

National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy, St Piers School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125453
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340767
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Wilks CBE
Headteacher	Nick Byford
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
School address	St Piers Lane Lingfield RH7 6PW
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons and eight teachers were observed. Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, governors and two groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at planning documents, assessment and tracking information, pupils' files, samples of pupils' work and the minutes of governors' meetings. Fourteen parents responded to the inspection questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how information from out-of-hours activities is used in planning and assessment
- the range of opportunities for pupils of different abilities and whether all groups of pupils have equal opportunities
- how well the school monitors teaching and learning.

Information about the school

St Piers School, part of the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy (NCYPE), provides education for both day and residential pupils with epilepsy and a range of other disorders. Most pupils are White British although a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for their medical conditions. The majority of pupils have additional needs, including profound and multiple learning difficulties, sensory impairments, or autism. There are close links with its on-site partners the NCYPE Further Education College and the newly opened Sure Start Community Children's Centre. A medical and assessment centre, linked to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, provides 24-hour support. Residential provision for pupils is provided within the extensive grounds. A children's home provides 52-week care for a small number of pupils. The school has its own governing body that reports to the charitable trust which supports the school.

Boarding provision was inspected in March 2010 and the report can be found on the Ofsted website. It was inspected under the Care Standards Act 2000 and judgements were made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils thrive in its happy working environment. It provides outstanding care, support and guidance for all its pupils resulting in their excellent behaviour and high quality personal development. Pupils enjoy school very much and attend regularly. They have positive attitudes and take part in all that the school has to offer with enthusiasm. The extensive indoor and outdoor activities ensure that pupils develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem as they move through the school. For example, one pupil was observed trying to achieve different jumps on the trampoline. He was very keen to stand up from a sitting position as he jumped. The excellent support and guidance that he received resulted in success and extreme pride in his achievement.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally very low and some pupils may have been out of school for a long time. Pupils achieve well during their time at the school so that by the time they leave many go on to the college. Their good progress is a result of the high levels of attention that each pupil receives and the wide range of specialists who ensure that a multi-disciplinary approach caters for individual medical and learning needs. Teachers assess pupils' work well on a daily basis. Assessment information is gathered regularly to ensure that pupils are doing well. However, the use of assessment data to track pupils' progress as they move through the school is less successful. This is because the school lacks a clear system to show how much progress pupils make over time. Leaders are aware of this and are taking steps to improve it.

The school curriculum is vibrant and responsive to pupils' individual needs. It is adapted well to meet requirements. However, the accommodation and resources in some areas are limited. Pupils do not always have sufficient access to information and communication technology (ICT) or technological communication aids to improve their skills. Some pupils, particularly the least mobile pupils, do not have access to the cookery room; as a result, these pupils have to cook in their classrooms.

Partnership work is strong, underpinning the work of the school and ensuring good local links. Relationships with parents are outstanding and they are fully supportive of the school's work. The headteacher and senior leaders provide clear educational and personal direction for all pupils. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive and the trust supports the work of the school very well. Middle managers, particularly subject leaders, have clear plans for the future and are fully involved in development planning. The school has a good capacity to improve because of accurate self-evaluation, strong teamwork, rigorous attention to safety, regular monitoring and very extensive partnerships, which promote learning, health and personal development of all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use and accuracy of data to track, monitor and review pupils' academic progress, both in the main school and in the sixth form, to inform future developments.
- Improve resources and accommodation, particularly for food technology and ICT, so that:
 - all groups have equal access to cooking, including those with limited mobility
- all pupils, including those in the sixth form, have access to resources appropriate for their age, including a suitable range of ICT and technological communication aids both for private use and in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils of all abilities, including those with additional needs, make good progress in their academic studies and excellent progress in their personal development during their time at the school.

Pupils arrive at school regularly each morning eager to start work and keen to take part in the wide range of activities on offer. This is because handover practices between the residences, school staff and transport personal are thorough and focus carefully on any difficulties. A key feature of pupils' good learning is the calm and harmonious atmosphere in lessons where pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other. This was evident in a lesson where some older pupils were reviewing their achievements. Each pupil was appraised by the teacher and by the other pupils. Comments were very supportive and helpful so that pupils' social skills improved. In one of the younger classes, where three pupils were being encouraged to interact with each other and with the teacher, effective use of praise and good role modelling helped them to respond politely and improve their confidence. They were able to say 'hello' in English and Polish. Similarly, in Years 9 and 10, three pupils were able to make choices because they benefited from individual support. This enabled them to count footballs and they were able, with support, to push the footballs into a tub as they counted them. Pupils communicate well.

Pupils say they feel safe at school because there is always someone to help them. They know about healthy eating and regularly choose fruit and take lots of exercise. Pupils like working together and most are polite and friendly. Many have simple jobs. They clear up after their work and help to keep the classrooms tidy. Work experience for the older pupils is encouraged through helping younger ones. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils make each other laugh, share jokes and they play ball together. They are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make effective use of resources to help keep pupils interested and ensure that they enjoy their learning. For example, some of the older pupils in the school were enraptured by a session in the creative arts area as they searched for answers to questions in an imaginary jungle. Most teaching is good across the school and some is outstanding. Teachers plan individually to meet pupils' needs and provide them with highly stimulating experiences. Relationships are very strong. Learning support assistants and support workers play a valuable role in mentoring and enabling pupils to achieve their goals.

Planned opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills through social interaction and visits are a strength and have a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. For example, they have excellent opportunities to visit a range of different churches in their local community. Sports clubs are among the additional activities offered by the school. Information from out-of-hours learning is used well in planning. However, access to food technology and ICT is limited for some pupils.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are all exceptionally good and have a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment of learning. The school's policies and procedures for safeguarding are successfully implemented.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

Behaviour is very well managed and pupils are helped to take control of their own feelings and worries. Support for pupils who are new to the school and for their parents is excellent. Risk assessments are rigorous especially for school trips and visits.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other senior leaders have a clear vision for the future of the school. The headteacher's vision is shared by the whole school community and is focused on removing barriers to learning for all the pupils and enabling them to achieve their potential. Teaching and learning are regularly and accurately monitored and leaders have a clear understanding of where improvements are needed to accelerate learning. They have sought many procedures to track and monitor progress as pupils move through the school but none have been completely successful. As a result, pupils' progress over time is not always clear. Subject leaders are fully involved in monitoring and regularly evaluate the outcomes of their own subjects. Robust arrangements for child protection and safeguarding ensure that pupils are safe and secure at school. Governors are helpful and supportive, visit regularly and fully meet their statutory duties. They regularly challenge leaders about their decisions but do not always monitor outcomes for pupils as rigorously as they could.

The school places an impressive emphasis on equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Partnerships with local businesses and schools enhance learning and provide support for staff. For example, the recent acquisition of the Sure Start Children's Centre on site has improved community relations and provided learning opportunities for pupils. The school has made a good start in developing its strategy for community cohesion and links are developing with schools in other parts of Britain and with a school in Africa.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students achieve well and make good progress in the sixth form. They learn to take responsibility, develop independence and enjoy their leisure time. For example, they learn about leading healthy lives as they cook for themselves from their community garden. They use their common room to play music or to relax and make friends. The strong focus on vocational activities is supported by effective links with local schools ensuring that students regularly have contact with their peers from mainstream colleges. Students take on many simple responsibilities around the school. They organised an assembly themselves, putting out all the chairs and playing their own recorded music to the rest of the school. Provision is flexible, especially for transition, and is tailored to meet each student's needs. Support for those with challenging behaviour is good and high levels of support and guidance enable all pupils to access learning.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory, although the provision has expanded rapidly in the past two years and there is no overall development plan. This has meant that facilities have not kept up with demand. Progression pathways are beginning to be established and are currently under review to ensure that they meet individual needs as well as possible. There is some external accreditation, which is moderated with other similar schools, but leaders are aware of the need to increase these options in order to extend opportunities for all groups of students. The curriculum is vibrant and often exciting but resources do not always match the ages of the students. The progress of each student is monitored daily although procedures to track progress over time are limited.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school; many feel that they cannot praise it highly enough. All who responded to the inspection questionnaires said that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps pupils safe and secure. I couldn't wish for a better placement for my child who has made excellent progress, wrote one parent. Others commented: The activities are exciting and the staff allow my child to have different experiences outside of school, and My child is very happy. For the first time my child is enjoying learning and being at school.

Inspection evidence supports these comments. Pupils are very happy at school. They have lots of exciting things to do and staff take very good care of them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Piers School, National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	86	2	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	64	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	71	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	79	3	21	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	79	2	14	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	79	2	14	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	71	4	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Piers School, National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy, Lingfield RH7 6PW

Thank you for your help in our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found out about your school.

- St Piers is a good school.
- You come to school regularly and you enjoy yourselves.
- You make good progress in your lessons.
- You have lots of exciting things to do at school.
- You behave extremely well and you know how to keep healthy.
- You told us that you feel safe at school.
- Your teachers and other leaders work hard to help you learn.

We are asking your school to do two things to make it even better.

- Improve the way your progress is measured as you move through the school. You could help with this by asking your teachers how well you are doing.
- Make sure you all have enough time to use computers and to make sure you can all get into the cookery room to do your cooking.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead Inspector

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