



# Sunnydown School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 125458  
**LEA** Surrey LEA  
**Inspection number** 281937  
**Inspection dates** 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Helen Sharpe HMI

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

|                                    |                    |                           |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Special            | <b>School address</b>     | Portley House            |
| <b>School category</b>             | Community          |                           | 152 Whyteleafe Road      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 11 to 16           |                           | Caterham, Surrey CR3 5ED |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Boys               | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01883342281              |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 72                 | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01883341342              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Mr D Payne               |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 18 October 1999    | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mr Moore Armstrong       |

|                              |   |                                    |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>11 to 16 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>14 September 2005 -<br>15 September 2005 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>281937 |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Sunnydown special school caters for boys aged 11 to 16 from Surrey and surrounding local authorities who have specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, social, emotional, behavioural and communication difficulties. Over the last three years more pupils with complex needs have been admitted. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Over 90% are from white British background and none have English as a second language. There are 29 weekly boarders who live too far away from school to travel daily. Boarding places are funded by local education authorities. The living accommodation is on the site of the school.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The school, inspectors, parents and pupils agree that Sunnydown is a good school. It provides very good value for money. High standards are set by the headteacher who leads the committed staff team by example. The welcoming and supportive ethos of the school and the opportunities given to them enables pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development. Many pupils join the school with low levels of self-esteem but they leave as confident and mature young people. Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in almost all subject areas, in particular in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 11 all pupils leave with a good number of GCSE passes. The results in 2005 were the best the school has ever achieved. Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Support staff play a very important part in pupils' lives because they promote pupils' learning and their well-being most effectively. The curriculum is good and has been improved since the last inspection. There is a good emphasis on addressing pupils' literacy difficulties. A wide range of GCSEs is offered but older pupils have few choices about their studies and only limited opportunities to develop work related skills. A good range of additional activities are offered after school for both boarders and day pupils. These make an important contribution to pupils' social, physical and emotional development. Significant progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The school has good capacity to improve further and raise standards for all pupils, including the increasing number of young pupils with more complex needs.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision**

### **Grade: 1**

The boarding provision makes an outstanding contribution to boys' personal development and their health and well-being. The accommodation is bright, clean and well maintained and the issues from the most recent boarding inspection have been addressed. The provision is well led and managed. There is a friendly and happy atmosphere in both houses. Staff know boys well and provide very good care and support for them. The boys' health and welfare are a top priority and rules and routines are consistently reinforced. A wide and varied programme of activities is offered which pupils really enjoy. A good emphasis is placed on developing the independent living skills of older pupils which prepare them well for life after school. Pupils really enjoy life as weekly boarders.

