

# Inspection of Saxon Wood School

Barron Place, Rooksdown, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 9NH

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy to attend this school. Parents say their children smile when they talk about their education. The morning routine runs like clockwork as staff create a positive start to the day. They skilfully help pupils with meeting individual health and care needs, including changes of positioning. This helps everyone settle quickly into learning. Pupils thrive on the clear and predictable structure that carries on throughout the school day.

Every pupil is valued as a unique individual, and everyone shares the belief that each pupil has a right to their own voice. Leaders and staff work closely with therapists to support pupils to communicate effectively using a variety of bespoke approaches. Pupils demonstrate highly considerate attitudes towards each other. They help out their classmates without question. The atmosphere around school is calm and purposeful.

Staff build strong and trusting relationships with pupils. Pupils rely on them to keep them safe and help them to achieve all they are capable of. Pupils have consistently positive attitudes toward their learning. They persist in their learning and work hard. Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements. They celebrate their own and other pupils' successes with equal joy.

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

Leaders' aspirations are high. They resolutely ensure that limits are not placed on what each pupil could achieve. This ambition has led leaders to thoroughly review the curriculum offer. From early years through to the older classes, pupils join a pathway of learning that is designed to deliver learning in line with their identified needs. Leaders have prioritised embedding the core subjects of English and mathematics. Because of this, some of the wider areas for learning and foundation subjects are not yet consistently fully planned and are currently under development.

As the curriculum offer has been reviewed and refined, aspects of the assessment systems are also still in development. The small steps in learning that pupils need to make have not been clearly defined across the whole curriculum. In some subjects, pupils' next steps lack precision. This means that pupils are not always given time to consolidate their learning before moving on.

Leaders have a sharp focus on reading. For those pupils who are ready to learn to read, the teaching of phonics is a well established part of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy these lessons, and over time, they become independent readers. Pupils in the early stages of learning braille are fully included in the lessons by skilled staff who adapt the resources with expertise. Other pupils are carefully taught to read important symbols for daily life. Staff creatively deliver sensory stories and support pupils to enjoy and understand books. Many pupils proactively request their favourite books when they have an opportunity for free choice.

The early years curriculum is organised to encourage children to develop their curiosity. Adults seek out opportunities to help children explore their interests and enhance their understanding of the world. Across the school, all pupils experience a broad range of learning activities. Throughout the day, staff seamlessly meet the medical and care needs of pupils, with minimal distractions from their learning.

A growing range of enrichment activities are being built into the curriculum offer. Pupils are enthusiastic about their horse-riding lessons. They are reflective about their progress and can share the important words they use to instruct the horses. Members of the school council proudly represent the views of their classmates. They shared how they had organised recent coronation celebrations. Pupils make a strong contribution to the inclusive ethos of this school. They consistently show kindness and patience to each other. This was exemplified during a group discussion. While one pupil persevered with their eye-gaze communication system to answer a question, another pupil calmly commented to the group 'let's all give her time, she is finding her words'.

All staff have high expectations of how pupils behave. For those pupils who need support to regulate their behaviour, very bespoke approaches are in place to meet their needs. Pupils were keen to share how they earn 'gold coins' for their positive attitudes. Weekly assemblies give the opportunity to celebrate each other's achievements. Following a recent trip to local shops, pupils were complimented on their exemplary behaviour.

Governors have a strong sense of loyalty to the school. They know how tirelessly leaders have worked to make improvements for the pupils. Staff feel these changes have been worthwhile. They appreciate the opportunities for training and development that help them to make a difference for the pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. Carefully planned safeguarding training for all governors and staff happens regularly and accurate records of this are kept. This means everyone is able to identify any signs that might mean a pupil is at risk. Pupils are also taught about how to stay safe, and they trust adults to listen to them.

Staff are vigilant and report all concerns to the safeguarding leaders without delay. When families need help, leaders take swift action to get support in place. They have close links with other professionals and work effectively with them to support pupils' welfare.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' work to revise the wider curriculum is still in development. In some foundation subjects or wider areas of learning, leaders have not clearly identified the important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn and when. This limits opportunities for some pupils to develop their understanding securely. Leaders need to ensure that teachers know what they should teach and when in each subject so that pupils fully develop their understanding over time.
- Leaders have not yet fully embedded a coherent assessment system that encompasses the small steps of progress that pupils need to make across the curriculum. This means that sometimes the targets set for pupils are not always the most important or valid next steps. Leaders need to ensure that the small steps of learning in each subject area are clearly articulated so that pupils can consolidate and generalise their learning before moving on.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116634
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256290
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	43
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Wendy Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jakki Alexander
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.saxonwood.hants.sch.uk">www.saxonwood.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Pupils attending this school have a variety of complex and profound special educational needs which affect their ability to access the curriculum and learning.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and learning support assistants.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and communication and language. For each deep dive, inspectors met

with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors looked at curriculum planning in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and policies, speaking to staff and trustees and discussing this with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and governing body minutes.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Linda Jacobs

Ofsted Inspector

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