

National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy, St Piers School

St Piers Lane, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6PW

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and strong team of senior leaders have rapidly improved the school since the previous inspection.
- Teachers are committed to removing any obstacles that get in the way of learning for pupils. Thorough checking of teaching contributes to good improvements for pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- Most pupils make rapid progress in mathematics, especially pupils with severe learning difficulties and autism.
- The planning and teaching of reading by linking letters to the sounds they make has improved. This has led to current improvements in English for all pupils.
- Pupils with epilepsy and pupils looked after by the local authority who are eligible for the pupil premium funding made particularly good progress in 2012 because of the excellent resources in place for them.
- Additional adults make a very strong contribution to learning in lessons through their support for pupils' academic, medical and physical needs.
- Behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Skilful behaviour management ensures most pupils engage successfully with learning. There have been no exclusions in the last three years.
- Excellent personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's success and underpins all of the school's strengths.
- The sixth form is good. Students develop independent living skills and grow in confidence and self-esteem. This prepares them well for their next steps in life.
- The trustees and Education Governing Body work well together to hold the school to account for its performance and its management of finances.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress of a few more able pupils is a little slower than for other pupils in the school.
- Teachers are not encouraging pupils to practise their reading and writing skills across a range of subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons all of which were joint observations with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to other lessons, looked at pupils' work and heard them read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and four governors, including the Chair of the Education Governing Body who is also a member of the Board of Trustees.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as other testimonies from parents and carers and 77 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school's improvement planning, the information it keeps on pupils' current progress, records, safeguarding policies and documents relating to performance management of staff (the setting and reviewing of targets to help them improve their work).

Inspection team

Justina Ilochi, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Hill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Pier's School is part of the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy (NCYPE) and provides education for both residential and day pupils with epilepsy and a range of other medical and neurological disorders. All pupils have a statement of special education needs.
- A majority of pupils have additional needs such as severe learning difficulties or autism and a few have moderate learning difficulties.
- Pupils are split equally between a Main School (Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 and Key stage 4) and Sixth Form.
- Most pupils start at the school at times other than the beginning of Year 1, with a large proportion joining in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form.
- Almost all pupils are White British, with very few children coming from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school is run by an integrated Education Governing Body that reports to the charitable trust. Three members of the charitable trust are permanent members of the Education Governing Body.
- The Chair of the Education Governing Body, the headteacher and most senior leaders of the school were appointed after the previous inspection.
- The school manages a Surestart Children's Centre. It also maintains a strong relationship with other on-site NCYPE providers such as St Piers Further Education College and the Neville Childhood Epilepsy Centre which accommodates a Medical and Research Centre with links to Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.
- All pupils in the school are eligible through the school's funding mechanisms for free school meals. Last year about one tenth of pupils looked after by the local authority were supported through the pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or children of service families).
- Pupils in St. Pier's School do not use off-site provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of the small number of more able pupils and speed up their progress through the school by:
 - making sure that teachers plan activities that make them think hard for themselves
 - ensuring that school leaders check their progress against high but realistic targets derived from national information about expected progress
 - ensuring that teachers encourage them to become more independent learners by giving them opportunities to take an active role in their learning
 - increasing the range of qualifications available for them in the sixth form.
- Place more emphasis on reading and writing so that progress is similar to that in mathematics by providing frequent opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress throughout the school has improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Results in assessments and tests taken in Years 2, 6, and 11 and in the sixth form show most students make good progress from low starting points in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. This is because of the school's emphasis on eradicating inadequate teaching and promoting good practice.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has been on an upward trajectory in the last three years. Progress in reading and writing has been slower because teachers do not ensure that pupils are practising and developing these skills enough in subjects other than English.
- There is an improving picture of progress for pupils with severe learning difficulties and autism because the school has identified their needs more accurately and has provided additional help and guidance that is at the right level for them.
- School records show that the progress of pupils with epilepsy has accelerated rapidly, particularly in 2012. This upward trend has continued this year. This is because of the close collaborative work between the school and the Neville Childhood Epilepsy Centre which provides quick medical advice and support for these pupils.
- The school promotes equality of opportunities really well. Average point scores data indicate that the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding that are looked after by the local authority is as rapid as that of other groups, and gaps had closed. This is because funding in the last year has been rightly spent on additional resources such as ipads and laptops, which have greatly improved their communication skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- All teaching throughout the school is good, with examples of outstanding practice in all year groups. The school has worked hard to remove any inadequate teaching.
- Pupils benefit from a range of subjects that are taught well. For instance, in a Key Stage 3 and 4 physical education lesson, the teacher planned sporting activities that ensured all pupils, including the most severely physically disabled in wheelchairs, were able to participate, enjoy and make outstanding progress.
- Adults who support pupils with epilepsy and other complex medical needs make a strong contribution to rates of progress in mathematics and English because they are well trained in how to get the best out of pupils in their charge. For example, in a mathematics lesson with a group of Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, additional adults used several strategies, including a sensory approach, songs and rhymes to prepare pupils for the lesson. Consequently, all pupils were well motivated and made good progress.
- Lessons are taught well in the sixth form. Teachers plan lessons that are exciting and engage pupils' attention so they concentrate intensely, behave well and work hard. In a phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) lesson in the sixth form, the teacher used a phonics song with appropriate pictures on the interactive whiteboard and captured the interests of the pupils. Pupils with very complex needs showed outstanding progress with letter/sound recognition by making the correct sounds and moving to the music.
- The teaching of writing has improved over the last three years. Teachers and other adults make sure that pupils that can are given ample opportunities to write during literacy lessons. This does not happen enough in other lessons, however.
- Teachers generally have high expectations and provide activities that stimulate and motivate pupils. Lessons typically have pace and variety. However, in a few lessons, teachers' planned activities do not build on the skills and knowledge the few more able pupils already have. Consequently, their progress slows.

- Teachers listen to and skilfully question pupils to check how well they are doing. Other adults provide well-judged support for pupils to improve their communication skills through the use of excellent resources. A few more able pupils are not always given enough opportunities to think carefully and find out things for themselves so chances are missed to develop independent skills that will help them when they leave school.
- Pupils' work is assessed frequently as lessons progress and all pupils are provided with individual guidance on how to improve their work on a regular basis. In a lesson in a Key Stage 1 and 2 class, the teacher continually checked the progress of pupils on set tasks through frequent discussions with other adults to ensure that learning was happening even for pupils with the most challenging behaviour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exceptional. This stems from the very constructive and calming effect of the first 30 minutes of every school day. The school devotes this time to sorting out medical matters and to encourage pupils' reflection on social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues.
- Pupils are well cared for. Pupils and staff are unreservedly caring and polite to one another and there is a strong community feeling in the school which fosters outstanding relationships.
- Most pupils have very challenging behaviours associated with their complex range of medical and physical disabilities and special educational needs. Staff are adept at managing these behaviours and removing obstacles to learning for pupils. Hence, pupils engage exceptionally well with learning.
- Students who speak using words say that they are happy and feel safe at school. They can talk about their worries with a trusted adult. The majority of parents and carers, as well as staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaires, have confirmed this.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. Procedures to manage behaviour are used consistently. Consequently, all pupils, including pupils on the autistic spectrum and pupils with severe learning difficulties and pupils who join the school at unusual times, behave well. On the very few occasions when bullying incidents happen, they are dealt with exceptionally well and there were no exclusions in the last three years.
- Pupils in the sixth form develop excellent social skills. Most of them are confident speakers when conversing with adults and other pupils. They are extremely respectful of each other and work constructively in their lessons. This contributes to their good learning.
- Attendance is average. Absence is related to the complex medical conditions of the vast majority of pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The determination of the headteacher and Chair of Education Governors to improve the life-chances of pupils with epilepsy and other complex needs is evident in all the actions taken by the school since the previous inspection.
- The school's checks on how well it is doing are robust, and decisive actions result from them. A good start has been made on developing a more challenging curriculum in order for pupils to get the highest possible qualifications by the time they leave school. This has already had a positive impact on increasing rates of progress in the sixth form. However, the range of qualifications available for a few more able pupils in the sixth form is limited.
- Effective procedures for setting targets for teachers to work to have helped to establish good teaching quickly. The quality of teaching is checked robustly and effective staff training supports teachers to improve their skills and knowledge. However, school leaders do not effectively check the progress the few more able pupils are making against high and demanding targets derived from national information about expected progress.

- The way subjects are taught is stimulating and interesting for all pupils. Themed topics such as the Tudors and Romeo and Juliet are recreated in very imaginative ways. This ensures that pupils, through role play and creative art, benefit from a historical experience that contributes in an exceptional way to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are also encouraged to learn about a wide range of cultures and faiths through frequent trips and visits.
 - Safeguarding meets current statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The Education Governing Body has made a strong contribution to the good quality of education the school provides. They are well informed by reports from the headteacher and other senior leaders which include detailed analysis of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They make important financial decisions, including how additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is spent. They have relevant training about keeping the school under review and are very clear about what the school is doing well and where it could do better. The Education Governing Body holds senior leaders to account for their performance and have procedures in place for checking and supporting school staff that is linked to pay. They have developed close links with parents and carers and seek ways of involving them in the life of the school. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and ensures that all requirements are met and are effective in relation to the safeguarding of children.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125453
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	421585

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	71
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Davies
Headteacher	June Atkins
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 May 2010
Telephone number	01342 832243
Fax number	01342 834639
Email address	info@youngpilepsy.org.uk

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