** the EY & KS5 provision, focus on EY preparedness for learning & KS5 community links
- **Further develop the monitoring and curriculum review leadership role** of Curriculum Subject Leaders and Primary & Secondary Phase Leaders

**Behaviour & Attitudes: Good**

The school support for behaviour management was reviewed in 2020, 2021 and 2023; ensuring a robust Behaviour Policy that links to all relevant safeguarding policies. School Leaders have invested in Thrive training for all staff to develop a consistently positive, supporting and caring behaviour support culture. This seen a move away from the use of pupil Behaviour Plans and a transition to more evidence based Behaviour Regulation Plans, involving class staff baselining of pupil emotional development, this informs next steps in supporting development. The introduction of a dedicated Pastoral Team supports a whole school approach that provides intervention where identified such as ELSA, Lego Therapy and sensory diets. Intervention aims to be proactive, supporting pupils at known situations of challenge such as transitions and less structured in the day. Heart of the Forest Special School has high expectations for pupil behaviour and attitudes and this is evident through calm corridors, pupils on task in classrooms and consistent transitions between sessions. Within classes, pupils are supported to understand behaviour and attitude expectations through clear and signposted routines, 'now and next' visual representations of work tasks and learning outcomes, timings of sessions and positive, respectful relationships with others and limiting low level disruption. There are identified 'Calm Spaces' around the school and within classrooms, with boxes of sensory resources to encourage regulation and supported discussion, enabling a prompt and appropriate return to learning.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school, they are supported within PSHE lessons to learn about positive relationships and how to recognise risk and signs of endanger and unsafe situations. Staff proactively support peer groups and individuals to raise their concerns with an appropriate safe person, through communication, talk, discussion. A Bullying Policy is in place and bullying is explored through peer groups to ensure a zero tolerance approach is in place. All staff regularly receive CPD on the relationship between safeguarding and behaviour, behaviour and communication and the theories and strategies that underpin pupil behaviour. The 2023 INSET was committed to implementing the THRIVE approach to behaviour management. Time to reflect on case studies on understanding pupil behaviour, support, the use of behaviour plans and professional wording when reporting behaviour incidents was utilised purposefully with positive staff feedback. All pupils who need support with



learning behaviour have a regularly reviewed individual behaviour plan which recognises stages of escalation and de-escalation through a detailed traffic light narrative. All pupils who present challenging behaviour have a regularly reviewed risk assessment and pupils who pose a 'flight risk' have a risk assessment with detailed 'eyes on' mitigation approach and physical representation of who is responsible.

In 2023 leaders aligned the reporting of behaviour incidents with the use of CPOMS already. The rationale was that staff were confident in electronic reporting language, frequency and commitment would be replicated from safeguarding to behaviour concerns and capture any cross over/dual nature of an incident. Incident data is reviewed fortnightly at senior leader level, proactive adjustments to support and learning provision are implemented in a timely approach and significant headline data is reported to governors at committees and physical interventions to full governors. There have been no pupil suspensions or exclusions, where adjustments have been required to address serious behaviour, a collaborative approach with parents/carers is used.

Attendance and punctuality is monitored closely by the Pastoral Lead. An effective process for following up late or non-attendance is in place and safeguarding ensures a timely approach to follow up. Attendance has increased over the course of the pandemic to a return rate of well above the national average for the special school sector at 87% in 21-22 compared to 80% in 20-21. Attendance for disadvantaged and LAC pupils exceeds 87% and the school aim of 90% is realistically achieved. Pupils who are on part time placements for medical or mental health reasons are supported to receive a full education through therapeutic/remote learning and multiagency support. A clear system and process for authorised absence is communicated to parents and carers and monitored closely by leaders.

