

St John's Catholic School for the Deaf

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Sarah Urding
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Head of care	
Head / Principal	
Date of last inspection	15 October 2008

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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

See organisation section.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

See organisation section

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

See organisation section

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

See organisation section

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

See organisation section

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

See organisation section

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

See organisation section

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of the boarding provision is good with outstanding features. The school meets the majority of standards well with some minor shortfalls.

There has been a strong commitment from the governing body and senior managers to address the safeguarding concerns raised at the last inspection. Improved internal monitoring of child protection issues, behaviour management, placement planning and the involvement of external expertise in safeguarding and education have considerably strengthened scrutiny in these areas and the school's capacity to improve from within. However, this practice is not yet embedded. The implementation of safe recruitment procedures based on the latest best practice guidance has reduced the risk of pupils being exposed to potential abusers. The development of policies and a shared understanding of roles between teaching and care staff have improved support for pupil's learning.

The protection of pupils is given high priority and there are positive networks developing with safeguarding agencies. Staff are clear about safeguarding responsibilities and report concerns appropriately. Pupils feel safe and staff actions ensure that welfare is promoted. However, the system for recording actions taken by staff in response to child protection concerns is still not well developed. This makes it difficult to see the level of support that staff provide. Complaints and unauthorised absences are well managed.

Good lines of communication between teaching and care staff aid consistent working and ensure learning is promoted beyond the school day. These are being further enhanced by classroom observation sessions to raise awareness. Twilight sessions for post 16's incorporate knowledge required for a transition to adulthood with academic learning. Care staff have very good insight into the individual needs of pupils in residence which helps them provide effective support or contribute to subject matter taught in twilight sessions. Pupils benefit from the extra-curricular activities that the local community can offer because of well established networks with local schools and clubs which promote integration.

Individual and specialist support for pupils is identified promptly and staff meet a range of diverse and complex needs well. This is particularly the case in the promotion of health. Staff are well trained, administer medication appropriately and receive up to date medical information based on current best practice because of well established links with nurses networks, local doctor's surgery and specialist support from York Deaf Child and Family service. The holistic approach to meeting pupil's health care needs is complimented by a team of specialist health advisors within the school. This aids understanding and communication so support services such as counselling and family therapy are accessed promptly.

Staff are positive role models and promote healthy lifestyles through PSHE and activity based programmes. Staff make the link between diet, exercise and good health. Meals are nutritionally balanced, tasty, meet dietary requirements and equip pupils to make healthy choices throughout their life in school and beyond.

The promotion of equal opportunities is outstanding. Staff share positive relationships with pupils, valuing and respecting differences. For example, staff and pupils are looking at ways

to raise awareness of bullying and further reduce occurrences. This work fosters respect and consideration for others and is indicative of the manner in which staff promote pupil's involvement. Pupils are confident, motivated and challenge appropriately as a result of the many forums by which they can make a positive contribution. Pupils behave well, are charming, sociable and welcoming. Good behaviour is promoted by positive reinforcement and encouragement. Careful monitoring reduces the impact and duration of negative behaviour.

Senior leaders, staff, pupils and their families share a common understanding of the ethos of the school and the services provided, which is well defined in the statement of purpose, handbooks and policies. Although a policy relating to caring for children of the opposite sex has not been developed. Staff, focus on the individual needs of pupils, are committed, communicate well and are consistent in their approach. The boarding provision is flexibly staffed to meet the needs of pupils and manage their complex needs. Staff are well inducted, supported, trained and their performance appraised. Although the supervision of staff is not frequent enough and the recommended level of staff achieving NVQ level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People has not yet been reached.

Pupils stay in a safe, comfortable, warm and well maintained environment. Facilities are of a good standard with a rolling programme of re-decoration and refurbishment in place. However, the replacement of the beds is not taking place quickly enough for pupils. The environment is adapted to meet the physical needs of pupils well. The school seeks to improve existing facilities for pupils. Established processes ensure health and safety is everyone's responsibility and a good balance is achieved between managing risk and promoting independence. Pupils are safeguarded by the effective monitoring of visitors.

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 that the actions taken in response to child protection concerns are fully recorded(NMS 5.4)
- provide staff with written guidance on procedure and policy as outlined in appendix 3, in particular care practices towards children of the opposite sex(NMS 30.7)
- ensure that all staff receive at least one and half hours supervision each half term(NMS 30.2)
- ensure that a minimum of 80% of care staff have completed their level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People NVQ(NMS 31.4)