



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

**RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL**

**St John`s Catholic School For The Deaf**

**Church Street  
Boston Spa  
Wetherby  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 6DF**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Monica Hargreaves**

*Announced Inspection*  
**16th February 2006      9:00**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

<b>Reader Information</b>	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	<a href="http://www.csci.org.uk">www.csci.org.uk</a>

This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

**Name of school** St John`s Catholic School For The Deaf

**Address** Church Street  
Boston Spa  
Wetherby  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 6DF

**Telephone number** 01937 842144

**Fax number** 01937 541471

**Email address**

**Provider Web address**

**Name of Governing body,  
Person or Authority  
responsible for the  
school** St John`s Catholic School for the Deaf

**Name of Head**

**Name of Head of Care**

**Age range of residential  
pupils**

**Date of last welfare  
inspection**

## **Brief Description of the School:**

St. John's School for the Deaf is a residential and day school for pupils aged from 3 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 emphasis on developing the spoken language, using a method known as the Maternal Reflective Method. There is an onsite audiology centre and full time audiologist. There are also four speech and language therapists and a psychologist who work with pupils at the school.

There are six house groups for boarders including a house for the post 16 group of pupils. Bedroom sizes vary. Those for younger pupils accommodate up to 4 young people and older pupils at the school have single rooms. The majority of pupils are weekly boarders, but a number of pupils also board at weekends.

The school's ethos is based on Christian values, though there are children of all faiths who attend.

# SUMMARY

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

This was an announced inspection and was carried out by two inspectors over two days. Before the inspection, questionnaires were sent out to parents, staff and pupils and a number of responses were received. A pre inspection questionnaire and self assessment document were completed by the Head Teacher. During the inspection, conversations were held with a number of different staff, with the Head teacher and with the Head of care. Pupils were spoken with at various times and the routine of the day was observed. Pupil case files and other records were examined.

All of the staff at the school were keen to make all records available and to allow inspectors full access to pupils and staff throughout the inspection.

## **What the school does well:**

The school is good at assessing the needs of prospective pupils and makes sure that proper plans are put in place to meet them. The health care needs of pupils are well catered for; the school nurse is well qualified, experienced and liaises well with other health professionals. The support and advice of professionals from other agencies is sought for children when they need it. The school is well equipped to help pupils with hearing loss.

Communication between all staff groups across the school is good, as is communication with parents. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own communication skills and to become independent at a level that is appropriate to their age.

All the staff spoken with were enthusiastic and committed to the welfare of the pupils. They are keen to develop their own skills in communicating with the young people in their care. They understand the difficulties that may be experienced by some young people living away from home and are keen to reassure them and their parents. The education of the pupils is well supported by the care staff team.

Young people said that staff at the school are 'helpful' and 'fair' and that school is a 'good place to be'. Many pupils said that they enjoy the activities and that they really like boarding as it means they 'can be with friends'.

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to questionnaires expressed the view that the staff at the school do a good job and that pupils are well cared for. Individual parents commented that 'staff are very caring' and understand the needs of their children well. Parents said that staff are good at keeping them informed about the welfare of their child at the school and some commented on the good progress their children had made.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The system for monitoring pupil absenteeism and recording concerns has been reviewed and refined.

## **What they could do better:**

Staff should receive regular supervision and should also receive training in the management of challenging behaviour. A system to record any episodes of restraint that may occur should then be developed.

Any medical information that is recorded to help communication between houses and medical staff needs to be separately recorded for each individual pupil and not kept on a central log.

The Head needs to make sure that 80% of the care staff team has a qualification at National Vocational Qualification level 3 or equivalent.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

# 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)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

14 and 15

The school makes sure that the health needs of the pupils are met. Pupils are offered a range of nutritious meals.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The school employs a nurse who works closely with the local GP surgery and there is a GP clinic held at the school every week. The nurse makes sure that full medical information is obtained about all the pupils and each young person has a health plan on file that details their needs and how these will be met whilst they are at school. There is a health promotion policy and guidance for staff on the administration of medication. The nurse makes sure that medication records are properly kept.

Discussion with staff showed that personal issues such as bed wetting or matters relating to specific health conditions or personal hygiene are dealt with sensitively. Staff said that they are given good information about the individual needs of the pupils as they arrive at the school and there was evidence that there is good communication across the care teams. The school employs an audiologist who is able to make sure that all the specialist equipment that the young people use to support their hearing is well maintained and that any problems are dealt with quickly.

An examination of records showed that all staff are trained in the delivery of first aid. This training is regularly updated. There was written evidence on files that young people are referred for any specialist services they may require. Staff explained how the school maintains good communication with parents to make sure that the health needs of pupils are properly catered for.

A number of meals were eaten with the pupils. The food was nutritious, well cooked and well presented. The Head and staff at the school said that there had been some recent changes to how the food is served. Pupils now have a cafeteria style dining room and are able to choose from a range of hot food and salads. In response to questionnaires, pupils said that the food is generally very good. A number of pupils made positive comments about the new style of

the dining room and clearly welcomed the choice that is now available to them. A sample of previous menus that have been served was seen. These show that there is a variety of food available for pupils. Fruit and snacks are also available to them in the individual boarding areas. There are two sittings for meals, with younger pupils eating first. This allows staff to manage meal times successfully and these were pleasant social occasions.

# 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 by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(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, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 26

Pupils are protected from abuse and bullying within the school and the school buildings are kept safe and secure. All staff should have training in the management of challenging behaviour.

## EVIDENCE:

Members of staff spoken with during the inspection, confirmed that they have undertaken training in child protection issues. The head of care has completed several child protection training modules run by the NSPCC and makes sure that this is cascaded to other staff. In discussion it was apparent that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the reporting of any child protection concerns.

There is an anti bullying policy in place and pupils are made aware that the school will not tolerate bullying. They are encouraged to seek the support of care staff and teachers with regard to any concerns they may have. In their responses to questionnaires, the pupils indicated that incidents of bullying that may occur are dealt with and the majority said that they are not bullied. Staff said that they make sure that pupils are monitored to reduce the risk of bullying and try to create an atmosphere within the school where pupils can seek and obtain support if there are problems.

The schools' complaints procedure is clear and pupils are made aware of how to complain. There was evidence that they understand the complaints procedure and they said that they feel able to complain. In responses to questionnaires, pupils explained who they would approach in the first instance. A small number of parents who responded to questionnaires said that they had not had information about the complaints process but said that they would approach the Head Teacher if they were unhappy about any part of the provision at the school.

Since the last inspection the school has reviewed its procedure for dealing with and recording any incident where a pupil is missing from school. Young people are required to let staff know their whereabouts at all times and there was evidence that they do so. Staff said that absenteeism is an unusual event within the school.

The school is kept secure and risk assessments are carried out on the premises and grounds and on any activities that pupils may be involved in. Records are kept and were examined during the inspection. Records of fire evacuation drills and bell tests are also kept in agreement with the requirements of the Fire Service.

There is a clear policy in place regarding the management of pupil behaviour and the use of restraints within the school. Some of the newer members of the care staff teams did not appear to be aware of this policy and also said that they had not had training relevant to the management of challenging behaviour. Senior members of the school staff said that Team Teach training had been provided in the past although they did not feel this was the most appropriate training. The Assistant Head Teacher indicated that the school is considering other forms of training. Senior staff said that they did not believe that challenging behaviour is an issue within the school, but care staff had indicated that they had dealt with occasional incidents. Relevant training should be made available to staff and a system to record incidents should also be put in place.

The school has a policy on the protection of pupil privacy and confidentiality that staff understand and that is followed in practice. When records were examined, it was noted that medical information about pupils is exchanged between care staff and the school nurse on a daily basis. This is good practice.

However, the information is kept in one central book for each boarding group and so could not be seen by pupils or their parents, without breaching confidentiality. This information would be better recorded in a way that allows each pupil's notes to be kept separately so that they can be read by that pupil or their parent, if they wish to do so.

# 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 both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

13 and 22

Pupils are given individual support that is in line with their needs. They are provided with a good range of activities .

## EVIDENCE:

Staff at the school work hard to make sure that all boarders engage well together and show consideration for each other. It was evident from discussions with staff that they know the young people they are caring for very well and understand their needs. This was confirmed by some of the responses to questionnaires received from parents. Throughout the inspection, staff and pupils were seen to have good relationships and to treat each other with respect. Pupils indicated that they feel able to approach all staff for support and that they feel that staff are generally fair.

There is a psychologist available who provides specific support to the boarding and teaching staff and who is able to work directly with specific boarders. The Head of care also said that specific support is sought for individual pupils where appropriate.

In their responses to questionnaires, pupils said that they feel that generally there is a good range of activities for them to be involved in after school and at weekends, for those who stay at school. There was photographic and other evidence of the things that take place on and off the school site, such as awards ceremonies (the school OSCAS) which pupils and staff had greatly enjoyed. At the time of the inspection, there was a school disco to celebrate Valentine's day. Staff and older pupils prepared food together for this event and older pupils organised games to take place during the dancing.

# 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 living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 11, 17 and 20.

Pupils are regularly consulted about their care and encouraged to make decisions about their lives. Their needs are properly assessed and they are supported to keep in contact with their parents.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The school uses questionnaires to seek the views of pupils and each pupil has a keyworker who also consults them regularly. Young people are encouraged to make their views known at the time of their review. There was written evidence of key work sessions and the consultation that takes place regarding reviews. In their responses to questionnaires, pupils also said that they feel they are encouraged to express their views.

Admissions to the school are carefully handled. Staff said that full information is obtained about any prospective pupil before they stay at the school for a pre-admission assessment. Following this visit, there is a full team discussion before it is agreed whether or not the school can meet the needs of the pupil.

