

# St Piers Residential Special School

St Piers Lane, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6PW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special 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 74 children on the school roll, of whom 16 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.

### Inspection dates: 27 to 29 February 2024

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 11 July 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children benefit from warm and nurturing care. Staff have a deep understanding of the children's complex and changeable needs. This understanding has helped staff build strong and trusting relationships with children. Children have benefitted from this high-quality care and are making progress.

Staff understand the importance of healthy routines and take a flexible approach to supporting children to ensure that they have a positive structure to their day. They adapt these routines based on the child's health and mood. Activities are always on offer for children to choose to take part in. Children enjoy activities such as discos, sports, nail painting, sensory play and time with the therapy donkeys.

Children attend education regularly. The school is on the same site as the residential provision. Education staff work closely with residential staff to provide a smooth transition to and from school. Communication is strong between the two settings to ensure key information is handed over.

Children's plans are clear. These enable staff to have a detailed understanding of the child's family history and their needs. There are clear plans for meeting children's health needs and to guide staff what to do if there is an emergency. Care for children is effective around the clock with a well skilled and supported night team.

Staff consult freely with a team of nurses and highly specialised therapists who are based on site. This means that children receive well informed care and are supported to maintain good health and develop independence. The team work closely with staff to ensure that children's discharges from hospital are well planned. One child was supported with creative input from the schools play therapist to recover from an operation to reintegrate back into residential and attend school.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

The designated safeguarding lead [DSL] is tenacious and has excellent oversight of safeguarding. Concerns and allegations are well managed and followed up. The DSL involves the local authority's designated officer when needed. Investigations are conducted fairly with the child's experience at the centre of the process. The DSL ensures that staff are well briefed on current national safeguarding themes and trends identified within the organisation.

Staff understand how children's behaviour is linked to their communication and health conditions. Staff work with therapists to understand the causes of behaviours and create plans to reduce harmful behaviours. Plans are insightful and proactive in their approach. One child's self-injurious behaviour is being closely monitored to

inform medication reviews and identify patterns. Behaviour incidents are reducing, and children's behaviours are improving as a result.

Physical restraint is used infrequently. There is a clear approach to use least restrictive approaches to manage behaviours. This is underpinned by training, policies and plans for children. When restraints have been used these have been well recorded at the time. Follow on information such as debriefs are not always recorded promptly. On one record the debriefs for staff and children had not been recorded for two months following the incident taking place.

Medications are well managed by staff and stored safely. Staff know how to respond to medication errors and ensure children are safe.

The houses are well maintained, providing a homely environment for children. However, the recording of the rationale for delays for urgent work could be clearer. For example, an electrical wiring assessment identified urgent actions. These actions were not immediately actioned and there is no record to confirm why it was delayed. This work was carried out during the inspection.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Senior leaders and managers are highly ambitious about the quality of care provided to children. They have made positive changes which have been welcomed by staff and they have addressed previous points of improvement from previous inspections. As a result, there is improved management oversight of practice, staff are receiving more supervision and extra storage space available for children's specialist equipment.

The experienced head of care works closely with two knowledgeable home managers who are hands on and visible in the residential setting. This management team is highly effective and acutely aware of the children's progress in the home.

Children benefit from a highly motivated and stable staff team. Turnover has been minimal since the last inspection. Staffing levels are excellent providing children with consistent care from staff who are familiar to them and know them well. Managers have provided staff with high levels of training and support. Not all staff have had an annual appraisal. Leaders have reviewed the appraisal process and plan to complete this by the end of the academic year.

The governors are committed to the continuous improvement of the residential provision. They are highly motivated and skilled providing a strong level of scrutiny. The governors visit the provision often. During their visits they track individual children to monitor their progress. Governors spend time with children and are keenly interested in the children's journeys, progress and experience.

Leaders have clear and aspirational development plans in place. Monitoring systems are beginning to inform these plans. Leaders are consulting with parents and children

to identify areas of development. The independent visitor reports are used well to monitor the quality of care. Leaders are using the external advisors to develop the skills of leaders and further improve the quality of the service.

Staff collaborate effectively with parents and social workers to ensure that moves for children joining the residential provision are well planned. As a result, children are well prepared for their stays and settle in well. Staff share information well with all who are involved in children's care to help them understand the children's health conditions. This enables children to be well cared for away from the residential provision.

## **What does the residential special school need to do to improve?**

### **Points for improvement.**

- Ensure that there are clearer auditing process around health and safety actions.
- Ensure that children's restraint records are completed in a timely manner and include evidence of management oversight.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Residential special school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** 2601107

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Simone Hopkins

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspectors**

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector (Lead)

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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