

# St Philip's School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102622
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kingston Upon Thames
<b>Inspection number</b>	323666
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 April –1 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kay Charlton

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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	120
Sixth form	18
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Terry Way
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen Goodall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 February 2006
<b>School address</b>	Harrow Close Chessington KT9 2HR
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8397 2672
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8739 1969

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Philip's is a special school for students with moderate learning difficulties. Since the last inspection, it has become an 11 to 19 provision. An increasing number of students entering the school have a greater range and complexity of need than in the past, including a significant proportion with severe learning difficulties and autism. All students have a statement of special educational needs. They are mainly from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The school has gained many awards, including the Healthy School and Investors in Careers awards. A majority of students leave school at the age of 16 if they can manage a college placement independently. At the same time, students from other schools join the sixth form, which has more than trebled in size since the last inspection. The school provides advice and support to local authority mainstream schools. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up post in September 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Philip's is a good school where students achieve well. Their personal development is outstanding, as are the curriculum and the care, guidance and support they receive. After a time of considerable change, particularly in the nature of the intake, the school continues to provide well for its students. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and make comments such as, 'My daughter has come on in leaps and bounds at St Philip's.'

Students' good achievement is a result of good teaching and learning. The staff have excellent relationships with students and are highly effective in improving their concentration and behaviour. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully. They work very well with support staff as a team and use resources well to make learning interesting. The ways in which staff use assessment are much improved since the last inspection, with the result that students are very clear about the next steps in their learning. There are models of outstanding teaching. Occasionally, however, teaching is only satisfactory and staff do not challenge students of differing abilities to achieve as well as they might.

Students make significant gains in their personal development because of the school's excellent support systems. They develop very good levels of self-esteem and their attitudes to school are excellent. They are keen to explain why they enjoy St Philip's so much, one saying, 'This school is fun and we make good friends.' Most students improve substantially in their self-discipline and behaviour is excellent. This is because of the positive and consistent approach by staff in rewarding their every effort. Students are extremely supportive of each other and bullying is rare. The care they receive is exemplary and they know that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. The guidance they receive about their career options is of a very high quality. This has been recognised by the award of Investors in Careers status.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. It is carefully planned, with a very strong focus on personal development, and ensures systematic development of students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). The exceptional range of enrichment, such as the many sporting and creative opportunities, enterprise initiatives, residential visits and environmental projects, all add an important dimension to the students' education. The school has developed flexibility within the curriculum to match fully the increased complexity of the needs of students joining the school. For example, it has extended the range of therapeutic and sensory approaches and also widened the vocational options available to students.

Leadership is good. The headteacher leads by example, demonstrating a strong sense of commitment to St Philip's and a determination that it continue to improve during a time of noticeable change. Everyone works to a common purpose and shares the vision of a fully inclusive school. Very focused staff development is ensuring that staff are refining their skills to meet students' changing needs. The senior team are rigorous in their monitoring so that the school is clear about which areas are most in need of improvement. Consequently, the school is aware that the monitoring information about students' progress is not used well enough to compare its effectiveness with the national picture. This means that the school, particularly the governing body, cannot be certain that its performance is as good as it can possibly be. Excellent links have been established with a wide range of others, including parents, other schools and colleges, to support students' development. The school's track record of improvement shows that it is well placed to move forward in the future.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, students make good progress. Students invariably go on to further education and achieve further success. They are enthusiastic about their courses and clearly appreciate the opportunities they get to link with local colleges. Students work in a fully inclusive environment covering a very wide range of abilities and they grow considerably in their self-esteem and in maturity. The curriculum has been much improved since the time of the last inspection, with a central focus on the development of students' life skills, including the use of public transport. A much wider range of vocational opportunities and extended business enterprise initiatives, such as the Beach Hut Cafe, have been undertaken. These are extremely well matched to students' needs. Highly effective guidance is given to students which ensures that they make well-considered career choices. The leadership is good. There are clear plans in place to improve the provision further, for example, by ensuring a fully consistent approach to the use of signing and to the ways of working with students with autism, so that all students achieve as much as they can.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges students of differing abilities so that all achieve their best.
- Make better use of monitoring information about students' progress to compare the school's performance with the national picture so that it can be certain it is doing as well as possible.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Most students reach, and some exceed, their challenging targets. Although standards are well below those in mainstream schools, this represents good achievement given students' very low starting points on entry. A number of students have experienced difficulties in their previous schools, but quickly develop a positive approach because, as they say, 'Everyone here is trying to help us do well.' Students, including those for whom English is an additional language, develop the key skills of communication, numeracy, and ICT well and apply these skills effectively across all areas of learning. By the age of 16, students gain qualifications, including entry level and GCSE, in both academic and vocational areas, depending on their needs and aspirations. All leave with an Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Youth Award, which recognises improvements in personal development. The school is working to ensure that teaching consistently challenges all students so that their achievements are always of the highest order.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Students make significant gains in developing confidence, independence and self-discipline because of the high expectations that staff have of each individual. They are very aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities. As a result, they work and socialise together in a very harmonious atmosphere and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Students are confident in giving their views because they know that they will be taken into account and their ideas respected. They make a very strong contribution to the wider community. This is exemplified through their work on community projects, such as making a

mosaic for the Tolworth underpass. All show good awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle, as is seen on Fruity Friday. They pay excellent attention to acting safely and look after each other very well indeed. They take on extra responsibilities with enthusiasm, for example, the school council helped to interview the new headteacher. Students are very well prepared for their future economic well-being, particularly through the very well organised work placement programme, enterprise initiatives and young parenting courses. The school does all that it can to improve students' attendance and, overall, it is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Orderly and purposeful lessons, underpinned by excellent relationships, are seen across the school. Staff treat students with respect and consideration and, in response, students try hard. In all areas of learning, staff are enthusiastic and motivate students to learn. They use resources and 'hands on' activities to make learning meaningful. Particularly good use is made of visits, such as the one to the Oval, as a basis for learning. There is some outstanding teaching. For example, in a food technology lesson, staff set a very high expectation for each student and used an exceptionally wide range of teaching approaches that very effectively challenged all to achieve their best. Practice, however, is not fully consistent and, in a small number of lessons, teachers do not ensure that students of differing abilities achieve all that they can.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is very carefully planned and makes excellent use of work experience and business and enterprise initiatives for older students. It has been successfully adapted to match the increased range and complexity of students' needs. Flexibility in the timetable means that it is tailored to each student's personal circumstances. The range of enrichment is exceptional, with the Proms Ball at the end of Year 11, residential visits with the police to an outdoor centre in North Wales and a visit to France being just some of the highlights. The award of Healthy School status reflects the good provision for making students aware of healthy lifestyles. The school has developed excellent links with other schools and, as a result, students sometimes access courses in mainstream settings. The building and its grounds have been developed very well to support the curriculum since the last inspection. The 'secret garden', ponds and wildlife areas are particularly good.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

The care students receive is exemplary, with thorough procedures in place to safeguard them. The school's Care and Concern Team play a vital role in ensuring that any vulnerable students receive excellent support to address their difficulties. The systems for supporting students' personal development are extremely effective. Comprehensive tracking of each student's academic and behavioural progress is used well to set challenging targets. The students are very positive about their targets, which clearly increases their determination to succeed. The way in which students review their own progress on an ongoing basis, and as part of the annual review process, shows that they have a clear understanding of the ways in which they might

do better. The school's work with parents and outside agencies supports students' development extremely well and ensures that there is a very smooth transition to the next phase of their education or to a career.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership is good. The headteacher provides a very strong lead and works tirelessly to achieve the school's vision of ensuring 'the emotional-well being and achievement of all students whatever their abilities'. She is well supported by leaders at different levels, including the governing body, which acts as an effective critical friend. All approach key developments very enthusiastically. They have a great deal of information about the progress students make in both their personal and their academic development and they use it to identify if any student is not doing as well as he or she might be and act quickly to resolve the situation. The system for collating this information, however, does not make it easy for the school to check on its overall effectiveness, particularly in comparison with other schools. Middle leaders are developing their roles well and are enhancing their skills in using monitoring information to increase their role in strategic planning. A school audit of community cohesion shows that provision in this area is outstanding and is supported by the school's exceptionally wide range of links. Students are highly effective in promoting the profile of those with learning difficulties locally, nationally (for example, as members of the UK Youth Parliament) and also internationally.

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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	16-19
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**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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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<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.

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of St Philip's School, Chessington, KT9 2HR

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I visited your school. You say that you have made good friends and that you enjoy all the extra activities, such as the residential visit to North Wales, and the wide range of physical activities, for example football and boxercise. You said that you can always go to a member of staff, particularly to the Care and Support Team, if you have a problem. I could also see that you help each other a lot and, through the school council, you make decisions that improve the school, for example by improving the toilets.

I found St Philip's to be a good school where you do well. Everyone helps you to become confident and independent and your behaviour is excellent. Teaching is good and, as a result, you gain many qualifications by the time you leave. These, as well as the excellent programme of work placements, for instance when you work with local businesses, and your enterprise projects, help to make sure that you are very well prepared for life after school. The very good links that your school has with the local colleges support your choice of future career very well indeed.

I know that the staff have plans to make St Philip's even better and you can help them by always trying your hardest. They are rightly focusing on improving teaching to make sure that all of you achieve your best in all your lessons. I have also asked them to make sure the school checks more carefully that it is doing as well as it possibly can.

Yours faithfully

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector