

# Philip Southcote School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125480
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	359899
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jon Carter

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Derek White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Horton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Addlestone Moor Addlestone KT15 2QH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by 11 teachers and two qualified support staff, and held meetings with school leaders, two groups of students and a representative from the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information, the school's analysis of students' progress, curriculum plans, minutes of governing body meetings and many other documents. Inspectors analysed the responses on questionnaires received from 58 parents and carers, 86 students and 28 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How effectively the school supports students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties so that their needs are met and they make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- How well teachers make use of accurate assessments of students' achievements to plan challenging learning activities that enable rapid progress to be made.
- The extent to which the curriculum meets the specific needs of students who have complex and additional needs.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels are continuing to drive improvement in teaching and learning, especially for students with additional needs.

## Information about the school

Philip Southcote is a special school of average size that mainly admits students from across the county of Surrey. A small number of students come from other neighbouring counties. All students have a statement of special educational needs related to their moderate learning difficulties. Most students also have additional speech, language and communication or behaviour needs, autistic spectrum disorders or sight problems. The school is the county resource base for deaf students who have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than seen nationally. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average and most students are of White British heritage. The school extended its age of admission to take sixth form students in September 2010. The new facility is aimed at students who are particularly vulnerable due to their complex learning needs. The school holds Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

**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

Philip Southcote School is a good school. Students with an exceptionally diverse range of needs work harmoniously together and make good progress in their learning. They are outstandingly well cared for and are successfully supported to overcome the difficulties they face because staff have a very good understanding of the needs of each individual student. This positive view of care is shared by most parents and carers and one, echoing the views of many, wrote, 'I would not want my child at any other school.' As a result of the support they are given and the secure and welcoming environment they learn in, students feel extremely safe at school.

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and other school leaders have improved the effectiveness with which assessment information is used to support learning. Consequently, teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons and learning activities well, so that most students are given tasks that are suitably matched to their abilities. This ensures that students are engaged, they enjoy their learning and lessons proceed at a good pace. A very small minority of students, who are the most able in the school and often have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, do not always make the same good progress as their peers. Planning for these students does not consistently provide sufficiently challenging activities to move their learning on rapidly. While good monitoring and evaluation by the school's leaders has identified this group and started to make some provision for them, this is not widespread and, therefore, is having limited impact across the range of subjects taught at the school.

The new sixth form facility is developing strongly under sound leadership. It is giving students positive learning experiences to develop better basic skills and increasing levels of independence. The focus upon life skills within the curriculum is strong and is promoting students' well-being effectively. However, students' knowledge and understanding of the skills needed to gain employment is not as well developed because the school has not had time to firmly establish a sufficiently diverse range of vocational opportunities to support students' learning in this area.

Overall, school leaders and members of the governing body have a clear understanding of where the school has strengths and what it needs to do to improve. Good strategies for frank and honest self-evaluation have increasingly involved members of staff at all levels within the school. This has secured a corporate view of the way forward that is passionately shared by staff. The improvements that have been secured by actions taken as a result of this good self-evaluation, such as the increase in students reaching and exceeding expected levels of progress, demonstrate that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Ensure the most-able students consistently make more rapid progress by:
  - planning and delivering challenging and highly personalised learning activities across the curriculum which promote independence and improved achievement
  - using support staff more effectively so that teachers can focus, at appropriate times, on leading small group and individual learning.
- Improve sixth form students' knowledge and understanding of relevant workplace skills through the development of a greater range of appropriate vocational opportunities in conjunction with external providers.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Most students make good progress in lessons because they are strongly engaged by the well-planned learning activities provided for them. They especially enjoy practical tasks, such as making bread in food technology and playing musical instruments, but also apply themselves well to activities where they have to think, discuss and record their work.

Students' literacy skills develop well because they are given time each day for reading, and specific teaching addresses issues about the social use of language effectively. Their achievement in mathematics, while not improving as rapidly as in English and information and communication technology (ICT), is progressing well because teaching often makes good use of opportunities to measure and calculate as they arise naturally during lessons.

Since the previous inspection, the rate of students' progress has increased steadily so that most students, including those with additional needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals, reach the level expected of them and an increasing proportion exceed their targets in literacy, numeracy and ICT. However, this improvement has not been achieved for the small numbers of students who have needs associated with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders.

While attainment compared to all students nationally is unlikely to rise above low owing to the students' learning difficulties and significant additional needs, an increasing proportion of students are achieving entry level qualifications in English and mathematics. Entry level qualifications in ICT were successfully achieved by all Year 11 students in 2010. A small number of students passed GCSE examinations in science and art.

Students have an active voice in the school community, with the school council being involved, for example, in identifying the 'things that help us to learn' for display in every classroom and the development of the 'choice chain' used to guide behaviour management in class. This system is fully understood by students and used consistently by staff so that those who find it difficult to behave well make good progress in taking responsibility for what they do and the impact it has upon learning.

The school's achievement of Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award recognises that students have positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles and participate enthusiastically in the good range of lunchtime clubs available. The inclusive approach taken to physical education in conjunction with the North Surrey School Sports Partnership supports the progress of all students and has enabled some exceptional individual achievement.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## How effective is the provision?

A key feature of the outstanding support students receive is the strong and effective partnership with feeder primary schools, which ensures excellent transition arrangements. Students who eventually transfer to the school in Year 7 have substantial opportunities through outreach provision to meet staff and visit the school from Year 4 onwards. Students being considered for transfer from mainstream secondary schools strongly benefit from arrangements to have some of their lessons at Philip Southcote School. Consequently, most placements at the school are highly appropriate and successful. Some students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties benefit from effective partnerships with mainstream schools to build upon students' individual strengths and provide more appropriate levels of challenge for them. However, not all of this group have access to these arrangements and their learning needs are not met consistently.

Teaching takes good account of the needs of most individual students because information about their prior learning and the difficulties they experience is used very competently when planning lessons. The use of ICT is particularly potent in supporting good learning because specialist teaching gives students the skills they need to access other parts of the curriculum. Where teaching is most effective, students are given good information about what they will be learning in the lesson and they spend more time

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working than listening to the teacher. Teaching assistants are often used effectively to develop students' understanding but are not always given responsibility for larger groups for parts of lessons so that teachers can extend and challenge the most able.

Students have access to a broad and well-organised curriculum that is increasingly taught by staff who are specialists in their subjects. Teaching by specialist staff is enabling more-able students to take GCSE examinations and improving outcomes at entry level for all students. In Key Stage 4, students can personalise their curriculum, choosing from a range of vocational options with good support from the school and the Connexions service. Courses accredited through awarding bodies such as the National Open College Network ensure that learning is relevant to students' current needs and future plans. In response to correctly identifying a lack of challenge for more-able students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, school leaders have established some mixed age group provision for mathematics. While outcomes for students in this small group are improving, the provision has yet to be extended to other subjects. Consequently, there is limited impact across the curriculum as a whole.

Students who have complex needs, such as those who are also deaf, have sight problems or a physical disability, receive excellent additional support to enable them to participate fully in all aspects of school life. The resource base for deaf students ensures that strong provision is made for the development of communication skills as well as helping students to overcome the personal difficulties that arise because of their disability.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and his leadership team have the confidence of staff at all levels. Improved communication has driven greater involvement of staff in evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work and consequently there is a good and shared understanding of what needs to be done to continue its rapid development. Routine monitoring of how well students make progress in their academic and personal skills is evaluated robustly and drives plans for improvement, which are usually implemented quickly and effectively. In response to one such evaluation, there has been increased use of subject specialists teaching across year groups and this has played an important part in securing better progress for students.

Governance is good. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and needs through its scrutiny of the school's self-evaluation, the visits governors make to the school and the information they gather from good engagement with parents and carers at school events. The challenge and support it provides has

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contributed well to school improvement as shown, for example, in improved outcomes for boys in ICT. Safeguarding procedures are extensive and well established. Staff and members of the governing body receive appropriate and regular training, and management systems are secure with excellent consideration of confidentiality. Risk assessment processes for specialist teaching areas are adequate, but, in contrast to other aspects of safeguarding, do not always conform to current best practice. The school works effectively with appropriate external agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable children are provided with suitable care and support so that their complex needs are well met.

All groups of pupils, including those with particular additional needs, are routinely tracked and monitored to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted well and any potential discrimination is tackled swiftly. This has ensured that rates of progress for most pupils at the school are similar, with the exception of a very small minority who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. It has a good understanding of the socio-economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds of the community it serves. This information is used strategically, for example, recently, to develop a better understanding about the cultural diversity of the school through training for both staff and students.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Views of parents and carers**

The number of questionnaires returned by parents and carers was well above average, although few questionnaires included additional written comments. Those parents and carers who did provide a comment mainly wrote positively about the care provided for their child by the school, a view endorsed by the inspection team. Those who raised concerns mainly wrote about not receiving information about the progress being made by their child or about the apparent lack of challenge for students who are more able than



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their peers. Inspection evidence endorses the view about challenge for the most-able students. The school has responded to earlier suggestions by putting a termly reporting system in place, the first report being due to parents and carers at the end of the autumn term.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Philip Southcote 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 inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	52	22	38	4	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	62	22	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	45	26	45	6	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	33	27	47	8	14	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	22	38	31	53	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	33	31	53	4	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	43	29	50	2	3	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)	19	33	28	48	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	41	27	47	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	40	24	41	6	10	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	31	32	55	4	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	43	25	43	4	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	48	22	38	4	7	1	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



10 December 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Philip Southcote School, Addlestone KT15 2QH**

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We were pleased to see so many of you enjoying your lessons and working hard.

I am writing to tell you that you go to a good school. The staff at your school take really good care of you. When something is this good, we describe it as 'outstanding' because it would be hard to make it much better. You told us that the help you get makes you feel exceptionally safe at school. We could see that in lessons because everyone supported each other, especially when you were working together in small groups.

Most of you are learning well and making good progress. This is because your teachers know how well you are doing, plan lessons that keep you interested in learning and help you learn new things quickly. The new sixth form is doing a satisfactory job in helping students get ready for when they leave school.

Your headteacher and the teachers who lead your school have a good understanding of what they need to do to make it even better. We have asked them to make sure that the most able students are challenged by their work. We have also asked them to arrange a better range of work-related learning activities for the sixth form.

You can all help by making sure you let your teachers know if you think you could do harder work than they give you.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter

Lead inspector

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