

Papillon House

Independent special school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	936/6590
Unique Reference Number (URN)	135407
Inspection number	386865
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2012
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Papillon House opened in 2007. It is an independent special school for children aged five to sixteen years with profound autistic spectrum disorders and associated challenging behaviours. It is set in a large country house in extensive grounds in rural Surrey. Currently, the school takes pupils from seven local authorities.

The school aims to develop pupils' social, communication and independence skills as well as their academic, physical and creative skills. There are 29 pupils on roll, of whom two are girls and two pupils are looked after children. Approximately half the pupils are of White British heritage and the remainder are of Black British African, Caribbean or Asian backgrounds. All of the pupils have statements of special educational needs.

Prior to attending this school, over two thirds of the pupils have been permanently excluded from other settings and many have spent significant periods out of full-time education. Since the last inspection in September 2008, the school's roll has increased significantly, by almost six-fold, and the upper age limit has increased from eleven to sixteen years.

The school's aims are 'to ensure that all our children achieve their full potential in a relaxed and caring environment that is well structured and where the curriculum takes into account the needs of the individual child'.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education provided is good and the school meets its aims. It provides a good curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the pupils and enables them to make good progress in their studies. The quality of teaching and assessment is good. A strength of the school is the attention given by staff to pupils' personal development and outstanding behaviour; as a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, is good. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and meets the vast majority of the regulations for independent schools.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and is relevant to the pupils' academic and personal development needs. A review last year of curricular planning and assessment resulted in revised provision based on thematic topics supported by guidance from the Early Years Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum and recognised principles relating to the education of pupils with autism. All topics have a strong emphasis on communication, numeracy and personal, social, and health education (PSHE). They include studies such as 'ourselves', 'the senses', 'healthy living', 'sport', 'helping others' and 'mini-beasts'. The curriculum contains all the required areas of learning, with a strong focus on practical activities. All planning seeks to maximise the pupils' development of communication skills. Significant curriculum time is afforded to supportive physical activities including regular sessions of occupational therapy where pupils experience a 'sensory diet' designed to assist their focus on learning. Physical activities also include regular swimming, walking and sessions in the soft play areas. A very effective range of planned activities maximise the pupils' communication abilities, include speech and language, and drama therapy. These specialist sessions take place within class groups and also individually as required. The breadth of the curriculum has expanded considerably since the increase in age range although the school has yet to create a programme of careers education and guidance; links with external careers agencies are at an early stage. There is a wide range of educational visits provided to support the curriculum and some older pupils are gaining an ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) qualification at an off-site equestrian centre. However, there is currently no external accreditation of the school-based curriculum.

Teaching and assessment are good. The characteristics of teaching include a good knowledge of the pupils' abilities and the subjects being taught. This is particularly evident in practical work when pupils are provided with first-hand experiences. For example, within the topic of 'winter', pupils make bird feeders to place in the school grounds. During such activities, staff use a wide range of communication methods, including signing, symbols and objects of reference to aid the pupils' understanding. Teachers' planning is detailed and is informed by national guidance. It is organised into long-, medium- and short-term plans covering all the topics. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend the more able pupils by encouraging them to work at their own pace. However, lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace. Teaching assistants work very closely and effectively with teachers and pupils. On rare occasions, teaching assistants intervene in a pupil's challenging task too readily, which limits learning.

Adults' good knowledge of the pupils has a positive impact upon the very effective management of pupils' behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely as a team in the classroom. Regular monitoring of the pupils' responses and attitudes to learning gives staff immediate feedback about the pupils' needs and enables them to adjust their planning accordingly. The staff work seamlessly to promote the pupils' outstanding behaviour in and out of lessons.

The pupils make good progress overall, especially in their communication and basic skills, including literacy and numeracy. The school is successfully implementing its assessment policy and is using national guidance effectively to track and support progression. Teachers have recently held assessment moderation sessions to assist them in agreeing the levels achieved and setting appropriate academic targets alongside pupils' behavioural targets.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's ethos has a strong and effective emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development through the curriculum they receive and by the well-focused support to improve their relationships and communication with peers and adults.

Pupils gain confidence and enjoy school, as shown by high levels of attendance and outstanding behaviour in and around the school. These are significant achievements for many of the pupils who have experienced extended periods out of full-time education prior to admission to Papillon House. During breaks, pupils play enthusiastically on the playground equipment and respond well to adults. Occasionally pupils play alongside each other, which marks a huge improvement in their social development. Parental comments strongly endorse the positive social impact made by the school. Within the school, racial harmony is evident. Pupils respond very well to the good role modelling provided by staff in lessons and at meal times, where they enjoy good quality lunches in a social setting which prepares them well for their regular visits to cafés in local towns. Over time, there is evidence that some pupils' medicinal requirements have reduced as a result of significant improvements in behaviour and relationships.

Responsibilities are offered to pupils within the school, for example classroom tasks or returning registers, and these promote independence well. There are no extra-curricular activities which allow pupils to make independent choices and there is no formal 'pupil voice' such as a council. However, pupils' views are regularly expressed in daily meetings, including 'circle time', where discussions of feelings are promoted. A strong moral code is promoted by encouraging the pupils to think of others' feelings within relationships. Within the curriculum, including PSHE which is threaded through the half-termly themes and topics, the pupils learn about roles and relationships in society. For example, visitors from the police and fire services come into school as part of the 'people who help us' topic. Pupils learn of other faiths and cultures and, when requested by parents, they are supported to follow their own faiths and participate in worship and other cultural events out of school. Such personalised programmes also support pupils' capacity to manage changes in routines, which is a key issue in making crucial improvements in the behaviour and sociability of most of the pupils. A wide range of visits is enjoyed as part of the curriculum, for example trips to museums, galleries and sports centres. Sometimes these journeys are made using public transport to extend pupils' experiences. These activities promote not just cultural and physical development but also the pupils' personal development and confidence in unfamiliar settings.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The essential policies and procedures aimed at minimising risks and promoting pupils' welfare, including child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, first aid, health and safety and fire safety, are up to date and implemented consistently. Relevant training at appropriate levels is secured for staff in all aspects of safeguarding and first aid. Similar training provision enables the staff to manage challenging behaviour, including physical interventions when required. The small-group and individual attention provided also has a positive impact upon the pupils' well-being as well as keeping them safe and healthy. The supervision of pupils and risk assessments are appropriate for activities within school and during off-site visits. All accidents, incidents and interventions by staff are recorded in detail. Systematic checks are made on portable electrical equipment. Monitoring in relation to fire safety is good. Registers of attendance are maintained as required and the school works closely with parents on all welfare matters to maintain high levels of attendance. The school's recent attention to its admission register has ensured that it now contains all the required information. The school's plan to increase accessibility to the premises and curriculum expired some while ago. However, the school has gathered the relevant information to prepare an updated three-year plan to increase accessibility in conformity with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required checks are carried out on the proprietor and the staff working at the school to ensure their suitability to work with children and young people. These checks are appropriately recorded in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation enable safe and effective learning. There is an adequate number of classrooms of a suitable size in addition to large rooms that provide suitable facilities for dining and indoor physical education. The specialist facilities include a small sensory room and an excellent soft play room which enable the pupils to climb and explore safely. Visiting therapists also have their own dedicated rooms. The standard of interior decoration is satisfactory, although there is evidence of damp penetration in a few areas. The school grounds afford excellent opportunities for safe and adventurous play on the fixed equipment and in the open areas. The school does not have suitable facilities to cater for pupils who become ill during the school day.

Provision of information

The school meets all requirements except one. It provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information to parents, carers and others through its recently updated prospectus and website. The parental view is one of overwhelming support for the

school's work in relation to their children and families. One wrote, 'It is more like an extended family than a school'. A small minority suggested that they would like to see homework issued more often, although it is provided when teachers deem appropriate. The school produces home-school notebooks and home visits are regularly made to support pupils and families. The school issues annual academic reports of good quality for parents and for the annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs. However, the school does not routinely provide annual statements of income and expenditure to local authorities who refer pupils to the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedures comply with all requirements to ensure that complaints are handled fairly and promptly.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- prepare and implement a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work (paragraph 2(1))
- make appropriate careers guidance provision for pupils receiving secondary education (2(2)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure the school buildings provide reasonable resistance to penetration by rain, snow, wind and moisture from the ground (paragraph 23(f))
- provide a suitable room designated for use by pupils who may be ill (paragraph 23(k)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- provide to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred in respect of any pupil placed by a local authority (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.⁴

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Provide suitably challenging activities in all lessons for the most able pupils.
- Provide extra-curricular activities where pupils may exercise choice.
- Seek external accreditation for learning on the school site.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special school for pupils with autism		
Date school opened	2007		
Age range of pupils	5–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 27	Girls: 2	Total: 29
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 27	Girls: 2	Total: 29
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 2	Girls: 0	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,120		
Address of school	Pebble Close Tadworth Surrey KT20 7PA		
Telephone number	01372 363663 07760771114		
Email address	head@papillonhouseschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Hutton		
Proprietor	Mrs Gillian Hutton		

27 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Papillon House School, Tadworth, KT20 7PA

I am writing to tell you about my visit when we came to see you last week. I would like to thank you and your teachers for the warm welcome you gave me and my colleague. It is clear that you enjoy school, get on well with your teachers and make good progress with your studies. The reasons you are doing well are several, and you play your part too.

Your teachers and all the staff who help you with your learning do a good job. They look at how well you do in lessons and how you can improve further. We did notice the calm atmosphere at the school which helps you to learn. We were very impressed with your behaviour, which we think is outstanding. The school does lots to keep you fit and healthy, such as the swimming lessons and using the really good school grounds. I enjoyed watching you making your bird feeders and I could see that the birds enjoyed eating from them in the school grounds.

I am asking your school to do a few things to make it even better. For the older pupils, there needs to be a plan for helping you to prepare for your next stage after Papillon House and give you more chances to make choices about what you do. Your school needs to send some financial information to the local authorities who pay for you to come to the school. Even though your school building is really good in many respects, there are a couple of improvements that are needed.

Thank you once again and I wish you all the best of luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Greg Sorrell
Lead inspector