

INSPECTION REPORT

SAXON WOOD SCHOOL

Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116634

Headteacher: Mr P Skinner

Reporting inspector: V Wilkinson
18461

Dates of inspection: 27th – 28th November 2001

Inspection number: 193606

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rooksdown Barron Place Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG24 9NH
Telephone number:	01256 356635
Fax number:	01256 323713
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Howard
Date of previous inspection:	24th.April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
V Wilkinson 18461	Registered inspector
C Roberson 16310	Lay inspector
S Parker 13033	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

QICS
Ibsley
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon

EX7 9EB

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Saxon Wood is a community special school for pupils age two to 11 who have a physical disability or complex medical condition. Recently the needs of pupils admitted to the school have become more complex. Many pupils often have additional difficulties with their vision or their hearing and there are a significant number of pupils who have little or no language and require alternative communication systems. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below that for pupils of similar age. Staff employed by the local Health Trust, physio, speech and occupational therapists and a paediatric nurse, work closely with education staff to meet pupils' needs. There are currently eight children who attend the nursery part-time and there are 34 pupils aged between five and 11. There are no pupils from an ethnic minority background or who have English as an additional language. There are a very small number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school has a very large catchment area which includes North Hampshire and the adjoining counties. Children who attend the nursery for assessment of their special needs are not always admitted to Saxon Wood when they are five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Saxon Wood is a very good school, which is very well led by the headteacher. It has high but realistic expectations of its pupils and with very good teaching it is successful in improving their achievements. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very effective leadership, which is reflected in the very successful partnership that has been established between all those involved in the education and care of pupils.
- Teaching is very good. It enables pupils to achieve very well and make very good progress, particularly in literacy and communication and in the use of computers and alternative communication systems.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and they demonstrate great care and consideration for each other; their positive attitudes enable them to successfully meet the challenges they are given.
- The school very effectively promotes pupils' personal development because it sets ambitious but realistic targets to promote independence.

No significant areas for improvement were identified.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has successfully addressed all the key issues from its previous inspection in April 1997 when it was identified as a good school providing good value for money. The role of the subject co-ordinator has been redefined and now reflects the responsibilities that teachers have in planning the subjects of the curriculum. Their role in monitoring teaching is still underdeveloped but the school has appropriate plans to address this in the near future. All curriculum subjects are now supported by good quality policy documents and subject plans. The school has very effectively addressed the promotion of pupils' independence. The key issue to plan for school development over a longer period was carefully considered but the school felt that the current planning format, which covers one year, was effective in identifying and guiding the work the school needs to undertake to improve. The inspection team feel that this decision needs to be reconsidered.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	By age 7	by age 11	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	A	Very good	A
Reading	A	A	Good	B
Writing	B	B	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Children in the foundation stage make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Overall pupils between the ages of 5 and 11 make very good progress in literacy and those with little or no language make very good progress in communication and the use of alternative communication systems. Pupils of all ages make very good progress in using computers which help them to participate in learning opportunities and to record their work. Pupils' achievement and progress is good in all the other subjects of the curriculum because teachers set target and prepare work that enables pupils to practise their skills and build on what they have already experienced and achieved. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plan. The targets are well known to all those involved with the education and care of pupils and this ensures that there is a constant emphasis on providing opportunities for achievement. The school sets challenging but realistic targets for pupils which are successfully achieved. Assessment is being used effectively to plan for improvements in achievement across the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils clearly enjoy school. They are enthusiastic, interested in their work and participate fully in lessons. Pupils always try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils understand and respond well to the school rules and to the consistent and high expectations of staff. They clearly understand how to behave particularly when they go out on visits.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils' self esteem is high and they work hard to achieve independence. There are very good relationships with staff which help pupils to maintain their interest in activities throughout the day. Pupils show considerable care and understanding of each other's needs and approach their work in a very positive way.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils attend school on a very regular basis despite medical conditions which require them to have time away from school. Effective transport arrangements ensure that there is a punctual start to the day.

The very good relationships pupils have with staff and each other, and pupils' very positive attitudes, enable them to make the best of the learning opportunities and experiences provided.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation stage	Reception – Year 6
Lessons seen overall	Very Good	Very Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is very good. During the inspection it was never less than good and in almost half of lessons it was very good. Teaching of literacy is a particular strength because the literacy plans developed by the school provide very good guidance for teachers when they prepare lessons and as a result pupils make very good progress in developing their skills. The very good teaching of literacy has been recognised by the local education authority which asks the school to provide examples of good practice for other teachers. There is specialised and very effective individual teaching for pupils who need alternative forms of communication. The communication teacher provides very good technical and practical support for staff which enables them to use these systems confidently and consistently for the benefit of pupils. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in activities and enables those with little or no language to make very good progress. All teachers effectively support pupils' learning by using computers, particularly for them to record their work. Classroom support staff work very effectively with teachers and share their high expectations of pupils. Pupils are given very good support which results in them becoming confident learners who are prepared to participate in activities and to persevere when they find tasks difficult. There is a significant and very successful emphasis on 'enabling' pupils to be as independent as possible in both their personal and academic development. Special support assistants have a specific role in promoting pupils' independence and they make a significant contribution to the very good progress pupils make.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good range of very relevant learning opportunities. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well and has been adapted very successfully to meet the particular needs of pupils. There is an excellent emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and communication skills. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used effectively by teachers when they plan lessons. Pupils benefit from a very wide range of visits into the community and interesting visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school provides a secure and supportive community in which all pupils are taught to care for and consider others. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and moral development is very well planned for. The school consistently promotes good social development by encouraging turn taking and sharing. Spiritual awareness is very well supported through religious education lessons, assemblies and opportunities to reflect on the day's events. Cultural awareness is well promoted throughout the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All staff demonstrate great sensitivity in the way they relate to pupils. They know pupils very well and have a high regard for their well-being, health and safety. Staff continually consider how best pupils can be helped and supported so that they maintain and develop as much independence as possible. Assessment is good and is used effectively by teachers to plan

	what pupils will learn next. There are good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and very good systems for promoting and monitoring pupils' personal development.
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The school has a very effective relationship with parents. There is a very strong commitment to work with parents and to share information for the benefit of children. The annual review meeting is organised very well to enable parents to share their thoughts and concerns with the school, and with the other professionals who attend. Through these meetings parents make an excellent contribution to their child's learning because they take an active role in establishing priorities for their child and monitoring progress. There are good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and the school collects a considerable amount of evidence about pupils' responses to activities. However, it is not easy to extract information from these records because at times they are a dialogue about what has happened rather than a clear identification of what a pupil can and cannot do. They do, however, provide very good information about pupils' attitudes and their effort to participate which contributes very effectively to the promotion and monitoring of pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and ensures that there is a very effective partnership with parents, health and other education professionals. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and there is a close working partnership with all other staff. This results in a shared commitment to the continuous improvement of the school and is reflected in the way staff confidently take on roles and responsibilities. Development planning is good but does not identify improvements over a long enough period.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and school and it has a very good understanding of the work that the school does. It is committed to improving the current high standards and has implemented appropriate procedures to monitor aspects of the school including teaching and learning. It has not fully realised its potential in managing and shaping the school's future because it does not identify and plan for improvements which will take more than a year to achieve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Effective systems have been implemented to monitor all aspects of the school's work. These successfully identify strengths and areas for development. The school effectively monitors its progress towards the targets in the school development plan to ensure continual improvement to what it offers. It is beginning to use assessment information to compare its performance in relation to other schools and identify patterns in teaching and learning which may have implications for development.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Pupils' learning is effectively supported by the very good use that is made of staff, time and resources. The school ensures that it gets best value from its purchases but it does not evaluate the impact spending decisions have on the quality of teaching and learning. The accommodation is satisfactory, the school is a bright and lively learning environment but classrooms are small.

The size of the classrooms restricts pupils' opportunities to use their wheelchairs independently, particularly older pupils who have large electric wheelchairs. The school is very well resourced and pupils benefit from the very good provision of computers, specialised switches and the very good range of alternative communication equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like coming to school.• Teaching is good.• They are kept well informed about how their child is getting on.• They are provided with good information about the life and work of the school.• The school is well led and managed.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, problems and ideas.	

At the parents meeting and through the parent questionnaires a number of issues were raised. A very small number of parents were concerned about:

- The amount of therapy time provided for the school by the local Health Trust.
- That the size of the classrooms was restricting children's opportunities to use their wheelchairs independently.

The inspection team agrees with the very positive views expressed by parents and feels that the time pupils spend travelling to school is well monitored to ensure that it does not affect pupils learning or well-being. The inspection team agrees that the classrooms are too small and this has an impact on pupils' independent use of their wheelchairs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The headteacher provides very effective leadership, which is reflected in the very successful partnership that has been established between all those involved in the education and care of pupils.

1. The headteacher provides strong leadership which has resulted in a very positive school ethos and a commitment to promote high achievement by recognising pupils' capabilities and addressing their needs. The school is a very effective learning environment because of the high quality relationships that exist between staff and pupils as well as between the school, parents and education and health professionals. This very effective working relationship has been maintained since the last inspection.
2. There is a wide range of professionals involved in providing care for pupils. These include consultant paediatricians, educational psychologists, advisory teachers for hearing and visual impairment and therapists, as well as representatives from voluntary agencies such as SCOPE. The headteacher has established a forum where people are enabled to work collaboratively and all those involved in the education and care of pupils work very effectively together to ensure that pupils' needs are addressed in a planned and co-ordinated way. People share ideas and listen to each other's opinions. This ensures that pupils make good progress in both their academic and personal development.
3. The headteacher works closely with the governing body, the deputy headteacher and all staff to constantly improve the quality of provision. All staff have very good opportunities, through well planned meetings, to review the school's work and contribute to school development. They are confident to share ideas about improving what the school offers. The headteacher works to people's strengths and there are very good systems for professional development and support, which enable all staff to develop skills and effectively carry out the responsibilities they have been given. This makes a significant contribution to continued improvement of what the school offers. All staff benefit from a thorough induction and essential basic training, particularly about the needs of pupils with physical disabilities and communication problems. They are then offered regular support and development reviews to identify what support staff require to help them in improving and sustaining their own performance. This enables them to carry out their roles very effectively and ensures that they take on the responsibilities they are given with confidence.
4. The effective partnership that has been established between all those involved in the education and care of pupils is reflected in the very good procedures which have been established to assess pupils' needs when they enter school. Assessments are undertaken by education, therapy and nursing professionals and the outcomes result in very good quality care and individual education plans which are established to address pupils' needs. These plans ensures that pupils' needs are addressed through very well integrated learning, therapy and physical management programmes. The school ensures that information about pupils is pooled and used effectively to help plan the learning experiences and support pupils receive and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. The school looks closely at relevant approaches and research which could benefit pupils and parents report that it is very receptive to the ideas and information that they share with teachers. For example, the school embraces new approaches which are discovered by parents and, if appropriate, will train teachers in their use.

5. The school, by working in very close collaboration with physiotherapists and occupational therapists is very effective in supporting pupils to maintain or develop independent movement. There are very good systems and numerous opportunities for teachers and health professionals to share expertise and knowledge and the school continually reviews its practice in supporting and promoting independent movement. This ensures that pupils make very good progress. This effective partnership has been maintained since the last inspection.
6. A strength of the school and a very good example of how it works collaboratively with others for the benefit of pupils is the very close working relationship it establishes with parents and the way this enables them to have such excellent involvement in their child's learning. There is a very strong commitment and enthusiasm to work with parents and to share information regularly for the benefit of children at home and at school. The school puts considerable effort into involving parents in planning and reviewing the provision made for their child. It provides parents with very good information about their child's learning and the work of the school, including good information about the learning experiences that have been planned for pupils over the term. Parents are also provided with a good quality annual report. This contains very good information about pupils' achievement and progress in literacy and communication, numeracy and in relation to the individual targets set for them at the last review. Information about other subjects of the curriculum is good but tends to be a description of what pupils have experienced and their attitudes and responses to activities rather than what they know and can do. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement and has established suitable plans to provide, through recent improvements to the curriculum and assessment, a clear identification of what pupils have learned.
7. To support parents' involvement in their child's education further, the school provides regular news-letters, information letters and there are very good home-school diaries which parents value highly. For example, at the parents' meeting, almost all parents said that they kept completed diaries because they provide a very good record of what their child has done and achieved during their time at school.
8. The school effectively encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's learning because it provides them with very good opportunities to contribute through formal meetings, and there are also very good opportunities for parents to talk informally to teachers and other school staff and education and health professionals. The annual review meeting is very well organised and extremely well run. It provides an outstanding opportunity for parents to share their views about their child's education, health and well-being and for them to monitor progress and agree priorities for the coming year. Parents' partnership with the school enables them to play a positive role in establishing and monitoring the effectiveness of the provision being made for their child. Parents have very positive views about the school, and feel that it is very welcoming and approachable. The very effective partnership that the school has with parents has been maintained since the last inspection.

Teaching is very good. It enables pupils to achieve very well and make very good progress particularly in literacy and communication and the use of computers and alternative communication systems.

9. Pupils achieve well and make very good progress in literacy and communication because the school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well. The provision has a number of excellent features which include a significant emphasis placed on developing pupils' communication skills. The National Literacy Strategy has been adapted very effectively to take full account of the particular needs of pupils. The school

has produced very good guidance for teachers to help them plan lessons. The provision is very well managed and there are very good resources which make a significant contribution to pupils' positive attitudes, their interest and the progress they make. The effectiveness of the school's implementation and teaching of literacy has been recognised by the local education authority which asks the school to provide examples of good practice for other teachers.

10. The use of computers and communication systems such as Liberators which require symbol overlays as well as symbol communication books make a very effective contribution to the development of pupils' early reading skills. Teachers use computers very effectively to help pupils record their work, for example pupils in Year 4 use computers, specialised switches and software to write about the story of 'Chicken Little' These opportunities ensure that early writing skills are developed effectively. The school has established appropriate plans to develop pupils' writing skills in order to bring achievement in-line with communication and reading. Pupils are very effectively supported to make progress because the school has a very good range of computers and other technological aids which are specially designed and adapted for use by pupils with physical and sensory difficulties. These are very well used by teachers to ensure that all pupils are effectively supported to take part in the learning experiences provided. Teachers make very good use of computers to help pupils with all aspects of their work and to help them communicate. For example, pupils in the reception year use a simple, single switch with a pre-recorded message to say hello during the good morning session and a pupil in Year 4 uses a head switch confidently to operate computer software to write about the class story. These opportunities contribute very effectively to pupils' learning and the progress they make in all subjects of the curriculum.
11. The communication teacher has significant expertise in using high and low-tech systems, such as picture communication systems, single switches which play pre-recorded phrases and complex communication systems which are linked to the computer. The work she does in teaching pupils how to use these systems has a very significant impact on the progress they make. The very effective collaborative work undertaken by the communication support teacher with school staff, parents and other professionals has a significant impact on pupils' developing ability to communicate effectively and independently.
12. The very good practical support which has been offered to teachers and other staff ensures that pupils' individual communication systems are used competently and consistently to enable them to take a full and active part in learning. For example, during a good morning session adults enable pupils in the reception year to sign hello or to use a simple communication aid with a pre-recorded message, and a pupil in Year 4 contributes to the lesson by eye pointing to the answer from a choice of symbols shown to him. These consistent opportunities to communicate and contribute make a very significant contribution to the very good progress pupils make.
13. Very clearly described and justified philosophies and approaches have been established for this provision which contribute to its effectiveness. The school has achieved a very effective balance between high quality support for individual pupils and practical support for teachers, support staff and parents. There is very strong evidence of the significant impact this provision has on the progress and achievement of all pupils, those who receive individual teaching, and those who receive indirect support through the technical advice provided. This support has a positive impact and enables pupils to participate effectively in a wide range of different situations which are both learning and social. For example, pupils confidently use picture communication systems to make choices at lunchtime and use communication aids to talk to visitors. A pupil confidently engages an

inspector in conversation through his communication aid and is successful in selling him a Christmas pudding.

14. Very well-planned and organised lessons are a feature of the teaching throughout the school, particularly when teachers plan lessons for literacy. Teachers ensure that lessons they plan are fun and that pupils enjoy participating. This results in pupils concentrating well and contributing effectively. Enthusiastic story telling holds the attention of pupils in Year 1 and they listen very well to the story 'The Enormous Watermelon'; they maintain their interest and are very keen to act out the story using the very good props and costumes that the teacher has provided. Pupils make good progress because the end of each lesson is used effectively by teachers to allow pupils to talk about what they have learned and to rehearse new skills. Teachers have established the lesson routines of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and this helps pupils to settle quickly because they know that they 'do individual or group work' after they have spent time with the teacher as a class.
15. Pupils make good progress because teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 5 the teacher provides lots of short and interesting activities, such as number bingo, which are all focused on developing pupils' recognition of numbers. Good use of questions such as 'which number do we add first?.....' enables pupils to talk through their understanding of addition. A pupil in Year 6 is given good opportunities to rehearse her understanding of fractions by assembling 'a whole circle' from different sections. Clear explanations ensure that pupils have the confidence to take part in lessons. Pupils in Year 1 are able to use the props they have been given because the teachers' explanations have helped them to understand how to act out elements of the story. Pupils' progress is also supported by teachers' good use of demonstration. This enables pupils to be successful because they understand what they are expected to do. For example, teachers effectively show pupils how to set up their lap tops, a pupil in Year 5 knows that she needs to change the font size so that she can see the text properly and because she has been shown how to do it, she is able to get on with her work independently.
16. Activities are short and focused ensuring that pupils are motivated to participate. Teachers use good resources and artefacts which gain pupils' attention and help them to become involved. For example, pupils in Year 4 enthusiastically contribute to the story 'Chicken Little' by using different percussion instruments for each of the characters. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will participate in lessons and as a result pupils respond well; their good attitudes in the classroom enable them to concentrate and make good progress. Teachers use questioning particularly well to challenge pupils to explore further and explain their thinking as well as to demonstrate their understanding.
17. A significant strength of teaching is the way that teachers and support staff work together. Almost all lessons are characterised by good quality teamwork and classroom assistants rarely require direction during lessons. They follow tasks well, taking responsibility for some parts of lessons and activities, responding quickly and with minimum fuss providing pupils with good support.
18. Assessment is used well by teachers to help them plan what pupils will learn next. There are effective systems in place to find out about pupils' capabilities when they start at the school and this assessment and monitoring are continued throughout their time at Saxon Wood. Detailed and consistent observations are carried out to find out how pupils are getting on. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress and these contain a significant amount of information which is available to anyone working with them. As a result, teachers are clear about the skills where pupils need more practice and what they

need to learn next to achieve the targets that have been set for them. This knowledge is shared fully with classroom support staff, and special support assistants who effectively focus their efforts on encouraging pupils' learning.

19. The good procedures for recording pupils' achievement and progress include a significant amount of information about pupils' responses to activities. It is not always easy to extract information from these records as they are often a dialogue about what has happened rather than a statement about what the pupil has achieved. This has resulted in end of term reports which do not always clearly identify what pupils know and can do in some subjects. These reports are written for school use only but the information they contain is appropriately used to help teachers write pupils' annual review reports and to pass information from one teacher to another when a pupil moves class. Many of these end of term reports are too descriptive. The school has identified suitable plans to address this by identifying learning outcomes and assessment opportunities in its subject plans. These will be used to identify and measure achievement and make reports more focused on what the pupil can and cannot do. The school already has very good evidence of the effectiveness of this system within literacy and numeracy where records are very well focused on knowledge and skills and as a result assessment and reporting clearly identifies what a pupil has learned.
20. Teachers mark pupils' work well and this includes a significant amount of information about the levels of support pupils have been given in order to complete tasks. Although this information is very useful in helping to monitor pupils' independence and the effort they put into their work, what has been achieved is not always clear or easy to interpret from the comments that are made.

Pupils' behaviour is very good and they demonstrate great care and consideration for each other; their positive attitudes enable them to successfully meet the challenges they are given.

21. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning because teachers ensure that classrooms have a busy and purposeful atmosphere which encourages their participation. Pupils enjoy the learning experiences they are involved in, they work hard and demonstrate great pleasure in their achievements. They are very aware of each other's needs and know that their friends find some tasks difficult; they are quick to recognise and congratulate them on their achievement. For example, pupils in Year 1 encourage each other when they act out the story of 'The Enormous Watermelon'. They clearly appreciate each other's performances and celebrate achievements when they say 'give yourself a pat on the back'. Pupils are keen to contribute to lessons, they are confident to answer questions and share their understanding. During discussions pupils listen carefully to each other's views. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils listen carefully to each other's suggestions about good and bad characters in the story and pupils are very patient with those who use communication aids and who need more time to reply and share their views.
22. Pupils demonstrate that they can concentrate very well and they persevere when they find the work hard. Pupils in Year 6 are learning about simple addition and they work hard, listening well to the teacher's explanations and effectively use their number lines and fingers to help them. They maintain their concentration and this helps them to make progress so that by the end of the lesson they have a much better understanding of how to add numbers to make five. Pupils show great consideration for each other, waiting patiently for those with physical or communication difficulties to contribute and they make sure that everyone has a turn. Two pupils in Year 6 share a dice and pupils make sure that everyone in the group has a turn using number cards to make addition sums. The

concern pupils show for others when they are ill or finding things difficult is commendable. Pupils work very well together because teachers make sure that there are very good opportunities for them to co-operate and take turns during activities.

23. The inspection team was told on a number of occasions of pupils' very good behaviour when out of school on visits and on the number of times the school has been complimented for pupils' behaviour, their sensible attitudes and the very positive way they respond to the people they meet. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in school and their politeness and enthusiasm for sharing what they are doing with visitors supports these positive reports.

The school very effectively promotes pupils' personal development because it sets ambitious but realistic targets to promote independence.

24. Pupils become independent in their learning and to help them maintain and improve their independent movement because of the very good targets set for them. These are realistic but challenging because all those involved in the education and care of pupils work very effectively together to identify appropriate priorities. The school expects pupils to be as independent as possible and there is a consistent and effective emphasis on encouraging pupils to do things for themselves. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are expected to get themselves ready to go horse riding. Adults teach pupils how to check their work for mistakes and pupils in Year 6 check their spelling when writing a book review and check that they have used capitals properly. Two pupils sharing a dice are expected to throw it for themselves and pass it to one another even though this is difficult for them.
25. Staff are very aware of the significant amount of effort required for pupils to respond to their high expectations and they ensure that they have enough time and very good encouragement to do so. Pupils clearly want to succeed and the high expectations of staff and very good support enables them to achieve very well. Teachers and support staff consider very carefully how much help they offer to pupils and the amount given is tailored carefully to enable all pupils to take part in activities but to ensure that they do so with as much independence as possible. There is a very sensitive balance to the expectations teachers have which ensures that pupils are encouraged to be independent but are not overwhelmed. Teachers will often talk to pupils and negotiate the help they offer particularly when they see that physically pupils are finding tasks difficult. For example, a pupil in Year 5 who is a good reader is not expected to complete a book review for each book she completes because of the amount of effort that is required for her to use the lap top. In a Year 4 literacy lesson the teacher helps pupils to complete their work by typing part of the sentence they have dictated and asking the pupil to complete it.
26. Special support assistants have a very significant role in ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. They have specific responsibility for managing pupils' physical independence programmes and they work very closely with teachers and therapy staff to ensure that pupils' independent movement programmes are carried out effectively. There is a constant emphasis on ensuring pupils' physical well being and support staff ensure that pupils maintain good posture with sensitive prompts such as 'head up' and 'sit up straight'. This helps pupils to participate effectively in activities because their posture is correct and they are able to see and use their hands and arms more effectively. The school has developed a very good independence skills checklist which is used very effectively to record pupils' progress and help to identify where pupils need additional help or need to be taught particular skills.

27. Teachers and special support assistants are effectively trained by therapists to help promote pupils' independent movement and they work in partnership with pupils to achieve the goals they have been set. For example, pupils work on sitting unsupported and helping as much as possible when they move from sitting to standing. The school has established very good systems for school staff and therapists to share information both formally, through regular meeting, and informally throughout the day. This ensures that there is a very regular review of the goals set and of pupils' progress. This helps pupils to achieve very well.
28. The school has very successfully adapted the physical education curriculum to reflect the particular special needs of pupils. Therapy groups, where the focus is on physiotherapy programmes have been established so that pupils can work together on similar skills. For example, pupils work on stretching and rolling from their side to their back. There is a very good emphasis on teaching pupils what they must remember to do to 'help' with these actions, for example 'where does your arm-leg need to be if you are going to roll that way?' Teachers very effectively use music, games and action songs to encourage pupils to participate and to make the sessions fun. Pupils clearly enjoy the activities and they work extremely hard to do their movement exercises. Their individual therapy programmes, for example lying prone or having time in a standing frame, take place throughout the school day and staff ensure whenever possible that these programmes provide functional opportunities for pupils to take part in learning opportunities. For example, children fewer than five are put in positioning equipment while they play with sand and water.
29. The school is a calm and caring community, with a very good emphasis on promoting and supporting pupils' independence. All staff demonstrate in the way they relate to pupils an understanding of their difficulties and they are highly sensitive to their needs. Staff are successful in combining appropriate firmness and clear indications of their expectations with sensitive support and encouragement. All staff demonstrate their commitment to pupils' well being, health and safety through the way activities are organised and by the way they encourage pupils to be as independent as possible. This creates a very good balance between care and concern and high expectations. Pupils react very positively to this approach and they follow the very good role models that staff provide.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	42	58				

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	42
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	7	School data	0

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	38
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.6
Average class size	6.5

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	486

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	556598
Total expenditure	529279
Expenditure per pupil	12007
Balance brought forward from previous year	12672
Balance carried forward to next year	40991

The large budget carried forward to next year is the result of insurance payments received for a member of staff who was on long-term sickleave. This money has been properly allocated to improve the accommodation and grounds.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	44
Number of questionnaires returned	16

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	13			
My child is making good progress in school.	62	38			
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	25	6		7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	44	6		19
The teaching is good.	94	6			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	25			
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	6	7		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	31			6
The school works closely with parents.	69	31			
The school is well led and managed.	75	19	6		
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	37			6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	32			31

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents feel that Saxon Wood is a great school.

They feel that their children make good progress because the school has high expectations. Parents feel that their children make progress despite their physical and medical problems.

Parents said 'all staff are great people', 'thank you', 'a marvellous school', 'staff are good friends'.

Parents feel that their children enjoy coming to school.

A significant number of parents do not appear to be aware of the school's provision of homework or the activities available for children outside the classroom.

Other issues raised by parents

A very small number of parents are concerned about the length of time that children are on the transport.

There are a significant number of parents concerned about finding a similar school for their child when they reach the age of eleven and transfer to secondary education.

A very small number of parents are concerned about the small size of the classrooms and the effect this has on children's independent use of their wheelchairs.

A small number of parents expressed concern about the amount of therapy time provided by the Health Trust for the school.

The inspection team agrees with the very positive views expressed by parents.

The school is already in discussion with the Health Trust about the amount of time that is allocated for therapy support. The inspection team feels that teachers and support assistants effectively carry out the individual and group therapy programmes they have been taught and pupils' progress is monitored effectively by the therapists involved in their care. This ensures that pupils receive appropriate support for their physical needs and staff have become skilled at incorporating therapy programmes into the activities provided throughout the day. In this way pupils do not miss out on learning opportunities.

Transport arrangements are effectively monitored by the school and the inspection team feels that any detrimental effects of a long journey would be appropriately addressed.

The classrooms are small particularly for older pupils who have large electric wheelchairs and pupils' opportunities to move freely and independently around the classroom are restricted.

The school provides very good support for parents when their children are due to transfer to secondary school.

The school provides an appropriate range of work for pupils to do at home particularly in developing their communication skills and it carefully considers pupils' individual physical and academic needs when this work is given. The school is aware that parents do not always understand that the work given to pupils to do at home is considered by the school to be homework.

The school provides pupils with a very good range of learning opportunities outside the classroom but the inspection team feels that parents may not be aware of the extent and range of these opportunities.

The headteacher has plans to provide more information for parents about these experiences.