ACTIONS	EVIDENCE & IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Behaviour is now incorporated into every pupil's personalised curriculum plan through Thrive Baseline Assessment</li> <li>• Introduction and implementation of SAP (Staff Around Pupil) meetings</li> <li>• Development of Pastoral meetings consolidating safeguarding and attendance</li> <li>• CPD on &amp; implementation of ELSA intervention</li> <li>• Development of electronic behaviour tracking using CPOMS</li> <li>• Implementation of Pupil Regulation Plans</li> <li>• Embedding of pupil risk assessments and 'eyes on' monitoring system</li> <li>• Development and implementation of Calm Spaces for regulation/reintegration</li> <li>• Development of Behaviour Support Role</li> <li>• Implementation of clear electronic reporting system for physical intervention, risk assessment and behaviour plan through management flow chart</li> <li>• Development of clear electronic attendance reporting and review system</li> <li>• Local authority input into attendance management - AIM</li> <li>• Review of Behaviour Policy to reflect current school safe practice and ethos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>All pupils</u> receive bespoke teaching reflecting identified learning behaviour. Barriers to learning are overcome through professional understanding of pupil challenges</li> <li>• <u>Shared professional reflective</u> understanding through supportive discussion</li> <li>• Dynamic SLT response through actions to safeguarding and attendance concerns</li> <li>• Specialised targeted emotional literacy intervention for identified pupils</li> <li>• <u>All behaviour is tracked</u> to identify and respond to barriers to learning dynamically</li> <li>• Whole school approach to behaviour provides <u>consistently strong pupil support</u></li> <li>• All learning behaviour is supported, <u>responding &amp; removing all barriers to learning</u></li> <li>• <u>Effective management of individual pupil risk factors</u> through practical approach</li> <li>• <u>Specialised identified support provision</u> that supports behaviour plan triggers</li> <li>• <u>Specialised</u> delivery of effective behaviour support mentoring &amp; intervention</li> <li>• <u>Whole school consistent approach</u> to positive behaviour reporting and recording, ensuring every <u>pupil receives appropriate, documented support and lowered risk</u></li> <li>• All pupil attendance tracked, <u>reviewed and supported in a timely approach</u></li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour link with Regency Special School, including Team Teach CPD</li> <li>• Positive Behaviour Support CPD with CYPS (NHS)</li> <li>• Behaviour Lead presentation to Curriculum &amp; Standards Governor Committee</li> <li>• Pupil consultation on Focus Group learning</li> <li>• CPD on Sensory needs, linking communication and processing to behaviour</li> <li>• Pastoral referral system introduced to link staff concerns and pupil needs to teaching and learning</li> <li>• Personalised Curriculum Plan's identify communication barriers to learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Implementation of individual pupil attendance management approach</u></li> <li>• <u>Whole school shared approach and ethos</u> to positive behaviour management</li> <li>• <u>External challenge and support</u> of whole school behaviour management</li> <li>• <u>External specialist development</u> of staff skills and training for pupil support</li> <li>• Whole school <u>ethos and approach</u> challenged and supported by school leadership</li> <li>• Consolidation of understanding of barriers to learning via personalised plan enabling proactive support and intervention to optimise pupil learning</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Behaviour and Attitudes Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Further embed whole school Thrive approach to supporting learning behaviour, with consistent ethos, support and expectation across the school</li> <li>➤ Further develop the role and purpose of the Phase Leaders within pupil wellbeing &amp; support</li> <li>➤ Embed the pastoral referral system, ensuring that the newly introduced system informs teaching and learning through a supportive approach for pupils</li> </ul>
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**Personal Development: Good**

Heart of the Forest Community Special School has a strong 'caring culture,' this is preserved through socially inclusive coproduction of collaborative events. Weekly Celebration Assembly brings the whole school together to recognise the individual successes of peers through 'Star of the Week' and 'Star Signer of the week' Awards. Participation in competitions and school representation is celebrated along with birthday landmarks and live music performances and the school signing choir. The Christmas Production sees every pupil given an equitable role in performing for parents, carers and friends of our school. Weekly assemblies are linked to the school value for that term and are inclusive of all special needs. Pupils support each other to meet the expectations of an audience and this was recognised by the visiting Open Theatre who commented on the empathetic support that peers showed each other to participate in non-verbal physical drama. Heart of the Forest Community Special School achieved the Mental Health Champion Award. Our pupils show similar empathy and care for nature in their care for the plants and produce sown and grown onsite and the many animals that are part of our school community. Pupils know what living creatures need to live and stay healthy and work with support to provide this carefully, showing great interest in the well-being of the animals that are a part of our school.

