

St Piers School awarded Healthy School status

A huge well done and thank you to students, staff, parents, carers, leaders and governors for the great effort they have continued to put in to making positive changes so that St Pier's School can be proud to hold 'Healthy School status'. There are so many areas to the criteria we address, this write up is limited to mentioning just a few;

St Pier's School already had strong links to the school houses, and the SureStart centre. Together there were already in place many aspects of the healthy schools criteria. One area which was identified for improvement at the start of the project, was to try to increase the amount of time per week the students had access to sports and activities. To address this, the committed sports team provided some extra 'gifted and talented' sports sessions within the school week, inviting specialist coaches in. They also offer a wonderful activity week in the summer term so that students get to access and experience a wide range of sports. To increase the opportunity for sport per week, there is an increased number of after school clubs offering swimming, gym, football and trampolining. For those day students who are not able to access these after school clubs, the school teachers provide a range of lunch time clubs such as uni-hoc, disco, football, badminton, and in the better weather, gardening. The students have participated enthusiastically in these extra sessions, and have got the most from these sessions due to the continued high level of support they receive from their Student Support Workers. In addition to this we addressed the need for quieter, reflective activities, and so the students also have access to crafts and art clubs, library club, young women's group, young men's group and a worship club, some of which are within the school, some within the school houses. With the support from the Occupational Therapy team and physio team, the students have some sensory circuit activities build into their weekly timetable, varied to address their individual needs. This has had a positive impact upon the learning environment of the school.

Within the school day, we have had to make some healthy changes to the snacks and drinks, not only to keep in line with national changes, but most importantly, to benefit the health of our students. Quietly behind the scenes, the catering staff work hard to provide the school with a selection of healthy fruit snacks and a healthy selection of balanced school lunches, as well as providing for off-site lunches. For many of these changes, it is due to the staff leading by example, and communicating to the students, the health benefits of the changes, and then this being backed up by parents and care staff, which has led to the acceptance of these changes.

The school culture and environment is always evolving as staff keep up to date with national changes, and put forward their own ideas and suggestions. Throughout the school year we work together to create a caring and positive learning environment in which the students know they are supported. This is possible due to the excellent paths of communication between students, school staff, house care staff, community care staff, parents and also the medical and therapy professionals on-site. As part of

the school culture, it is important for us to encourage our students to participate and develop an awareness of their own voice. They all attend a school council election at the beginning of the year to vote for class representatives. Throughout the school year, the student council meet once or twice a week to give opinions on given projects and to raise concerns or ideas for improvements.

Through weekly whole school assemblies led by June and the creative arts team, excellent whole school events led by teachers, enthusiastically supported by student support workers, the students often come together as a whole group to develop their sense of being an important part of an exciting school. The whole school assemblies provide an excellent platform for student achievements to be shared and celebrated. A very recent example of whole school collaboration was last week, when the students had a unique opportunity to be involved in a filming project led by Creative Arts for Comic Relief.

A letter from Babcock 4S stated that the following achievements were ones they particularly liked:

- *“The teaching and monitoring and evaluation of PSHE and in particular how you have tailored this to the specific needs of your pupils.*
- *The emphasis on regular physical activity and in particular how the Sensory Circuits prepare the students for the school day.*
- *The prioritising of communication and ensuring that all students even those with severe difficulties can communicate effectively through a variety of means.*
- *The excellent leadership and co-ordination of your healthy school by Alison Guthrie.”*

The next step in the Healthy School process is to start an enhancement project.