

# Inspection of Papillon House

Pebble Close, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 7PA

---

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 September 2025

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are thriving in this deeply caring and ambitious school. Warm and nurturing relationships ensure that pupils are joyful, safe and enthusiastic to grow and learn. Expectations are high and behaviour is excellent. Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school. When pupils struggle with emotions, expert care helps them to return to a calm mindset and ready to continue learning.

The school has relentlessly high ambitions for all. School life brings out the best in everyone here. Many pupils start the day with high-quality physical activities and support to help them with balance, agility and control. This boosts pupils' mental and emotional well-being to help them to be ready for the day ahead. Pupils stay healthy and active through lunchtime sports clubs and exciting opportunities to play tennis, go horse riding or attend the local gym.

Pupils achieve their targets well in areas, such as communication, reading, personal development and speech and language. Students in the sixth form achieve a range of awards through a highly developed programme of opportunities. Students are proud to earn qualifications while developing valuable skills to prepare them impressively for the future. For example, students take food orders from staff and then prepare, cook and serve lunch.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Since the previous inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength. The school has focused successfully on developing its reading programme. Skilful staff teach pupils sounds to help them with early reading. Pupils read well matched and engaging books to motivate them and help them to practise their skills. Many pupils become fluent and confident readers, reading aloud with expression and flair. Some pupils find comprehension tricky, but they share high enthusiasm for the joy of reading across the classes. Reading is also highly therapeutic for pupils who enjoy relaxing with a book in the library.

This is a highly inclusive school. Staff frequently review, adapt and design support and resources to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access the school's rich curriculum successfully. The school designs every subject with essential skills and knowledge. Staff adapt tasks to ensure a personalised approach to help pupils thrive across the curriculum. All pupils have autism spectrum disorder and an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Many pupils have speech, language and communication needs. Pupils also have a range of sensory needs, so the school ensures a calm, purposeful and peaceful learning environment for all. Pupils progress well through the curriculum to meet their highly personalised learning targets. Visual aids and prompts provide valuable help. Pupils acquire independence, confidence and self-esteem while developing language skills. Therapy is a strength of the school. Therapeutic specialists work closely with teaching staff to offer a joined-up approach that helps pupils to shine and overcome challenges that make learning difficult.

Sixth-form provision is exceptional, with frequent reviews of student progress through the curriculum, ensuring that staff tailor tasks to bring out the best in all. Students develop impressive life skills through links with charities, businesses and community groups. They achieve meaningful accreditations through the school's strong investment in a range of routes that meet individual needs. Some students develop strong skills in writing or mathematics, while others blossom through more vocational activities. Work experience and careers advice show high ambition for everyone. Pupils and students enjoy voluntary work and learn how to handle money and how to conduct themselves in a workplace.

Teachers and support staff benefit from extensive training opportunities. This ensures that subject knowledge and pedagogical skills are strong. Across the primary and secondary stages, teachers and staff give helpful and tactful feedback to pupils to enhance their learning. On occasion, teachers' checks on learning do not routinely identify pupils' misconceptions to directly inform their next learning task. This means that pupils sometimes do not achieve as highly as they could.

Behaviour around the school is excellent, because of high expectations and well-embedded systems. Pupils feel safe, secure and supported. Staff work closely together to help pupils who become unsettled. When pupils struggle with emotions, staff use patience, skill and expert knowledge to adapt lessons to get them back on track. Pupils attend school highly. Absence rates have decreased impressively for pupils who have struggled to attend school in the past.

Personal development is extensive and transformative. Pupils learn to celebrate diversity through well-designed assemblies and curriculum activities. Pupils discover a range of faiths and world views. The school's work to promote equality is strong. The proprietor ensures that the school complies fully with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Pupils learn how to stay safe online. Trips to the miniature steam railway and sites of historical interest enrich pupils' lives. Pupils learn to swim through a highly prioritised programme. Older pupils and sixth-form students love supporting younger children. They are proud to showcase their skills in assemblies.

Leaders are dedicated, compassionate and inspirational. The proprietor and managers responsible for governance duties show expertise and care. They challenge each other and hold everyone to account to reflect, evaluate and drive continued improvement. The proprietor ensures that the school meets the independent school standards robustly and securely. The learning environment is highly developed. The school grounds are expertly managed and maintained to make every aspect of school life safe and accessible for all. Parents and carers are unanimous in their praise for the school. One, representing many, said, 'All staff are knowledgeable, understanding, kind and approachable for both children and parents.' Staff morale is buoyant. The proprietor and leaders strive to reduce workload and support positive well-being. Staff feel highly supported and incredibly proud to work in this deeply nurturing and successful school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Occasionally, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding do not identify misconceptions precisely enough to inform future learning. This can stop some pupils from achieving highly. The school should ensure that assessment leads to successful adaptations to learning to help all pupils achieve their best across the whole curriculum.

### **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135407
<b>DfE registration number</b>	936/6590
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10391743
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	42
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	6
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Gillian Hutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Mackey
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£54,510 to £77,343
<b>Telephone number</b>	013 7236 3663
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.papillonhouseschool.co.uk">www.papillonhouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@papillonhouseschool.co.uk">admin@papillonhouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	29 November to 1 December 2022

## Information about this school

- Papillon House is an independent special school in Surrey. The school takes pupils from four local authorities.
- All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan where the primary diagnosis is autism spectrum disorder. Most pupils also have associated social and communication difficulties.
- The headteacher was appointed substantively in September 2025. She was previously the deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher was also appointed in September 2025.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school offers early years provision, but no pupils are currently registered for this provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, proprietor and leaders responsible for curriculum and therapy.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, communication, mathematics and personal development. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out other activities to check that the school complies with the independent school standards. These included a check on the school premises and scrutiny of school policies.
- Inspectors considered responses to the staff surveys as well as responses to Ofsted's Parent View and free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection, including through the subject deep dives. There was a member of school staff present when inspectors

spoke with pupils. This did not have an impact on the quality or impartiality of evidence gathered.

### **Inspection team**

Scott Reece, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christopher Toye

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2025