

# St John's Catholic School for the Deaf

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	13 November 2006

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

St. John's School for the Deaf is a registered residential and day school for pupils aged from three to 19 years. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and all the teachers are qualified Teachers of the Deaf. Classrooms are acoustically treated and are equipped with group hearing aid systems. The school places great emphasis on developing the spoken language rather than relying on signing. There is an onsite audiology centre and full time audiologist. Pupils are also supported by speech and language therapists and can access a specialist mental health team for deaf children. Accommodation is in groups according to age and gender. Bedroom sizes vary with single rooms, doubles and rooms for four. Each group has at least their own lounge, dining room and kitchen. The majority of boarders are weekly though some stay at the weekends. The school has additional guest accommodation for visitors and a car park. The school's ethos is based on Catholic values, though children of other faiths are welcome.

### **Summary**

This was the school's annual announced inspection and covered all the main outcome areas. The school continues to improve and provides outstanding outcomes for its pupils. As a result of this inspection the head of the school is asked to make several recommendations. These include: improvements to records of medication, physical intervention and placement plans; improving the quality of meals especially on an evening; and making residential areas more homely.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Levels of staff supervision and numbers of staff with the required care qualification have increased helping to promote the welfare of children in the school.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

There are outstanding arrangements for helping children and young people to have healthy lifestyles. Children and young people's individual health care needs are identified and assessed at an early stage. These are recorded in a health plan for each child detailing how their specific and general health issues are to be addressed. Health needs which may impact on future outcomes for children are identified through this process. The school nurse in partnership with parents will ensure access to services needed to address these health needs. This includes referrals to a local team specialising in mental health issues for deaf children. Children receive regular health checks and the school has a fulltime audiologist who regularly checks children's hearing ability. These hearing tests help to ensure children have the most effective hearing aids. There is a whole school approach to actively encouraging children and young people to take an interest in looking after their personal, social and emotional health and promoting healthy ways of living. Children and young people have access to advice, guidance and information about health and social issues from the school nurse, care and teaching staff. The school has received an award and recognition from the local council for its approach to health promotion. The school nurse is very active in promoting the health of the children and young people. She will make referrals where necessary to other health services and ensures that

children have regular physical and emotional health checks. She manages the medication procedures and trains care staff to administer medication. Parental consent is obtained for administering medication and first aid. Care staff are also trained in first aid in the event of any accidents. Records are kept of medication administered. Records do not always include what medication is brought into the school. Medicines are stored safely and controlled drugs are managed well. Children and young people were seen to treat mealtimes as enjoyable social occasions and there were good standards of behaviour. Children and young people are involved in food choices through the school council. The school council's suggestions has led to: a salad bar in the main dining room used for lunch and the removal of vending machines with sweets and drinks. Fresh fruit and drinking water is readily available. Older children are supported to plan their own menus for tea, shop and cook. There is limited provision of vegetables in the schools menus.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

There are outstanding arrangements for helping keep children and young people safe. All children are seen as individuals and their privacy and dignity is respected. Records are stored securely and information about children is handled confidentially. Staff are friendly and approachable. Children feel able to talk to them about any concerns and know how to complain. Staff are open to their concerns and respond sensitively and professionally. There is frequent contact with parents who also feel comfortable approaching the school about any concerns. There is a clear complaints procedure that is readily available to children and their parents. The school has a very clear procedure for responding to child protection concerns which is known to staff who have regular training about this subject. There are good links with the Local Safeguarding Board and any concerns about children's welfare are referred to them. Children are provided with guidance about personal safety as part of the school curriculum and by the school nurse and care staff. Children confirm that there are low levels of bullying within the school, though staff do act to keep them safe. There is an anti-bullying policy and this is regularly discussed with children to help foster a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. There is no history of children being missing from the school. Staff are aware of what action to take should this occur. Children are actively encouraged to behave well and most of them think the rules are fair. Staff respond to poor behaviour in a number of ways which may mean a child loses a privilege, or has some time out to calm down. The ethos is to reward positive behaviour, staff see the children and young people in a very positive light. As a result the use of sanctions is limited. Physical intervention by staff when children are very challenging is rare. Sanctions are recorded and monitored to ensure they are being used appropriately. Use of physical intervention is similarly recorded but not in a bound book used only for this purpose. There is very good risk management and a range of risk assessments about the safety of the school, fire, children and young people's behaviour, activities and trips out. These assessments are taken into account and risks well managed in supporting children to develop their potential. The school is safe and well maintained. Staff recruitment processes are very thorough ensuring only suitable staff work in the school. The premises are secure and visitors monitored to help protect children's safety.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

