

Saxmundham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124605
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293049
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robin Potter
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Hawes
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Brook Farm Road Saxmundham Suffolk IP17 1XQ
Telephone number	01728 602205
Fax number	01728 604309

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

This is an average size first school. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are extremely few pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult is above average in most year groups.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Saxmundham Primary is a good school providing good value for money. The very high quality of care, guidance and support contributes most effectively to pupils' outstanding personal development.

Teaching and pupils' achievements are good. From starting points below those typical of children nationally, most children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Fewer pupils than expected reach higher than average standards at Key Stage 1. Pupils' standards are above average by the end of Year 4 and their progress is good.

The leadership of the school places a strong emphasis upon including each pupil whatever their background and this is reflected in the wealth of information that tracks each pupil's progress. This information is not always collated and analysed to enable easy comparisons between different groups of pupils. Supporting pupils' personal development is an area of significant strength and improvement since the previous inspection. Although some pupils with particular needs find it difficult to be self controlled in the playground, most pupils behave extremely well and overall behaviour is good. Pupils have a strong sense of justice and accept responsibilities with impressive maturity. The school council is an extremely active and thoughtful group.

Extremely good partnerships between the school and other professionals benefit pupils with learning difficulties. These partnerships demonstrate the school's enormous commitment to helping these pupils and their families. Strong links with playgroups, the middle school and with families enable pupils to settle remarkably easily into new situations. Parents' questionnaires confirmed that they rate the school highly. For example, comments included that the headteacher, 'Has done wonders with the school', and another that her child is, 'Always happy to go to school'. Pupils confirm their considerable enjoyment of the wide variety of activities indoors and outside and particularly enjoy the many special events.

Good leadership, management and accurate self-evaluation have ensured good improvement overall since the previous inspection. Improvements to the learning environment both inside and outside are impressive. Standards in reading, especially for higher attaining pupils, have improved very well at Key Stage 2. The school has rightly identified that it needs to reverse a recent downward trend in mathematics results at Key Stage 1, and the most recent information indicates that standards have stabilised this year. Teaching has improved from satisfactory to good throughout the school. These improvements demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1, especially of the more able.
- Collate and analyse existing data for a clear overview of attainment on entry to the school and the achievement of different groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children's attainment on entry to school spans the full range, but overall it is below the standards expected nationally. Children make good progress in the

Foundation Stage. They join Year 1 with standards in most of the areas of learning a little below those expected but with increased readiness to learn. Good progress for most pupils continues and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2, but fewer pupils than expected reach higher than average standards.

By the end of Year 4, continuing good progress ensures that many pupils exceed the standards expected for their age. Evidence from school records and pupils' work indicates that there are examples of individual pupils, both higher attaining and those with learning difficulties who make very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This area, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school very much and are very enthusiastic learners. Attendance is above average. School council representatives take their responsibilities extremely seriously. They have helped fire other pupils with enthusiasm for improving the school environment and the school is about to receive its silver 'Eco Award' with justifiable pride. Pupils have impressive respect for the high quality displays of pupils' work around the school and show remarkable consideration and sensitivity when looking at each other's art work. Pupils demonstrate their maturity when reflecting on serious world issues. They have a growing global awareness through links with their twin school in Tanzania and the support they give for the Tanzanian Orphans and Widows charity. Considerable care for each other is demonstrated through the extent to which pupils value the 'buddy stop' in the playground. Pupils are polite, well behaved and friendly with a strong sense of moral justice. They feel safe because they are confident of very good support if they have any problems. They are very enthusiastically embracing healthy lifestyles, and are extremely interested in cultures beyond their own. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning show in pupils' good progress. Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently good. The quality of relationships supports the very effective management of pupils' behaviour, and contributes enormously to pupils' enjoyment of school. Parents are very appreciative of the help their children receive. Pupils describe their teachers as friendly and very helpful, saying for example, 'They never will stop helping them learn'. There is very effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, who make extremely valuable contributions to pupils' learning, especially for those who find learning difficult.

In the best lessons, teachers use questioning very effectively so that all pupils are challenged at their various levels, and the higher attaining pupils have good opportunities to articulate their ideas logically. All pupils receive helpful feedback from teachers. Pupils' understanding of written comments on their work is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good variety of well planned and interesting activities. Most attend one or more of the great choice of after school clubs. Suitable activities help children to settle into the Nursery and develop the social skills they need to make good gains in learning. The Reception classes have introduced some good creative initiatives, for example 'write/dance', which is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Teachers are increasingly linking subjects to make learning even more enjoyable and relevant. For example, one boy described the scientific principles of his working 'jack-in-the-box', made in design and technology, and knew it was a traditional toy from his history work. Detailed planning ensures the curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities overall, although sometimes there is not enough challenge for the more able pupils at Key Stage 1. The school provides highly effective support for pupils who find learning difficult. The personal, social and health education programme includes exceptionally comprehensive topics about staying safe and healthy. The school is rightly extending activities for gifted and talented pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

An extremely caring and supportive ethos results in happy, well motivated pupils. Outstanding support, including excellent links with other professionals, is provided to meet the many and varied needs of vulnerable pupils. Consequently they make very good progress in both their social and academic development as they move through the school. Parents are very pleased with the help they and their children receive. Teaching assistants are highly effective and frequently undertake additional training to meet the particular needs of individuals. Pupils greatly appreciate their help.

Rigorous procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. The school is exceptionally adept in taking opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of safety issues, such as water and cycle safety and the dangers of smoking. Strategies to monitor and promote good attendance have significantly improved attendance since the last inspection. Very effective induction procedures and links with the middle school ensure an impressively smooth transition into nursery and onto the next stage of education. Some marking of pupils' work is highly specific and informative. Most targets that pupils have to reach are understood by them because they are shared with pupils, who are involved in reviewing them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is respected by staff and parents alike, especially for her determination to support each pupil's individual needs. Her clear vision for the school's continuing improvement is shared by other managers, staff and governors. Her newly formed senior management team have made a good start with their increased role in driving school improvements. Self-evaluation is good so the school is addressing the right priorities for improvement. Governors are both supportive and constructively challenging. They hold the school to account well. Staff hold a wealth of information about each pupil's progress,

supporting swift and effective intervention for pupils who are struggling. Whilst the schools analysis of this information is becoming increasingly useful, not all information is collated, such as the precise proportions of pupils working at different levels when they join the Nursery. This means that determining the progress of different groups of pupils is not clearly established.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Saxmundham Primary School, Saxmundham, IP17 1XQ

Thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to the children who met with us in the atrium and helped us to find out so much about your school. We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school. There are too many good things to list every one, but here are some of them.

- You are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy school a lot.
- You work hard and make good progress in your work and some of you make very good progress.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants help you to learn well.
- There are lots of interesting activities in lessons, after school and in and out of school, such as going to music festivals and having special book or art weeks.
- Everyone in school cares for you extremely well so you feel very safe.
- Children who find learning difficult get masses of help.
- Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to make sure that all the adults work together to keep improving the school.
- Your school grounds are fabulous and we are impressed at how well you take care of them and your concern for the environment.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to think about making your school even better by making sure that some of you who find learning easier get even better marks in the Year 2 tests. We have also asked them to use all the information they have about your progress to work out what works best for different groups of children.

Thank you again for being such fun. We hope you continue to enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin (Lead inspector)