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

\* Develop the Key Stage 4 curriculum to include some vocational elements and offer pupils choices about the courses they follow. \* Improve the planning of some Key Stage 3 lessons so that the content and teaching methods are more closely matched to the needs of pupils with the most complex needs. \* Identify at senior management level the precise developments needed to further improve the provision for younger pupils with more complex difficulties. \* Continue to develop the systems for assessing progress and identifying underachievement across all areas of the curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils achieve well at GCSEs and Entry Level in a good range of subjects. Almost all pupils' achievement represents good progress from their starting point in Year 7. Over the last few years all pupils have obtained 5 or more GCSEs at grades A - G. Last year the majority of the small group obtained 3 or more at grades A to C. The school grades pupils' achievement as outstanding. Inspection evidence confirms that this is the case, especially in personal development, English and mathematics. This represents very good improvement since 1999 when achievement in mathematics was a weakness. Progress is good in almost all other subjects but, in one or two areas such as religious education, some pupils in Key Stage 3 with more complex needs do not make as much progress as others. Challenging targets are now set in English, mathematics and science but this is not as well established across all subjects. When pupils join the school careful assessments are made of their ability in reading, comprehension and spelling. The school's data shows that impressive gains are made. This prepares them well for the next step in their lives in school or outside. Older pupils clearly describe the substantial progress they have made particularly in English which they say is a result of the good individual support they receive from staff who really want them to succeed. Over half of the parents responded to the inspection questionnaires and all said they were happy with the progress made by their child.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The school grades itself as good in this respect but the inspectors find that personal development is outstanding because almost all pupils really enjoy living and learning at school. Their attendance is good. The excellent relationships and the welcoming and supportive ethos within the school and boarding houses instil confidence in pupils. By Year 11 they develop into confident young men willing and able to express their own opinions and take responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and take an active part in decision making through the school council. Pupils have no fear of embarrassment or failure in this tightly knit community and as a result they make substantial gains academically and socially. Behaviour is good in most lessons and very good in other areas. The school is an orderly and happy place in which to live and work. In the school and the houses staff consistently encourage boys to adopt safe practices and follow a healthy lifestyle. Boarding pupils make very good progress in developing the skills required for independent living but day pupils miss out on opportunities to develop some of these skills. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Staff are aware of the importance of developing an understanding and tolerance of other religions and cultures. They help to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The inspectors, parents and older pupils agree with the schools judgement that teaching is good because in most lessons, especially those for older pupils, relationships are excellent and a positive working environment is created in which pupils have no fear of failure. Most lessons finish with a short opportunity for pupil's to evaluate their achievements. Pupils respond thoughtfully, listen well to each other and receive meaningful praise which enhances their self-esteem. There is some outstanding teaching. Good subject knowledge is combined with a thorough consideration of pupils' individual targets. These lessons are lively from the start. Humour is used well to capture and maintain every pupil's attention. Behaviour in these lessons is excellent. Questioning is effective in moving learning on. Explanations and examples related to pupils' everyday lives really help to promote their understanding. Not all teaching is as good as this. Inspectors confirm some younger pupils' views that there is too much teacher talk in some lessons which leads to a loss of concentration and some silly behaviour. In a few lessons teachers have difficulty in managing younger classes and insufficient consideration is given to the suitability of the content, task or teaching method for those with more complex difficulties. The learning support staff play a key role in promoting pupils' learning. They know pupils well and are skilled in unobtrusively supporting them whilst at the same time encouraging them to become independent learners.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. Key Stage 3 pupils benefit from additional literacy support which is tightly focused on helping them to overcome their difficulties. This emphasis enables pupils to follow and succeed in examinations in Key Stage 4 and prepares them well for life after school. The range of courses offered to GCSE level is good and Entry Level is used well to ensure all pupils leave with certification. Key Stage 4 pupils follow the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Youth Award Scheme which helps them to develop skills of independence, communication and co-operation. Key Stage 4 pupils are pleased with the number of GCSE courses they can follow but they feel a wider range of subjects and some choice should be offered. They particularly would like to study food technology. Inspectors support the view that the curriculum for these pupils is currently too narrow and there is too little attention on work related skills. The school currently does not have well established links with other schools or colleges which would allow options to be extended. Throughout the school and in the boarding houses there is strong emphasis on personal, social and health education. Key Stage 4 pupils feel they are well informed about careers options and well prepared for the next stages in their lives. Almost all leavers move into further education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of care, advice and guidance to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare is excellent. Policies and procedures are frequently reviewed and are followed consistently in school and the boarding houses. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for and they appreciate the commitment shown by staff. Where incidents such as bullying have occurred they are satisfied they were dealt with firmly and effectively. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and if they have any problems there is always a member of staff they can go to. Links with external agencies are well established so that pupils receive the additional support and guidance they require. Communication between parents and school and care staff is regular and effective in ensuring everyone is fully informed about pupils' needs. Individual targets are established and regularly reviewed by staff teams. Pupils find annual reviews very helpful. They enjoy discussing their progress and setting new targets but they would like more frequent reviews such as these.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The long serving headteacher sets high standards for the school and promotes the view that being good is not enough. He is well supported by an experienced and dedicated education and care team. Significant progress has been made since 1999. Monitoring and evaluation was a weakness then but good improvements have been made. As part of the performance management system the quality of teaching and learning is monitored and supported by senior managers whose roles are more clearly defined than they were in 1999. The way in which the provision for mathematics, particularly for older pupils, has improved since 1999 highlights the effectiveness of the schools self-improvement process. Good use is made of the LEA and outside organisations to supplement self- evaluation and help bring about improvement. Subject leaders are beginning to evaluate the impact of their work on pupil's achievement but this is not yet established in all subjects. The school has good capacity to improve further. The headteacher has encouraged the governing body to take a more active and questioning role in monitoring the school's effectiveness. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Governors are now better informed about the provision from subject areas to whole school issues and they adopt a more questioning approach. Whole school targets are challenging and the assessment of pupils' learning has improved since 1999. The assessment co-ordinator, which is a new role, has started to monitor pupils' progress so that underachievement in subject areas can be identified. The school have rightly identified the need to improve the provision for pupils with the most complex needs but how this is to be achieved has not yet been determined in any detail by the senior management team.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |              |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 1 | NA |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 2 | NA |

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review      | 2   | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 2   | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 2   | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected  | Yes | NA |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily  | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise  | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse   | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements                                   | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place  | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism                                | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them   | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships   | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them                   | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills  | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams                                  | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form          | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy               | Yes |

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for helping us to find our way around the school and for giving up your time to talk to us about life at school and in the boarding houses. I promised that we would write to you to tell you about our findings.

We agree with the staff that Sunnydown is a good school. Both you and your parents told us that most of you really enjoy school. You are usually happy and hard working which helps you to do well in your lessons. The school is a very friendly place to be. Mr Armstrong and the staff in school and the boarding houses work hard to make sure you do as well as you can. You get on well with the staff and you feel safe and secure at Sunnydown. The progress you make in almost all subjects is good and in some, such as English and maths your progress is often outstanding. Teaching is good and this helps you to make good progress. When you want to express your own views or answer difficult questions in class you have the confidence to do so. Your behaviour around the school and in the boarding houses is very good. In most lessons behaviour is good but sometimes some of you in Years 8 and 9 lose concentration and do not behave quite as well as you could. However, from the time you start at Sunnydown to the time you leave you make outstanding progress in your personal development. Your belief in yourself improves enormously and you become confident young men. You are encouraged to make your views known to staff and they listen to you and often take your views into account when making decisions. The curriculum you follow is good. You spend a lot of time working on improving your reading, writing and spelling so that by Years 10 and 11 you can take GCSEs in a good number of subjects. The schools results in recent years have been very good and everyone has left with some GCSEs often at C grade and above.

There are only a few areas in which we feel the school could improve. In some lessons teaching could be a little bit better especially for younger pupils so that you can understand things more easily and not lose concentration. We agree with the pupils who suggested that the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 should offer some work related courses and you should be able to make some choices about the courses you follow. Teachers should continue to carefully assess how much progress you make in every subject so that they can quickly see when you are not doing as well as you could do. Finally, careful plans need to be made about how the school should develop in some areas so that all of you continue to do well whatever difficulties you face.

Yours sincerely

Helen Sharpe, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools