

# St Piers Residential Special School

St Piers Lane, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6PW

## Inspection date

5 July 2023

## Context of the inspection

St Piers School is a non-maintained special school for pupils aged between five and 19 years with neurological conditions such as epilepsy and autism spectrum disorder. Pupils may also have associated conditions such as learning and communication difficulties. There are currently 65 pupils on the school roll, of whom 17 access the residential provision. The school offers weekly boarding, with some provision for children to stay at the school at weekends.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

The purpose of this monitoring visit was to review staff moving and handling practices with children. This was in response to concerns raised by a social care professional.

## Summary of findings

There have been changes in leadership arrangements and structures since the last full inspection. The school welcomed a new executive principle at the start of January 2023, who is also responsible for overseeing children's residential services with support from the acting head of care, nursing, designated safeguarding officer and home managers. Leaders feel that this arrangement is improving on communication, collaboration and action management for children.

Since the last full inspection, senior leaders have closed one of the children's homes. Staff working in this home previously cared for children with daily hoisting needs. These children have since moved on, meaning that there are currently no children with ceiling track hoisting needs being supported by staff in residential care.

One child has a moving and handling plan in place for staff to use a mobile hoist. This equipment has not been used with the child since the last full inspection due to the child's healthy and planned weight loss. The moving and handling plan is currently under review by the therapy team while the child undergoes a series of medical health assessments. This hoist was serviced in April 2023 and staff have received training to use this in relation to the individual need of children.

The senior occupational therapist has recently been promoted to head of therapies. Leaders are planning to recruit a new occupational therapist into their well-being team, along with a new speech and language therapist. These gaps in recruitment mean not all children have received full therapy assessments in line with the admissions process. This is not impacting on the health and safety of children but does mean some children's experiences and opportunities vary in the home. In one example, one child is waiting on an assessment to use both showering and bathing facilities.

Staff are clear advocates for children and understand internal processes for challenging therapy assessments for children. Although there have been some delays for some children, these assessments are now planned. Leaders are reviewing the admissions process for children and their families, and plan to implement these changes at the start of the autumn term.

Home managers are extremely knowledgeable about children in their care. They understand children's risks, vulnerabilities and positive handling needs. Along with leaders, they recognise that daily moving and handling needs for individual children could be better streamlined in a formal risk assessment. Currently, this guidance for staff is found in children's support plans and staff guidelines. The therapy team plans to review all current assessments for children by October 2023, following additional and moving and handling training directly from children services.

Home managers and all staff working and supporting children have received both theory- and practical-based certified moving and handling training. This training is in date and staff demonstrate good moving and handling techniques. This means that children are receiving care from skilled and competent staff.

There have been no reported injuries, accidents or bruises sustained from poor moving and handling practices since the last full inspection.

There is a lack of appropriate storage for children's occupational therapy equipment. Currently, adapted chairs, wheelchairs, a mobile hoist and other equipment are visibly stored in the children's homes. These are blocking windows and the end of corridors and taking up valuable space. This detracts from an otherwise very homely environment for children.

Inspectors saw staff smoking cigarettes outside buildings during staff breaks. This visibility, along with the risks associated with cigarette smoke, has the potential to influence and harm children. This does not characterise or support the school's ethos of staff representing positive role models to children.

Points for improvement made at the last full inspection have not been reviewed as part of this monitoring visit.

## Recommendations

- School leaders should ensure that staff to do not smoke cigarettes on the school grounds. Smoking arrangements for staff should factor in their visibility and second-hand smoke distances for children.
- School leaders should make suitable arrangements for the appropriate storage of specialised and adapted equipment for children.

## Inspection team

Kelly Monniot

Lead Social Care Inspector

Mark Dawkins

Social Care Inspector

## Information about this school

St Piers School is a non-maintained special school for pupils aged between five and 19 years of age who have neurological conditions such as epilepsy and autism. Pupils may also have associated conditions such as learning and communication difficulties.

There are currently 65 children on the school roll, of whom 17 access the residential provision.

The school offers weekly boarding, with some provision for children to stay at the school at weekends.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125453
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	2601107

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	17
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	Five – 19 years of age
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simone Hopkins
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	11/07/2022
<b>Telephone number</b>	01342 832243
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:shopkins@stpiers.org.uk">shopkins@stpiers.org.uk</a>

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