



# National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy, St Piers School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 125453  
**Local Authority** Surrey  
**Inspection number** 301105  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Sheila Nolan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	St Piers Lane
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained		Lingfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–19		RH7 6PW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01342 832243
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	72	<b>Fax number</b>	01342 834639
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	13		
<b>Number on roll (day care)</b>	67		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ann Wilks CBE
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Nicholas Byford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 March 2001		
<b>Date of previous day care inspection</b>	19 April 2006		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Piers School, part of the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy, provides education for both day and residential students with a range of neurological disorders. Students are drawn from across the country. Although most are of white British heritage, just under a fifth comes from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. There are twice as many boys as girls and all have a statement of special educational need arising from medical conditions. A significant number have additional complex needs, including Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. Although the majority of students fall within the secondary age group, there are six students under eleven years of age. The small sixth form caters mainly for students with Profound and Severe Learning Difficulties. The school, supported by a charitable trust, has close links with its on-site partner, St Piers Further Education College. A medical and assessment centre, linked to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and the Institute of Child Health, provides services 24 hours a day. Residential facilities for the students are provided in age-related groups within a number of units allocated to the school. Additionally, a children's home provides year-round care for a small number of students. The school has its own governing body that reports to the Trust Board. The headteacher is responsible for both care and education within the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

St Piers School, within the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy, seeks to provide a 'safe, happy and creative environment' in which each young person can develop as fully as possible. In this it is exceptionally effective and provides an outstanding quality of education and care for its vulnerable students. A parent expressed the sentiments of many others: 'It is a wonderful school and I really believe my child benefits from being there'.

The school provides high quality care, guidance and support for students, striving to gain the best for them through networking with many on-site and other agencies. Boarding provision is also exceptional. Because of very close links between school and residential homes, students who board, both full and part-time, move seamlessly between provisions. Day students also benefit from the carefully planned out-of-hours activities although lengthy journeys sometimes affect their participation. As a result of the well-considered management of the students' individual education and placement plans, personal development is outstanding and students make exceptional progress in this. They make giant strides from their points of entry to the school, learning to attend more regularly, manage their medication independently where possible, and improve their communication and social skills. Standards of attainment remain very low but students achieve well because of good teaching and a curriculum that is exceptionally well matched to their needs.

Around half of parents returned questionnaires. They have nothing but praise for the school's work. Students, too, enjoy school and appreciate greatly the secure environment with trusted adults. They attend day and evening physical activities readily and have good access to healthy and special diets that help to alleviate their medical conditions. Students contribute to their community through organising events, fund raising and managing their environments. They share productions with local schools. Shopping activities, budgeting for projects and mini enterprises all support their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management, including that of the sixth form, are outstanding. The excellent liaison between school and care staff has contributed significantly to the school's progress in addressing issues from the last inspection. Governance is good and restructuring has enabled governors to challenge the school's work effectively. Rigorous self-evaluation has accurately identified that lesson planning should take more account of out-of-hours learning, especially in the sixth form.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

The small sixth form, which is set to expand, provides outstandingly well for students with very complex needs. They make exceptional progress in their personal development and in applying skills in a range of different contexts. Most complete courses leading to external accreditation in creativity, technology and science. They make good progress in early literacy and numeracy skills because teaching is good. Life skills are highlighted

in both school and residential provision through carefully managed individual education and placement programmes. Some learning recorded in out-of-hours activities, however, is not always fully used in classroom activities. Nevertheless, the overall curriculum matches the students' needs very effectively. Personal care, guidance and support are excellent and records of academic progress comprehensive. The sixth form is exceptionally well led by senior staff and its day-to-day management is very smooth.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Boarding provision for the school section of the campus is excellent. The bright, airy and cheerful accommodation is very well maintained in line with the requirements of the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI). The most recent inspection of the 39-week residential accommodation indicates that almost all aspects are above the national minimum standards for this provision. Relationships between care staff and teachers are good and have strengthened between successive inspections because of well-considered training and opportunities for staff to work across both the school and the boarding units. Students are safe, happy, well supervised and well supported in making decisions about their daily lives. Following the most recent recommendations from CSCI, the school has provided additional training for residential staff in the effective care of students diagnosed with autism. Steps are in hand to better manage pharmacy provision and regulate medication dosage at weekends, particularly when students are on home visits.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that recorded out-of-hours learning is taken into account when planning for what students need to learn next, especially in the sixth form.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Achievement is good. Although standards are very low because of the extent of students' medical conditions, sometimes degenerative, the progress students make is at least good and occasionally outstanding. Records show that when students join the school, their academic and personal skills are very much lower than is typical for their ages. The school gives high priority to ensuring that each student is equipped with the necessary tools to access learning. Students make especially fast progress in communication skills, often using signs and symbols and other communication aids very effectively. This has a very positive effect on their progress in early literacy and numeracy skills. Because they grow in confidence, students with profound and severe learning difficulties are increasingly willing to try to apply their physical, social and academic skills in a range of settings. More able students extend their spoken and written communication and money management skills very well, often through games

and excursions into the wider community. Annual reviews of students' progress indicate that students meet well over half of the targets set in their individual education and placement plans.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students' personal development is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is excellent. Students know staff care and they form warm and very trusting relationships. Behaviour overall is outstanding in lessons and around the school because of the exceptionally high level of individual support. A parent compared her son's 'contentment at St Piers, to previous experience of repeated exclusions'. Students enjoy their involvement in lessons and day students attend regularly. They communicate that they feel safe and that any bullying is dealt with effectively. 'Staff sort out problems for us all the time,' one said. Students appreciate the opportunity to eat healthily and to take part in physical activities during and after school. They enjoy the daily walks between their residential accommodation and classrooms.

Students are actively involved in the school council and regular boarding house meetings where their views contribute much to their small communities. A celebration of Chinese New Year, for example, was at the request of students in one house. They are involved, wherever possible, in activities that prepare them for life beyond school. Shopping trips and budgeting activities involve them actively in the use of money. Some are active in promoting produce from the campus farm.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching is good overall. In some subject areas such as physical education and creative arts it is outstanding. Teachers and support staff are adept at managing students' behaviour so that working relationships are warm and friendly. Good teamwork among adults in classrooms shows students how to relate to each other. The most successful lessons use a wide range of visual resources to hold students' interest and underpin concepts. The story of Noah's Ark, for example, came alive because of the inspired use of simple costumes. Signing, singing and the well-considered use of information and communication technology (ICT) add much to students' enjoyment in learning. Meticulous planning for individual needs is at the heart of the students' success in learning despite medical conditions and other social and emotional needs that hinder learning. However, there are occasions when lesson plans do not take into account what students have learnt in out-of-hours sessions, especially in the sixth form.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum is exceptionally well matched and flexibly organised to meet the complex needs of the students. 'Each student follows an individually tailored curriculum' commented one family. Time allocated to English, mathematics, personal, social, health and citizenship education and ICT is carefully balanced so that students have good opportunities to cover many elements of the mainstream school curriculum. A rolling programme of themed activities incorporates science, the humanities and creative arts. The school day is enriched by a range of on- and off-site opportunities that involve the wider community, sport, including swimming, and excursions at home and abroad. Sensory and quiet rooms, the toy library and ICT facilities assist learning in residential accommodation. There is a carefully managed and individualised programme to support students in planning transitions to the next stage of education or living.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding students are exceptionally robust. A parent commented, 'Our daughter presents challenging behaviour at times and will regularly refuse to access activities, but she is always given the choice to proceed at her own pace'. Well-established procedures in both the school and boarding houses provide a secure and stable environment to underpin high quality pastoral and academic support for students. Incident and physical restraint records are regularly updated.

High quality medical care, constant one-to-one adult support, and well-considered individual learning and placement plans add considerably to the progress students make in lessons. Information on attainment and progress against baseline information is analysed carefully so that the school is clearly aware of how much progress students make. Good quality accessible information and personal guidance is provided for all students, including career progression where applicable.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school is led by an inspirational headteacher who has responsibility for both care and education. He is very well supported by senior staff in both the school and the residential provision. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection in the coordination of the many aspects of the school's work, particularly in the use of ICT. Liaison with on-site institutions and with other external agencies is outstanding and contributes very well

to the excellent all-round care students receive. The re-structured governing body has played a valuable part in challenging the school's leadership to sustain progress. Exemplary teamwork underpins much of the current smooth management of the school and care provision.

Well-designed training activities support established teachers, those new to the school and support assistants, whose roles have been expanded recently. Subject co-ordinators are growing into their roles and are increasingly involved in co-ordinating key elements such as drama and intensive interactions across the curriculum.

Self-evaluation at senior levels and by governors is rigorous, albeit modest in its judgements. Systematic monitoring together with a thorough analysis of strengths and areas for improvement informs well the school's future development plans. The school recognises, for example, that in order to improve teaching even further, curriculum areas need to formulate class learning outcomes in terms of individual targets. Parents feel fully involved in the life of the school through formal reviews, questionnaires and regular telephone or electronic communication. Many consider the school's work 'amazing'. Students also have their say regularly and more formally through the established school council. Work with a national agency is underway to aid further communication for those students who lack speech. The school has convincingly demonstrated its strong capacity to improve since the last inspection and is in an excellent position to make further progress.

## **Effectiveness of registered day care**

### **Grade: 1**

The children's home benefits from similar high quality accommodation as the boarding provision. Eleven students from 10 to 15 years of age benefit immensely, particularly socially, from its integrated approach to care and education. Students are well supervised in out-of-school hours as well as over lunch and in travelling the short distances to and from school. Students confirm that they feel very safe and secure and are appreciative of the caring support they receive. Individual rooms ensure their privacy and allow them to express individual preferences in colour and artefacts. Recreational areas and resources are of a high standard. Risk assessments and health and safety procedures are robust. Care staff work very closely with the school through the 24-hour curriculum to ensure that students' achievement is enhanced further. Regular house meetings and individualised sessions allow them to express views, which are taken seriously. The first CSCI report of this recent venture is very positive with only minor issues noted as needing attention.

## **Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care**

As per the Commission for Social Care Inspection Report.

Day Care: 19 April 2006 Boarding: 13 November 2006



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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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>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### 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 disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is 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 behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
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	

## The effectiveness of the registered day care

<b>The quality and standards of the registered day care</b>	1
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	1
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	1
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	1
How effectively is the day care organised?	1
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	Yes
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and houses. We really enjoyed sharing time with you and seeing how much you like St Piers. We know that both you and your parents appreciate greatly how well staff look after you both in school and in your bright, cheerful homes.

We know that you agree with us that St Piers is an excellent school. You are learning well because your teachers make sure work is at the right level for you and because they use lots of interesting activities to help you understand. You also make good progress after school, especially through sport, the sensory rooms and through the contact with adults that you trust.

You behave very well, are happy, and are encouraged to do as much as possible for yourselves. Staff encourage you to eat healthily, manage money and co-operate with each other.

Because you are learning all the time, we have asked your teachers to build information from your progress in your houses into lesson planning.

We hope you will continue to work together with your teachers and house staff to do your best.

Best wishes

Sheila NolanLead Inspector