School Leaders have developed a purposeful and cohesive Pupil Personal Development Programme. This includes whole school long term projects, such as an extended piece of artwork titled 'A Year in the Forest,' inspired by David Hockney's long painting titled 'A Year in Normandy.' Each class has a planned personal development project for each term that provides opportunity for pupils to engage in a new skills or interest; such as musical theatre, rock band, creating podcasts, film making, circus skills, farming, sensory 'bubbles and bombs,' Shakespeare for Schools. We have created opportunities within a new learning environment (yurt) to ensure personal development is memorable and engaging; Art Challenge, Teddy Bears Picnic, Bake-off, Sensory Glamping, Shakespeare Performance, Bushtucker Trials, and HofFest. A Pupil Passport system has been introduced during 2023. This recognises pupil engagement and achievement in lessons and acknowledges when pupils demonstrate their understanding of the 6 school values. Each term provides opportunities to engage in opportunities outside of the curriculum such as flying a kite, feeding the ducks, visiting a railway station, also introducing more urban elements of modern living into a very rural and remote setting.



Pupils learn how to form safe relationships, including online through the 'So Safe' intervention programme. Protective safeguarding is delivered through the NSPCC 'Pantasauros' programme and Healthy Living is learnt within the PSHE curriculum, including chronological and developmental age appropriate RSE delivery. Our pupils take part in the 'Kindness Project' in preparation for Anti Bullying Week and produce an assembly and rap to disseminate the key messages to their peers. Our school celebrates individual uniqueness through understanding of differences, difficulties and cultures within the SMSC curriculum. SMSC has been audited by staff within the school and the learning of Fundamental British Values, Equality and Diversity are embedded into lessons and assemblies. School values were developed through pupil consultation and are reflected within the ethos, culture and intention of the whole school. Pupils learn about each value within relevant curriculum context.

Pupils represent their class on the active School Council, with minutes reported to senior leaders and the Full Governing Body for monitoring of actions. Pupils are democratically elected to join the School Council and also contribute their individual views through surveys and class discussion. The school council met within the Autumn term to report on how pupils wished to spend a portion of Sports Premium money on purchasing new playground equipment, identifying fundraising ideas for forthcoming charity events and consult on the development of the whole school behaviour rules and feedback on suggested improvements to school dinners and extra-curricular clubs. Pupils demonstrated both respect and empathy for elderly visitors from a local care home when entertaining them for the day. Pupils are keen to participate in charitable fundraising for a wide range of causes and contributed to the foodbank collection through Harvest Festival.

Pupils receive guidance on destinations at Post 16 and engage in a Careers Programme where opportunities for experience in workability and placements are sought and supported. Pupils learn about roles within the wider world of work and care, receiving visits from Careers professionals, Public Service representatives and multi-agencies. College transition is thorough and supportive, taking place through bespoke packages of appropriate time length, frequency and information sharing. Post 16 pupils determine the theme & assisted preparation for their end of year Prom, celebrating off-site for the first time in 2022, equitably included in their wider community.

Heart of the Forest provides a wide range of rich personal development opportunities, through weekly physical (non-verbal) drama at Open Theatre, Drumming Workshops, an all-pathway school Choir perform in school and at collaborative performances. Senior pupils wrote and recorded their own music and performed to a large audience. Primary pupils engage in mark making at Little Learner each week. Sensory music and art is externally led within Pathway 1 and 2 classes. Outdoor learning opportunities at Forest School and Duke of Edinburgh provide a platform for pupils to learn new skills and go on expeditions, camping over-night and achieving Bronze award and Junior Forester award to recognise these achievements. Pupils go offsite for enrichment activities that add meaning and context to their learning, visiting the resources within the locality. Visitors guide pupils on safety; such as the fire & police service. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs are offered, with disadvantaged pupils prioritised and supported to attend through Family Liaison communication of information. Pupils celebrate national events such as the King's Coronation, writing to and receiving letters back from the Royal Family. Visiting disabled athletes provide relatable role models.

