

Inspection of a good school: Saxon Wood School

Barron Place, Rooksdown, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 9NH

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Outcome

Saxon Wood School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy and well cared for in this kind and inclusive school. Relationships between everyone are strong and the atmosphere is calm and harmonious. The school has a particularly supportive, caring and nurturing ethos. This helps pupils to develop positive attitudes towards each other. Most parents and carers are very positive about how effectively the school meets the individual needs of their child. Staff take great care to ensure that all pupils can communicate in ways which best suit them.

Pupils are keen to learn. They are happy to take part in activities with each other, especially in assemblies. They are enthusiastic to celebrate their own success and take joy in the success of others. When the opportunities arise, pupils love trying new challenges. This includes physical as well as academic tasks. However, currently, these opportunities are too rare.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that staff care about their well-being and welfare. Pupils behave well, both in lessons and at social times. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns and trust staff to always help them. Pupils told inspectors that bullying does not happen.

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

The newly appointed headteacher has had an immediate impact. She has challenged staff at all levels to be ambitious for the learning of all pupils. Some teachers and learning support assistants are working together better. They teach in partnership to ensure that plans identify what pupils should learn and when. In these classes, pupils are able to build and link their knowledge. Consequently, they can solve more challenging tasks.

However, this approach is not yet consistent across the school. Not all teachers amend their plans quickly enough. This means that pupils often wait longer than they should for

the next learning task. Too much time is used on repetitive group work, with pupils' learning delayed while each member of the class joins in one at a time. Pupils are not stretched, even though they are ready to learn more. As a result, some pupils do not improve their skills or knowledge in a curriculum that is not ambitious enough.

Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and using symbols to communicate. Pupils take particular pride in celebrating each other's successes in this area. Most staff use signs and symbols well to support learning and understanding. This is seen across the school, beginning in the early years.

Staff focus on creating a safe and caring environment for all their pupils. They do this to make sure that everyone can join in with all aspects of learning with confidence. Because of this, behaviour across the school is exemplary.

Staff use a range of methods to help pupils to develop their physical abilities. For example, in physical education lessons, pupils use parachutes to help improve grip. They also help them to respond to colour and movement. In this way, pupils gain a sense of independence as they learn.

Staff are proud to work at their school. They say that the new leadership team appreciates their efforts. Leaders are considerate of staff workload. Staff feel that leaders now support them both professionally and personally and that the new headteacher listens to their views.

Most parents are very supportive of the school. Many of them commented on how much they appreciate the support and care that staff give to their children. One parent commented: 'Saxon Wood has provided a safe, caring and nurturing environment for my son. He loves school.'

Leaders and governors know which aspects of the provision they need to improve. Through the recent changes to the leadership team, they have started to address the ambition of the curriculum for all pupils. These plans are at an early stage and have not yet had an impact. Leaders also know that they need to have a sharp focus on attendance. They have yet to carry out analysis of pupil absence to identify key issues and to take appropriate action. This work will ensure that everything possible is considered to help pupils attend school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school, with the new headteacher making this a priority. Systems, checked by governors, are in place to support pupils, so they are safe in school.

Pupils know that there are trusted members of staff they can speak to. Staff are trained to know what to do if they have concerns. The safeguarding team provides effective

support for pupils. They have also begun to work hard to ensure that agencies give the support expected when it is needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Currently, there is not an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is better planned and delivered so that pupils' knowledge and skills are improved. This will ensure that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes regardless of their level of need.
- There are too many inconsistencies in the delivery of the curriculum. Teachers need to use the foundations of pupils' confidence and happiness that they have successfully built to help drive learning forward. They should make sure that there is real rigour in what they expect pupils to learn and achieve.
- Not all pupils attend school as well as they could. Leaders and governors must strengthen their approaches to raising levels of attendance to ensure that pupils are in school as much as possible.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Saxon Wood School to be good on 14 November 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116634
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10122297
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ben Walton
Headteacher	Jakki Alexander
Website	www.saxonwood.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 July 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Pupils have a variety of complex and profound special educational needs which affect their ability to access the curriculum and learning.
- The number of pupils attending the school has increased since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education. We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, physical development, and personal, social, health and economic education. Inspectors discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and, where possible, spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.

- Inspectors considered the views of two members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, and the 15 free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views and communicated to them informally about the school.

Inspection team

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Emma Phillips

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020