After school staff will help children complete their homework. There is good communication with school staff about any relevant issues that may affect children during the school day. Care and teaching staff work well together to encourage children's all round development. Children and young people are actively encouraged by staff to take part in wide range of leisure activities both inside the school and in the community. Children's own interests are encouraged, they enjoy the activities the school arranges. Children have regular meetings involving them in planning what the school offers. There is very good support to help ensure that individual children's needs will be met. This includes identifying other agencies where necessary to help. Staff are open to helping children with a wide range of needs including disability, religious and cultural needs. Children, young people and their parents think that staff are very approachable and will do their best to provide the support needed. Comments made by the children included: 'The school is fantastic', 'they help us learn...and keep out of trouble', 'I like the care staff, teachers, everything'.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Consultation with children is very well integrated into care practice within the school. Children elect their own school council who have regular meetings. The council's suggestions are listened to by the management team and result in changes to the school. Children can also make their views known through their own weekly meeting and because staff are open, friendly and approachable. Staff value the views of children. Parents also feel the school takes account of their views. There are very good warm relationships between the staff and children. Children appreciate the staff and support they give, typical comments made were: 'staff help us to sort out problems and raise our confidence' and 'staff are funny and kind'. All admissions to the school are thoroughly planned. This involves visits and a thorough four day assessment at the school. Alternatively younger children who use the school on a daily basis may become boarders, having already been assessed as a day pupil. There is very good support as well for young people to learn independence skills as part of the preparation for leaving school. Each child has a placement plan about how their needs are to be addressed. These were being changed to show more clearly what support a child will get from staff and to detail a child's abilities, progress and achievements. Staff are completing these with children so each child will know about and be able to contribute to their own plan. New placement plans were not yet in place for all children and did not detail all their abilities, goals and support staff provide. There is a very good established and thorough system for reviewing children's placements, their care and education. Children are actively encouraged to take part in these reviews and to put forward their views. Children's parents are also encouraged to attend and contribute. Children are able to keep in touch with family, and parents often ring them at school. The school has additional accommodation for visitors making it easier for visiting parents.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Parents are responsible for providing children with clothes, pocket money and personal items whilst staying at school. There is a school bank and children are encouraged to save money and budget for items they need when shopping. There is a good range of accommodation for pupils staying at the school. Children are split by age and gender into smaller groups. Each group has their own communal kitchen, dining room and at least one lounge. Some of these rooms are very spacious. Older children have a single room as do some younger children. Some

of the younger children share a bedroom. There is a refurbishment programme and some areas have had new carpets, furniture and bathrooms. Throughout the school and residential areas there is noise insulation, amplification systems and telephone adaptations to help children with hearing impairments. Décor and furnishings are chosen with special care to promote children's hearing. Other adaptations have been fitted to help children with physical disabilities. There is a regular programme of repairs and maintenance. The décor and furnishings are of a reasonable standard but some areas are less homely than others.

## Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is very good clear information about the school and what it provides. There is a child friendly welcome pack and guide for parents. The school is well staffed, there is low turnover and staff have a very good range of experience. Staff have access to a wide range of training and are encouraged to achieve the desired qualification in caring for children and young people. Staff receive regular supervision and good support from their managers. There is a well qualified and experienced management team who are committed to continuous improvement and bringing best practice into the school. There are well developed quality monitoring systems based on feedback from children to avoid institutional practices.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure an accurate record of the receipt, disposal and administration of any medicine to any child (NMS 14)
- ensure that menu planning provides children with a better range of vegetables (NMS 15)
- ensure that any use of physical intervention on a child by an adult is kept in a separate bound and numbered book (NMS 10)
- ensure that placement plans include: health needs and health promotion, methods of communication and how they will be met, the contribution to educational needs, leisure needs, contact arrangements with family and friends, support with disabilities and behavioural difficulties, race, cultural and religious needs, and provision of intimate personal care if required (NMS 17)
- ensure that residential accommodation creates a more homely environment (NMS 24).

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for residential special school

#### Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

**Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

**Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

**Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

**Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

**Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**