

# Saxon Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125111
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	317248
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jennifer Smith HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Vango
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mary Ellen McCarthy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Briar Road Shepperton TW17 0JB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01932 563035
<b>Fax number</b>	01932 566830

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

When Saxon Primary School was inspected in November 2006, it was judged to require special measures. The school roll has fallen slightly since this inspection but has now stabilised. However, it is a smaller than the average primary school. The majority of pupils in the school are White British pupils. A higher proportion of pupils have special educational needs than the national average. An interim headteacher managed the school from January 2007 until the end of the summer term. A new substantive headteacher took up post in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory with a number of good features, such as the personal development of its pupils. Over the last two terms the school has made rapid progress, especially under the dynamic leadership of the new headteacher. She has a clear vision and provides good direction for the staff. This is recognised by the parents who spoke to the inspectors during this inspection and who were also very positive in their response to a school-initiated questionnaire. The views of many parents can be summed up by one who reported that, 'The school is fantastic, my son is so happy and soaking up knowledge like a sponge!' The school's close collaborative partnership with a neighbouring primary school has significantly raised expectations of what can be achieved and this is now coming to fruition. A significant number of staff changes have occurred over the last two years; staffing has now stabilised. There is a real drive to ensure that pupils achieve well and enjoy school.

Standards attained in 2007 at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading and mathematics and higher than they had been for several years. Writing remains significantly lower. Overall, this represents largely good progress as a result of improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and more robust tracking of pupils' progress. There were similar improvements in the national tests for Year 6 in 2007 in mathematics and science, although the science results are still significantly lower than the national average. Pupils' achievement is steadily improving from their starting point and is now good by the end of Year 2 in mathematics and reading but satisfactory in writing. By the end of Year 6 in 2007, pupils made satisfactory progress overall. However, early indications from pupils' work seen in lessons in the current Year 6 suggest that these pupils are now making good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and report many positive changes this year. They are well behaved, and have a good attitude to learning. Attendance has improved. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Better use of assessment strategies is beginning to help teachers to plan more effectively to meet the needs of most pupils. However, some more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Although teachers have tracked pupils' progress well, pupils do not always have targets clearly explained to them so that they can see the progress they are making for themselves. The pastoral care and support for pupils are very good and pupils are provided with very effective classroom help from teaching assistants.

The school has good capacity for further improvement because of the recent changes in leadership and management, the greatly improved partnership with parents and the improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They enter the school with skills and knowledge that are lower than expected nationally and their writing and speaking skills are especially weak. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress in all their areas of learning. They are working in line with expectations in most areas, except for aspects of literacy and numeracy, when they enter Year 1. The classroom is spacious and very well organised to

support lively interactive learning. For example, children were practising writing and talking in an 'Indian restaurant' and learning about capacity by pouring rice into different containers. Staff are well deployed and give good support to children through focus groups. They encourage children to become independent through self-assessment. On occasion, however, they are not quick enough to encourage children to work independently and to persevere with their learning. Good management underpins very thoughtfully detailed planning and assessment, so work is carefully matched to the needs of each child.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the pupils are set clear targets that they understand and that will help them improve their work.
- Improve the standards in writing in Key Stage 1 and science in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that the highest attaining pupils are always sufficiently challenged in all areas of the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are above the national average in mathematics and reading but significantly below the national average in writing. Pupils are making increasingly good progress but writing remains a concern.

In 2007, the standards reached at the end of Year 6 improved significantly in mathematics and science from the previous years. English and mathematics were near the national average although science results were still significantly below. Overall, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory because of a more consistent approach to teaching, the setting of clear learning objectives at the start of the lesson and better planning, assessment and marking. Regular reading sessions have helped to improve pupils' skills in this area but writing remains weaker than reading, and is a priority for improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from well-targeted support in lessons and this, supplemented by additional literacy support, helps them make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and enjoy being given responsibilities such as being chosen by their classmates as school council representatives. The large majority of pupils enjoy their school experience, settle well in lessons and have a very good attitude to their learning. Behaviour in class is good. Pupils are polite to visitors and behave well around the school although a little noisily at lunchtime. Pupils really appreciate the good news assemblies on Fridays, which provide excellent opportunities to build their self-esteem and to celebrate good work and helpfulness. Pupils are growing in self-confidence in speaking in public and have been given responsibility to shape the school's new behaviour code, which they understand well and reflect in the way they conduct themselves. The spiritual dimension of pupils' learning is underdeveloped.

Attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection because of encouragement and reward systems. It is now a little above the national average and due to the changes at the start of the day, very few pupils are now unpunctual. Pupils and parents report that bullying is uncommon but any instances of poor behaviour or bullying are now dealt with very speedily by the headteacher, and nipped in the bud. The swift action taken is well recorded and is a key factor in the very calm and effective learning environment in the classrooms. A good number of pupils eat and enjoy the healthy school lunches. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, because of well focused monitoring and staff training. Teaching is now good in the Foundation Stage, and in a significant number of lessons from Year 1 to Year 6; it is satisfactory overall. Teachers make learning interesting and relevant by developing links between subjects. Pupils in Year 4, for example, were enjoying writing reports of their recent history topic visit to Hampton Court. Teachers' effective questioning helps pupils to develop their thinking and expand their answers. Pupils' learning was particularly good where investigations were planned for example in science and mathematics. Pace and challenge were previously identified as weaknesses and, whilst there is improvement in these areas, these are still the weakest aspects of lessons. Marking has improved, but it is still inconsistent across classes in informing pupils about their successes and assisting them in revisiting areas of their work that are weaker. Pupils that are more able are not always given sufficiently challenging work. However, teachers work hard to plan for the needs of most pupils, including those who need support with their literacy, and as result all pupils make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum has recently been reviewed in order to improve continuity and to match appropriate materials to each year group in all subjects. The school recognises that further curriculum review is necessary to ensure that each subject is taught in the best possible way to suit the pupils. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to teach information and communication technology through other subjects. There is a range of clubs, which focus particularly on sport, and the curriculum is suitably enriched. For instance, there are a number of visits and school journeys, and all Year 4 pupils learn to play the guitar.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Relationships in the school are very good. Staff are good role models and the pupils therefore feel very well cared for. All statutory safeguarding is in place and pupils say they feel safe and know which adults to go to if they need help. Social and moral education is well taught and the school is introducing a scheme to make sure that there is continuity in all aspects of pupils' personal development. Academic target setting is less strong. Use of assessment information is now better than it was at the last inspection and pupils have levelled targets for improvement. However, these are not explained in words, so pupils are not clear what they have to focus on

next to achieve these levels. The careful work undertaken by the headteacher in building very effective links with parents has ensured that parents report their rapidly growing confidence in the school as a happy and caring environment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The new headteacher has already brought in a number of substantial and important changes, which have had a marked impact on the effectiveness of the school. Clear direction and vision for the school have led to the rapid improvements this term. For example, the regular and very informative newsletters have enabled parents and carers to feel very much partners in the education of their children. A significant number of parents are now helping in the school and their attendance at both parents' evenings and curriculum workshops has increased dramatically. Parents really appreciate this new inclusive nature of the school.

The targets set by the school are now more realistic and reflect the drive for improved standards and higher achievement of its pupils. These expectations, confirmed in teachers' performance management targets, are supported by comprehensive staff development. The school's self-evaluation is very thorough and effective steps are being taken to address areas of weakness. The most significant change is the pupils' attitude to learning, which is very positive. Parents report that their children are eager to come to school and are enjoying the regular homework that is now set. The hard working staff are enthusiastic and committed to sharing the headteacher's vision.

Governance of the school is very good. Governors have developed a clear visiting policy and now understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. They visit the school regularly and have, for example, been involved in looking at samples of pupils' work with the headteacher to gain a clear picture of the progress being made.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

3 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saxon Primary School, Shepperton, TW17 0JB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and joining you in your lessons. We were very pleased to see how much you now like school. When your school was last inspected many things needed to be put right. This time, we think that your school has worked hard to improve things for you. This is what we found out.

Saxon Primary School is providing you with a satisfactory education and many improvements have been made lately. Mrs McCarthy is a good headteacher and is leading the school very well. She and all the other adults work very hard to help you do as well as you can. You are keen to learn in class and your teachers have high expectations of you. Teachers are good at explaining things and they prepare interesting activities for you. We enjoyed looking at your work. Some of the writing that Year 6 pupils read to us showed the good progress you are making, such as this poem written by Milissa, aged 10.

'The snow gracefully runs down from the white sky like a musical dancer in the middle of the school field then it slowly melts away in the sun.'

The teachers and other staff look after you well and we were particularly pleased to hear from you and your parents that you enjoy doing your homework, which you now get regularly; well done! You told us that your new Friday 'good news' assembly helps you to appreciate each other's good achievements and contributions to the school community. Many of you are making a real effort in getting to school on time and your attendance has improved; in some classes, it is now very good indeed.

We think that there are some things that would help your school become even better. We have asked the school to help younger pupils to improve their writing and to help older pupils do better in science. We have also asked the adults to tell you clearly what your targets are, so that you can see the progress you are making for yourself. We also would like the work set to really challenge all of you.

We wish you luck in the future and especially the new school council. We hope the school council members will talk about this letter at their next meeting and then speak to the whole school about it.

Jennifer Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector