The words **backward, backwards, forward, forwards, outward, outwards** etc can be used as adjectives and adverbs.

**As adjectives**

When these words are used as adjectives, they don’t have the -s ending. That means we can’t use forwards, backwards, outwards etc as adjectives. Instead we use forward, backward, outward etc.

There are many **backward** countries in Africa. (NOT There are many backwards countries in Africa. Here backward is used as an adjective modifying the noun countries.)
He is **backward** in his studies. (NOT He is backwards in his studies.)
**Forward** passes are not allowed in rugby. (NOT Forwards passes are not allowed in rugby.)
She was seen riding in a **northward** direction.

**As adverbs**

When these words are used as adverbs, they can be used with or without the -s ending. While the forms with -s are more common in British English, the forms without -s are usually used in American English.

Go **upwards**. OR Go **upward**.
Why are you moving **backwards** and **forwards**? OR Why are you moving **backward** and **forward**?

In expressions like **look forward to**, **put forward** and **bring forward**, the form without -s is always used.

We are **looking forward to** your next visit. (NOT We are looking forwards to your next visit.)