

# Inspection of St Piers College (Young Epilepsy)

Inspection dates:

27 to 28 November 2023  
23 to 24 January 2024

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Provision for learners with high needs

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Information about this provider

St Pier's College (Young Epilepsy) is an independent specialist college offering exceptional residential and day college for students aged 19 to 25. The college is part of the Young Epilepsy charity group which provides specialist education and residential provision for children and young people. At the time of the inspection, there were 99 students with neurological conditions, moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), including students with autism. Of these, 61 were residential students. All students have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and have high needs.

Leaders have based programmes on preparation for adulthood and include employment, independent living, community inclusion, and health. Programmes consist of three different pathways – learning for life for those with complex and profound physical, medical and sensory needs; skills for life for those with cognitive impairment, communication difficulties and sensory needs; and specialist skills for those who need less support to access education and work. Students work towards qualifications from entry level to level 1.

Students study employment, independent living, community inclusion and healthy living. These highly personalised courses support students' well-being, independence and skills for work.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Students' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. They benefit from the high expectations of staff for their behaviour, conduct and attendance. Students are highly positive in their attitudes to learning and work. They are resolute in achieving their aspirations and ambitions. As a result of the high levels of support from staff, many students exceed their academic and personal targets.

Students feel safe and thrive because the college is a harmonious, nurturing, inclusive and exciting place to learn. Students understand each other's differences through the very well-planned enrichment curriculum as a result of the expert support of staff. Students participate in a broad range of challenging community activities that contribute to broader society and enable them to develop their skills in different environments. For example, students participate in learning activities using kayaks and canoes. They also participate in water-based activities at the local reservoir. A wheelchair-accessible boat enables all students to participate. These activities enable students to develop awareness of their own body motions, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking skills and confidence.

Students develop excellent communication skills. The highly committed staff team ensures that students use a wide range of assistive technology including mobile phones for text, signing, visual prompts and gestures. As a result, students make very good contributions in lessons. They take pleasure in encouraging each other and celebrating each other's achievements.

Students are very well prepared for adult life. Tutors, support staff and therapy staff work extremely well as a team to create safe and enjoyable experiences for students. They adeptly teach students about the risks they may experience at college, work and in the community. As a result, students have the knowledge about road safety, safety in the community, digital safety, healthy relationships and consent to keep themselves safe. For example, students use visuals and models that enable them to understand sexual difference and behaviours such as appropriate and inappropriate touch.

Students develop skills that prepare them very well for life after college. The college works tirelessly to support students to become increasingly independent. Students regularly attend a range of events to provide valuable feedback to key stakeholders such as awarding bodies, including the Inclusion Quality Mark and Natspec on the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms. As a result, students interact independently outside of college.

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

Leaders and governors have a clear and decisive vision and mission to ensure young people with SEND are nurtured. Their strategy clearly focuses on the preparation for adulthood agenda and for students to be successful and valued members of the communities in which they live and work. Leaders and governors are highly effective

in communicating the college's strategic ambition and vision to staff, parents/carers, students and other professionals who they work in partnership with. Staff embody these in all aspects of their work with the students and their peers.

Highly experienced and well-informed governors understand SEND provision and preparation for adulthood exceptionally well. They use their experience to support and challenge leaders and managers effectively. Subsequently, they promote aspirational outcomes for all SEND students in education and supported living successfully. Governors understand what works well for students as a result of their frequent visits to the college to meet with students and staff. They take action where they identify areas they would like to make even better.

Leaders work collaboratively and proactively with employers, and charitable and voluntary organisations to understand the benefits of working with students with high needs and create opportunities for students to progress into work. For example, they work with the National Trust and Wakehurst Place to help students to progress into meaningful work. As a result, a high proportion of students gain paid employment or voluntary work.

Staff benefit from a broad range of highly relevant specialist training which enables them to meet students' needs very well, for example training in autism awareness, positive behaviour support, Makaton and bereavement training. Staff continuously develop their vocational knowledge, which they use to help students develop practical skills successfully. For example, staff teach students about the life cycle of vegetables in the gardens. In farming, they teach students the process of sharing in 'fleece to fibre', which results in students' creating high-quality, saleable products such as bags and cushion covers. As a result, students benefit from the specialist support, become increasingly independent and make excellent progress towards their next steps.

Leaders and managers have developed a highly inclusive individually tailored curriculum for students. Tutors set highly ambitious and personalised targets for students, which closely align to their aspirations and outcomes identified in their EHC plans. Tutors support students to access opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to achieve their targets. Students understand their targets and make exceptional progress. For example, students develop employability, communication and social interaction skills working in the college café, where they bake and sell cakes and pastries.

Staff support students to access a broad range of competitions and activities. For example, at the 'Jim Green Challenge' students participate in themed challenges and win awards for activities such as making an alien scarecrow, baking challenge and designing and planting flower beds. Activities promote a healthy lifestyle and provide opportunities for students to be creative in a fun environment.

Tutors use the extensive student information they gather to create a personalised approach for each student in the classroom and for practical learning activities. Tutors and support staff review learning goals frequently and set ambitious targets to

monitor the very good progress students make. As a result, students make continuous progress and achieve their learning goals. For example, students learn how to cut and paste text in documents and value how this will help them in work. Others describe how they have learned to cross the road independently and safely by listening to staff and taking note of the signs to know how to keep safe. Consequently, students learn and make progress at a pace appropriate for them.

Tutors prepare students for their next steps after college diligently. Students follow a curriculum that successfully prepares them for transition to their next steps. They benefit from informative careers and employability support from staff. Students preparing for work placements learn how to dress appropriately for interviews and work and how to answer interview questions. Students gain confidence in speaking to employers and are successful in their placements. For example, a student on placement at a local hospital confidently delivers medication packs to different wards and works on the information desk confidently providing information to visitors and staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141241
<b>Address</b>	St Piers Lane Lingfield Surrey RH7 6PW
<b>Contact number</b>	01342 832243
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.stpiers.org.uk/">https://www.stpiers.org.uk/</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Simone Hopkins
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent specialist college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 November 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of college, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Carolyn Brownsea, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Pam Richardson	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Leavey, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jo-Ann Henderson	His Majesty's Inspector
Josie Grainger	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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