It is our socially inclusive ethos and an environment where this is highly valued and prioritised at Governor level that nurtures our pupils to show respect, understanding and empathy for their peers and the challenges that each face daily. This element is celebrated with equal value to academic attainment and will continue to be the 'golden thread' running throughout our school. Everyone is valued and provision is equitable for all. At the end of each day, pupils join in the School Hall to prepare to depart in bus groups. Here there is a buzz or sharing of daily learning experiences and greetings of delight when seeing their friends across all key stages and pathway groups. There is a tangible school community which is warm, proud and welcoming to all. Diversity is embraced, celebrated and welcomed within our setting.

ACTIONS	EVIDENCE & IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding of inclusive assemblies through sensory approach and improved Audio Visual</li> <li>• Achieved Mental Health Champion Award</li> <li>• Inclusive School Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable collective worship and celebration experience for all learners</li> <li>• Full recognition of the many well-being initiatives through external audit</li> <li>• Equitable participation and representation of pupil voice at influential level</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of PSHE 'Pink' curriculum including SRE</li> <li>• Implemented 'So Safe' &amp; 'Pantasaurus' pupil safeguarding resource</li> <li>• Development of peer lego therapy discussion group in senior school</li> <li>• Link with local care home for elderly</li> <li>• Paired peer delivery of 'Mini Movers' intervention</li> <li>• Kindness Project</li> <li>• SMSC audit and planned opportunities</li> <li>• Development of extra-curricular clubs</li> <li>• Enrichment opportunities introduced into curriculum provision trips/visits</li> <li>• Pupil consultation on new SEMH provision, school dinners and extra curricular clubs</li> <li>• Introduction of Pupil Passports recognising engagement</li> </ul> <p>Introduction of longer term and whole school personal development projects that provide opportunities to pursue interests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National curriculum coverage where appropriate, differentiated across pathways</li> <li>• Pupils empowered to safeguard selves online and manage own risks</li> <li>• Senior peers supported to support each other through discussion groups</li> <li>• Pupil interaction with an older generation, learning to care for differing needs</li> <li>• Seniors support youngest pupils with fine and gross motor skill programme, also undertaking the anti-bullying project to raise awareness and understanding</li> <li>• Pupils are engaged in new interests &amp; can showcase</li> <li>• Pupils are visibly included in their own community</li> </ul> <p>(Add destination data)</p>
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<p><b>Personal Development Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Further embed pupil voice into the monitoring and development cycle of the whole school, ensure co-produced EHCP's to prepare pupils for Modern Britain</li> <li>➤ Embed SMSC &amp; Careers learning more explicitly signposted within intended curriculum planning</li> </ul>
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**Leadership and Management: Good**

The extensive list of actions demonstrates clearly the strong leadership drive for school improvement with a sharp focus on quality of education and safeguarding. Leaders have commissioned a range of external audits in safeguarding, phonics and early reading, governance and communication, establishing a rigorous action plans that optimise safeguarding for all pupils through CPD, monitoring and reporting. Leaders commissioned a whole school external Health and safety audit through SHE department. This produced an action plan that addresses all identified risks. A staff led well-being group has been established to support risks identified through staff consultation alongside the extensive action plan that has been addressed in full.

The School Development Plan maps out the integral steps to be developed to establish a safe centre of excellence for SEN learners. At the core of this plan is a strategic CPD plan and required school structure to deliver and maintain high quality specialist provision which will be extended for increased pupil numbers and needs to include SEMH. The key to ensuring that this is done effectively is through partnership and collaboration. A necessary restructure of middle leadership has ensured that whole school areas of development can be managed with oversight of all pupil needs and ages. Leaders have a keen eye on the CPD required to implement this plan and have ensured that full training has been delivered aligned with the expectations of the Ofsted Inspection Framework. The focus on curriculum knowledge and development has been prioritised through CPD, professional network attendance, audit and review, with leaders supported to action plan curriculum subjects, a process which is aligned with performance management.

Senior leaders recognised the immediate need for efficient reporting and recording to enable responsive leadership decisions. Appropriate software has been identified, implemented through training and integrated into refined systems and processes for attendance, safeguarding, pupil assessment and behaviour. This has ensured that



leaders have the most up to date data on the school and can manage variables dynamically with clear communication. Actions are recorded and followed through promptly, escalated where necessary through the correct agencies.

The priority focus on the quality of education through full curriculum review has resulted in the development of a sequential and progressive teaching and learning map. The Curriculum Lead has ensured age appropriate national curriculum coverage through a thematic cycle that ensures that learning is memorable. The development of a truly personalised curriculum by planning directly from individual EHCP's has ensured that learning is relevant and professional workload focuses with accuracy on end points for each learner, assessing every success on that journey.

Primary and Seniors Phase Leaders are fully integrated into the implementation of school improvement through SLT strategic direction, communication links with staff within their phase and monitoring of pupil outcomes. Subject leaders within the curriculum have been supported to develop effective oversight of their subject across the whole school through efficient monitoring of intent, implementation and impact. Teacher performance management is directly linked to the SDP RAP and SEF. A virtual coaching platform has been developed and utilised to model and support best practice in differentiation, pupil grouping and staff allocation.

Strong governance has driven the strategic direction of the school towards a centre of excellence, with a priority instilled that the strength of our school is its socially inclusive community and should be retained within developments to widen provision. The Governing Body commissioned an external audit of our school governance. Recommendations led to a focussed action plan. A skills audit conducted by the Chair has ensured appropriate allocation to committees and roles. The Governing Body has implemented a new committee structure and efficient communication approach. Reporting ensures challenge and parents are informed of key priorities. A full schedule of policy review is planned through a cycle that also aligns with the school monitoring cycle and committee reporting. The Chair works in close partnership with the Head to steer the strategic direction, with a full understanding of the challenges and opportunities that the school faces. The full governing body have supported change management positively.

School leaders have implemented new communication systems to engage with parents, carers and the wider community. An informative website linked to an app for parents and staff ensures that communication and information sharing is accurate and timely. This has improved engagement with parents and ensured clear messages, supplemented by weekly briefings and newsletters, termly curriculum letters, a termly Curriculum Fayre and celebratory social media platform.

Staff well-being and workload is a consistent consideration for leaders when implementing change in systems, processes and expectations of provision. Staff consultation, an 'open-door' approach to leadership enables dialogue to inform decisions and communication. Staff comfortably request more time when needed. A Staff Council has been introduced to enable concerns and improvements to be fed back regularly through an appropriate channel. Clear reporting and line management flow charts are in place and communicated. Pastoral, Safeguarding and Leadership meetings are embedded into the academic calendar, enabling operational and strategic decisions to steer the school in a forward direction of improvement for all stakeholders.

ACTIONS	EVIDENCE & IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full external safeguarding audit – external LA commissioned &amp; LA S175</li> <li>• Full external Health and Safety audit by Local Authority SHE Unit</li> <li>• Full external review of the Governing Body by National Governance Association 2019 &amp; 2021, LA commissioned audit 2023</li> <li>• Full skills audit of Governing Body by Human Resources specialist</li> <li>• Whole School Medical Needs audit – administration of medication files</li> <li>• Whole school staff stress risk assessment</li> <li>• Established staff well-being working party – transition to Staff Council 2023</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full action plan identifying &amp; addressing all safeguarding concerns</li> <li>• Full action plan identifying &amp; addressing all health &amp; safety concerns</li> <li>• Restructure of committees for efficient strategic leadership</li> <li>• Maximised utilisation of governor skillset to support &amp; challenge appropriately</li> <li>• Revisited administration of medication training ensuring understanding of 5R's</li> <li>• Identified the risks of change management; action plan &amp; staff working party</li> <li>• Empowered staff to support identified stress risks during school change</li> <li>• Ensured accurate and timely communication to parents, carers and staff</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of parent communication app – Parentapp</li> <li>• Development of informative school website</li> <li>• Collaborative leadership groups with GASSH</li> <li>• Link with SAND for advisory support</li> <li>• PMLD link with Regency Special School</li> <li>• Extensive staff CPD programme that aligns to pupil needs &amp; school direction</li> <li>• Development of Staff Handbook and Induction programme</li> <li>• Policy review cycle developed</li> <li>• Implementation of whole school provision monitoring cycle that aligns with governor reporting calendar</li> <li>• Curriculum leads present to Curriculum and Standards Governor Committee</li> <li>• Implementation of family/parent visits to prospective school through FLW</li> <li>• Implementation of new pupil transition through FLW documentation &amp; visits</li> <li>• Review of Commissioning Brief and increase in commissioned NOR</li> <li>• Consultation to reassign Pathway Leadership to Phase Leadership</li> <li>• Implementation of systems and processes software</li> <li>• A safe and secure purposeful environment through increased boundaries &amp; transport transition systems &amp; flight risk management</li> <li>• Full stakeholder consultation on school vision, mission &amp; statement &amp; values &amp; newly proposed primary SEMH provision + support during Covid19</li> <li>• Succession plan of senior leadership &amp; development of middle leadership</li> <li>• Staff CPD on low level concerns and allegation management, alongside a clear and effective safeguarding reporting system, supports timely and appropriate action from leaders at Social Care, LADO and parent level</li> <li>• Local Authority review &amp; audit of ECT support ensured effective systems &amp; processes were in place for ECT successful completion of induction in SEN</li> <li>• Worcester University link – Head &amp; Deputy deliver workshops &amp; seminars on SEND &amp; inclusion to trainee teachers, sharing good special school practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective up to date communication of school purpose to any stakeholder</li> <li>• Future proof succession planning for expansion of provision</li> <li>• Creative leadership of local and central government initiatives</li> <li>• External verification &amp; validation of practice through leadership peers</li> <li>• Specialist input on new PMLD focused provision, increased staff knowledge</li> <li>• Knowledge and awareness of new inspection expectations and focus</li> <li>• Safer practice for all pupils through understanding of processes and risks</li> <li>• Safer practice for all pupils and shared understanding of responsibilities</li> <li>• Safer practice for all pupils through understanding of processes and risks</li> <li>• Staff understanding of direct impact of environment on learning</li> <li>• Clarity in school expectation and systems and processes</li> <li>• Governor ratification of operational policies &amp; agreed strategic policy direction</li> <li>• Valid, current data reported to governor committees in timely approach challenged and monitored, enabled leaders response through dynamic actions</li> <li>• Full governor awareness of quality of education through curriculum direction</li> <li>• Transparent approach to provision admissions and effective transition</li> <li>• Enabled maximisation of pupil place and smooth, communicated pupil transition</li> <li>• Increased current NOR by 25 + 20 SEMH</li> <li>• Effective middle leadership of quality education across provision &amp; staff support</li> <li>• Efficient and accurate reporting, enabling timely response from leaders</li> <li>• Positive &amp; collaborative relationship with whole school community to implement change and further improvements to standards &amp; effectiveness</li> <li>• There is a clear culture of proactive pupil-centred safeguarding reporting consistent across the school. Low level concerns are reported to DSL's &amp; Leaders; an understanding of responsibility is secure, supporting pupil safety</li> <li>• Widen and enrich understanding and confidence of new and aspiring professionals, aiming to attract committed new teachers to SEND</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leadership and Management Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Embed the new Staff Council to encompass wellbeing, workload &amp; communication</li> <li>➤ Future proof school provision to address the recruitment and retention challenges nationally, in particular in our isolated location, by joining a MAT</li> </ul>	



## Appendices:

  
RAP 23 24 (1) -  
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**Rapid Action Plan 23/24**

1. Safeguarding Audits and Action Plan [Safeguarding action plan review updated 290224](#)

  
230901\_Heart of the  
Forest\_Allan Brown\_G  
**2. External Audit of Governance**

  
240101\_Heart of the  
Forest\_Andy Lole\_Rev  
**3. External Audit of Whole School Communication**

  
240130\_Heart of the  
Forest\_Teresa Cross\_1  
**4. Quality of Education**

5. Progress Data for PE [Progress Data - PE Spring 2024](#)

   
Attendance and Behaviour data term  
Behaviour data.docx 3 Governors (1).docx  
**6 & 7**

  
Curriculum  
model.pptx  
**8. Curriculum Model**