Each pupil has an individual file that contains a placement plan detailing the young person's needs and how the school will meet them. An examination of a number of pupil files showed that there was evidence of plans being updated to take into account changing needs and circumstances.

Most of the pupils at the school are weekly boarders who return to their parents on Friday of each week. Staff said that they are encouraged to contact their parents during the week and the school has telephone and minicom systems to enable this to happen. Many pupils also have their own mobile phones and use text to communicate with parents and friends.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## 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, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- 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)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

21, 23 and 24.

The school provides a good standard of accommodation and is conveniently located for its purpose. Staff use the routine of the school and daily life to help pupils gain the necessary skills for independent living.

## EVIDENCE:

The school is a large building set in well kept grounds and provides a safe environment for young people with a hearing impairment. It is designed to support communication for pupils with hearing loss and has features such as induction loops and minicom adaptations.

The boarders' accommodation is suitably decorated and was found to be in a state of good repair. Younger boarders share bedrooms that are brightly decorated and spacious and showers and bathrooms offer a good degree of privacy to young people. There are some single occupancy rooms in the older boarders' accommodation. The Head of care said that these can be given to boarders who may have particular needs, such as health issues. Students in the post 16 unit have their own rooms. Single rooms can be locked by the boarder and therefore allow the occupant to keep their possessions secure. Not all pupils in the shared accommodation have a lockable facility where they can keep their possessions. The school should review this provision.

Each boarding area has a large communal lounge that is comfortably furnished where pupils can watch TV, play games, read etc. There is also a domestic style kitchen that is used to make snacks and drinks and where pupils eat breakfast.

Young people said that they are helped to keep in contact with their parents. Staff said that they often use their mobile phones to send text messages to families or friends; pupils also have the use of minicom facilities to keep in touch with parents. Families are encouraged to visit the school and there is a flat within the main school building, where they can stay overnight if they are coming from a distance. Reviews are arranged to make sure that parents can attend and parents indicated that they feel fully involved in the reviewing process.

# Management

## 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 is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both 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)

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

18, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 33.

Each pupil has a file that contains the information staff need for their work. Young people are cared for by staff who are enthusiastic and committed to their welfare and staff are offered training that is relevant to their work. Levels of formal staff supervision need to be increased.

### **EVIDENCE:**

A number of pupil files were examined. These were found to be well ordered with good information that gives a clear picture of the pupil's history at the school. There was also written evidence of good communication between the various parts of the school, such care staff, teaching staff and health care staff, which helps staff to be consistent in their approach to the needs of the young people at the school.

Staff throughout the school were found to be committed to the welfare of the pupils, enthusiastic and keen to develop their own skills to help them to care for young people. They said that they feel they are given good training

opportunities and believe that communication across the school is good. Care staff are registered for the National Vocational Qualification award, at level 3, after completing an induction period. At the time of this inspection, the school was still working to reach the target of 80% of staff holding this qualification.

Records of staff supervision were examined. Although staff do receive supervision, this has not always happened every half term and the Head of Care needs to consider how this target is to be met, given that the care team is large. Staff said that they feel they are supported and that there is a great deal of informal supervision. They also feel that there is good support within the team and that communication is good, which helps them in their work.

A number of the care staff team expressed the view that at times they would benefit from extra staff on shift to make sure that keywork sessions can take place and that all pupils are able to take part in a full range of activities off site. However, the school is staffed in accordance with guidance produced by DfES circular 11/90 and there were no staff vacancies at the time of the inspection.

The Head of the school confirmed that a member of the governing body visits the school and provides a report on the care and welfare of the pupils with regard to boarding. At the time of this inspection, there were only 2 such reports available. These visits should be made each half term and a report on the finding of these visits should be made available to the school.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	3

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	2
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>6</b>	3
<b>7</b>	3
<b>8</b>	3
<b>10</b>	2
<b>26</b>	3
<b>27</b>	x

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	x
<b>13</b>	4
<b>22</b>	3

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	3
<b>9</b>	x
<b>11</b>	3
<b>17</b>	3
<b>20</b>	3

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>16</b>	x
<b>21</b>	3
<b>23</b>	3
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	x

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	x
<b>18</b>	3
<b>19</b>	x
<b>28</b>	3
<b>29</b>	3
<b>30</b>	2
<b>31</b>	2
<b>32</b>	x
<b>33</b>	3

No

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS3	Medical information that is passed from boarding houses to the school nurse should be recorded individually for each pupil and not kept on one central log.	
2	RS10	Staff should receive training in the management of challenging behaviour and the school should develop a system to record any episode of restraint of a pupil that may occur.	
3	RS30	All staff should receive at least one and a half hours one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term.	
4	RS31	The school needs to make sure that 80% of the care staff team has a qualification at NVQ level 3, or equivalent.	

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Aire House  
Town Street  
Rodley  
Leeds  
LS13 1HP

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI.