

Saxon Wood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116634
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338847
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Howard
Headteacher	Lynne Cannon
Date of previous school inspection	5 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The proportion of time spent looking at learning was about two thirds. Nine lessons were observed and seven teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school's planning documents, pupils' work and teachers' plans. Nine parents responded to the parental questionnaires, but only seven questionnaires were completed fully.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following:

- how well the school includes pupils with the greatest needs in all activities
- the quality and impact of provision to improve reading skills
- the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics.

Information about the school

Saxon Wood caters for pupils who have physical disabilities and/or complex needs. The majority also have moderate learning difficulties. A minority have severe learning difficulties and a few have visual impairments. Pupils come from a wide geographical area covering the whole of north Hampshire and some adjacent authorities. Most pupils are White British. The accommodation includes some specialist provision such as a multi-sensory room and a sensory garden.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Saxon Wood is a good school. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all its pupils, ensuring that they greet each day with enthusiasm and genuinely like coming to school. Very high quality individual education plans for each pupil enables the school to meet pupils' special educational needs extremely well, including providing the specialist help that they need. As a result, pupils thrive in the warm and caring ethos, leading to their excellent social and moral development. Pupils say that they feel very safe and secure. They show exceptional understanding of how to lead healthy lives, eating a wide range of fruit and vegetables. In the nursery class for example, children try new tastes such as tomatoes, carrots and mangoes for their snack with enthusiasm. Pupils work very well together, taking turns and sharing their tasks and are very aware of the many challenges facing the world. The school council organises many fundraising events for different charities. For example, they recently successfully organised a 'line of pennies' to support the people of Haiti.

Pupils achieve well during their time at the school, including making a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most achieve challenging targets year on year and some exceed their targets. They achieve very well in communication due to high-quality technology and communication aids and to the rigorous use of signs and symbols. A few, mainly those with the greatest needs, do not always make the progress expected of them in mathematics because they are not always sufficiently challenged; planning and resources do not always fully meet their needs. Pupils make particularly good progress in their personal development.

Good leadership and management are evident in the headteacher's clear vision for the future of the school. Together with other leaders, she has embedded many good new procedures to improve provision and raise achievement. For example, through effective monitoring and self-evaluation, she has identified deficiencies in practice that are now being successfully addressed. Consequently the school has a good capacity to improve further. Previous lack of signing to promote communication and interaction for all pupils has been improved through high-quality training for staff. The recognition that achievement in mathematics was lower than that in literacy and communication has resulted in training programmes for staff, a review of the mathematics curriculum and joint observations by leaders and local authority personnel. As a result, achievement in mathematics, although still below that in literacy, is just beginning to improve. Governors support the school well. Links with parents are outstanding and some exceptional partnerships help to enhance provision for pupils, particularly in sport.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the learning of all pupils in mathematics, particularly for those pupils with the greatest needs by:
 - developing mathematics resources that are closely matched to pupils' ages and individual needs
 - monitoring the teaching of mathematics to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged and reach their full potential.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy school, as demonstrated by their high levels of attendance. They are eager to take part in all the activities offered. 'I really enjoy school,' wrote one pupil. 'I enjoy going swimming and horse-riding and working on the computer,' wrote another. During their time at the school, all groups of pupils, including those with severe learning difficulties and those with visual impairment, achieve equally well, making good progress in their lessons. They make the best progress in communication and language because of the very high emphasis placed on the use of alternative augmentative communication (AAC). As a result, individual pupils are able to express their own feelings and regularly make choices and decisions about their own work. Pupils enjoy using control technology and information and communication technology (ICT) from the earliest age. They quickly learn how to touch a screen to cause something to happen or use the mouse to find a particular picture or programme. This was particularly evident in the nursery class, where one child ran into class in the morning straight to the computer to find her favourite pictures and music.

Progress in mathematics is more limited, particularly by pupils who have the greatest needs. This is because resources are not always appropriate to the ages and specific needs of pupils and because they are not challenged as well as they could be in some lessons. Pupils enjoy music and art very much and are proud of the vibrant displays of their work around the school. They show high levels of understanding about keeping themselves safe and say that there is no bullying. They take part in daily exercise and choose fruit regularly for their snacks. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is outstanding. The very effective school council are fully involved in the work of the school and in decisions taken. Pupils are well prepared for their futures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The outstanding care provided for all pupils ensures that there is always someone for them to talk to. Very well targeted support ensures that their special educational needs are carefully monitored and steps introduced to help them towards overcoming barriers. Excellent guidance for pupils and families ensures that parents are fully informed and involved in their child's learning. The school's very effective work with a wide range of agencies to improve pupils' well-being and to support those facing challenging difficulties means that high-quality advice and guidance are regularly available. As a result, pupils and families are very well prepared for the future.

The school's curriculum provides a broad, imaginative and creative range of learning experiences for pupils which contribute well to their learning, including helping them to make good progress in developing their reading skills. Specialist provision such as the multi-sensory room and the sensory garden are used well to provide enrichment for those with visual impairments in particular, giving those pupils opportunities to explore their environment and make choices about their own learning. Enrichment opportunities, including sports partnerships, are good, with many visits to places of interest and links with external support providers that contribute to pupils' healthy lifestyles. In one after-school club pupils from a local secondary school played 'rugby' with pupils in wheelchairs, creating a very competitive, enjoyable and enthusiastic approach in which every single pupil wanted to win. Although the curriculum has recently been revised to provide more thoroughly for the wide-ranging needs of the pupils, the range of resources in mathematics is limited. Teachers generally plan well to provide a wide range of experiences, visits and enrichment for pupils. Teaching assistants are well

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deployed and play an effective role in supporting all groups. Teachers know pupils very well and relationships are a major strength, ensuring that lessons are harmonious. They make learning fun and, in the majority of teaching, assessment is used well to plan tasks that meet individual needs effectively. However, in mathematics, tasks are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for those with the greatest needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's good leadership is demonstrated in the ambitious plans for the future to embed improvement by ensuring that all groups make at least good progress, by achieving healthy school status and by widening pupils' horizons. It is also demonstrated by the way the school has improved since the last inspection despite significant changes in staffing and in the increasingly complex needs of pupils joining the school. Since that time, there has been good progress in provision and outcomes particularly in reading, with all staff and governors fully committed to securing further improvement. Assessment and tracking of pupils' achievements has been rigorously applied so that leaders know each pupil's strengths and areas for improvement. Although teaching is regularly monitored, leaders are aware that the monitoring of teaching and learning in mathematics needs a sharper focus. Leaders promote equality well and ensure that any discrimination is tackled quickly. The rigorous attention to detail in providing augmentative aids for communication is a major strength in helping all pupils to make the best use of their abilities, including enabling those with the greatest needs to participate fully in activities provided. Governors provide good quality support to the school. They regularly collaborate with key agencies to ensure that all safeguarding procedures are robust. Risk assessment and child protection procedures are excellent and are well known by staff and governors. The strategy for community cohesion is developing well. Exceptionally good local links and partnerships provide high-quality enrichment for pupils and enhance their understanding of the community around them. Links with the wider world through a link with a school in Kenya are good and plans are well advanced to make links with schools in different communities in Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the nursery and reception classes are good. They enjoy school and are keen to get started each day. Strong relationships ensure that children are well known to adults and that their needs are met effectively. Children know and understand the routines of the classroom and show good levels of independence as they choose their own activities. They make good progress, especially in language and communication. Very effective use of signing by adults helps children to understand language and stories. As a result, they make good improvements in their ability to interact and make choices. They behave well and share their toys with their peers. The classrooms are bright and colourful with a wide range of resources to keep most children fully engaged. The outdoor area is spacious but is not always used as well as it could be to extend daily learning. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Assessment is rigorous because adults make effective use of observations to move children onto the next steps in their learning. Just occasionally, those with the greatest needs are not as fully engaged in activities as others and, as a consequence, their progress is more limited in relation to their abilities. Children are safe and secure and regularly choose healthy snacks.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents who responded to the questionnaires are happy with the school and feel that their children are safe and secure. They are very supportive of the school. A very small minority feel that the school does not keep them informed about their child's progress but the large majority are pleased with the progress their child is making. Inspectors found the information to parents about children's progress to be very regular and thorough. 'Saxon Wood is a wonderful school,' wrote a parent. 'My child is very happy at this school and I know he receives excellent help and care,' wrote another.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saxon Wood School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received nine completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 38 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	56	3	33	1	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	44	3	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	78	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	78	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	67	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	67	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	78	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saxon Wood School, Basingstoke RG24 9NH

Thank you for your help during my recent inspection of your school. I enjoyed talking to you about all the different things you do. This letter is to tell you about some of the things I found out about your school.

- Saxon Wood is a good school.
- You do well in your lessons, especially in learning to use your communication aids and in your talking skills.
- You behave well and know all about keeping healthy. I saw lots of you eating fruit and playing rugby to keep fit. You had lots of fun.
- You work well with your friends and help each other.
- Your teachers give you lots of exciting things to do, like going on visits so that you are learning about your local area.
- I was very pleased to see how your school council are doing such a good job in helping your school to get better. They work hard to make sure you all get lots of things to do to help others.
- Your leaders keep you safe at school.

I am asking your school to do one thing to help your school become even better.

- Help you do better in mathematics, especially those who find learning more difficult. You could help with this by making sure you try hard in your mathematics lessons.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead Inspector

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