



*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

Key Announced Inspection
13th November 2006 09:00

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

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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 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

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	Mrs. A M Bradbury
Name of Head of Care	Mrs. Karen Vine
Age range of residential pupils	8 – 16 years
Date of last welfare inspection	16 th February 2006.

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 great 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 five 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 small 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.

Two inspectors came to the school on the 13th and 14th November. The visit was planned. Some weeks before the visit, questionnaires had been sent out to young people, to parents and to staff to ask them for their views about how the school is run. A questionnaire was also sent to the Head Teacher and to the Head of Care. During the visit, the inspectors spoke to young people, to some of the care staff, to the Head of Care and the Head Teacher and the School Nurse and looked at some of the files and other information that the school keeps to help them to look after pupils and boarders. Inspectors used all the information they got in this way to help them to write the report.

What the school does well:

These are some of the things that young people said:

- We can choose our foods
- We have healthy foods like salads
- I like dinner time. I like salads always

Most young people said that they like boarding at school and that they think they are safe. Young people said:

- Staff look after me
- Care staff keep me safe
- I just feel safe

Young people also said that they are always looked after properly when they are ill and that there are always staff to help them with problems. Some young people showed the inspectors how fire drills happen and said that staff always flash the bedroom lights before coming into their rooms.

Inspectors found that there is a lot of information written about young people to make sure that staff know how to look after them properly.

All of these things made inspectors believe that staff try to make sure that young people are kept safe, that they are helped to be healthy and that their privacy is respected.

Young people also told inspectors that they have a lot of activities after school, such as cooking, bowling, ice-skating and swimming and that they enjoy these things.

There was a lot of information from parents in the questionnaires they sent back. They said:

- Brilliant school. My child seems very well cared for

- I think the staff do an excellent job
- I feel my son is in a safe nurtured environment being well cared for
- They always let us know what has happened
- Staff always make time to discuss my child's progress

These replies made inspectors think that parents are happy with the way in which staff look after their children and that staff are good at keeping in touch with parents.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since inspectors last visited the school in February 2006, care staff have had more training to help them to care for young people and now have more meetings with the Head of Care or the Deputy when they can talk about their work.

Staff have made sure that the daily medical information about pupils is written on separate sheets and not in one book so that each pupil or their parent can see what is written about them.

What they could do better:

More staff need to get the National Vocational Qualification at Level 3, which is the qualification they need for their work. All staff should have regular meetings with the Head of Care or the Deputy where they can talk about how they are caring for young people. These things will help care staff in their work with young people.

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 or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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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

Quality in this outcome group is excellent. This judgement has been made using all the evidence available, including a visit to the school.

The health needs of boarders are well met by the school.

EVIDENCE:

Staff at the school make great efforts to see that the health needs of pupils are well met. There is a qualified nurse who oversees all health matters within school. She makes sure that full medical information is received about boarders and works closely with the local GP surgery and undertakes liaison with relevant health services from other authorities. Each young person has a health plan on file that records her/his needs and shows how these will be met whilst s/he is at school. The nurse and care staff keep written records about relevant health information that is exchanged on a daily basis to ensure continuity of care. The school's health promotion policy includes guidance to staff on the administration of medication. The school nurse takes responsibility for monitoring medication records and pupil health records. All records are securely held and information is kept confidential, shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis. All pupils can have access to speech therapists and the psychologist who work closely with the school and there is an audiologist working full time at the school. Young people said that they feel they are well looked after when they are ill and in their replies to pre-inspection questionnaires, a number of young people specifically identified the school nurse as a person they would approach if they had a problem.

During school time, all pupils have lessons in PSHCE where matters of relationships and general health and well-being are addressed. In addition, the school nurse said that she holds regular advice sessions for 16+ students regarding personal health checks and healthy lifestyles. These sessions are done in separate groups for boys and girls to allow for uninhibited discussion.

There was evidence in pupil files that referrals for specialist health services are made as required by boarders. Boarders are also able to be referred to the York Deaf Children and Families centre which offers individual counselling and support and family work, in relation to emotional and psychological issues.

Records of accidents were examined and were in order.

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, 26 and 27.

Quality in this outcome group is excellent. This judgement has been made using all the evidence available, including a visit to the school.

There are clear structures and systems in place to make sure that pupils are kept safe and protected from abuse and bullying. These are followed in practice.

EVIDENCE:

There is a range of policies in place regarding privacy and confidentiality, child protection, countering bullying and complaints. Staff spoken with during the inspection demonstrated that they understand the need to respect the privacy of the young people they are working with. They explained that, given the

needs of the boarders, they flash the lights outside bedrooms, rather than knocking on doors, when asking for permission to enter. Young people confirmed this during the visit. All pupil records are stored safely. Since the last inspection, the daily information about pupils that is passed between care staff and the school nurse, is no longer recorded on one central book, but is kept on separate records that can be transferred to individual pupil files and can therefore be seen by the children themselves.

Child protection training is regularly updated. This training is delivered as a whole school event. The Head of Care is the designated person for the school, in relation to child protection matters and makes sure that training is kept up to date. She explained that the school is to complete training organised by the NSPCC. During the inspection visit, it was possible to speak to several members of staff who demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities in relation to child protection matters and of the appropriate reporting procedures. There was evidence that a recent incident of concern, raised by a parent, had been reported to the relevant child protection authority and had been dealt with appropriately.

In their responses to questionnaires, the majority of pupils said that they had never been bullied at school. In discussion with boarders during the visit, they said that if there were any problems with bullying, they were certain that staff would deal with it properly. There was a lot of information about bullying visible around the school, age appropriate leaflets and reminders to pupils about the importance of reporting their concerns to staff. The ethos of the school is to encourage pupils to be respectful to one another and to staff and all pupils are made aware that bullying will not be tolerated. Staff explained how they work to support pupils if bullying is suspected. They also said that they did not think that bullying is a great problem within the school, but felt that pupils would tell someone about any problem they might have.

The school has a clear code of behaviour that is expected of pupils and a policy about the management of pupil behaviour and the use of restraints, which guides staff in their work. Staff said that they have received training in Team Teach. In their replies to questionnaires some staff said that they felt they would benefit from further training to support them in this area of their work, as it is their view that more of the newer pupils can present challenging behaviour. The Head of the School and the Head of Care said that there had recently been a training day on managing challenging behaviour aimed at the whole school and that further training specifically in restraints, is planned. There are appropriate recording systems in place should an incident of restraint be necessary.

The Head teacher and the Head of care confirmed that there has been no incidence of a pupil running away from school for over two years. The Head of Care said that a risk assessment would be undertaken for any student about whom there was a reported concern and that there is a roll call of boarders at

the end of the evening activity when they are expected to return to the houses. During the course of the visit, boarders were observed to let staff know of their whereabouts and to ask permission to move into and out of the boarding houses. Boarders told inspectors that they must always let staff know where they are going to be. There is a school policy and guidance for staff regarding the actions to take should a pupil go missing.

Staff make sure that the school is kept secure and young people said that they feel safe at school. Risk assessments are carried out on the premises and grounds and also on activities that pupils may be involved in. Records of fire evacuation drills and bell tests are also kept. Equipment is regularly checked and serviced. Young people volunteered information about what they would do in the event of a fire alarm being activated. They explained that flashing lights in the corridors and rooms are activated by the fire alarms and that this makes them aware of the emergency. They also said that come into their rooms to get them up and make sure they leave the buildings. They clearly understand the escape routes and the assembly point and said that they have regular fire drills. Records were examined and were in order. There are no outstanding requirements arising from the last inspection by the Fire Authority.

There is a detailed complaints policy in place that is made available to parents, placing workers and others who come into contact with the school. Parents who responded to questionnaires, said that they had been given information about how to complain. Information about how to complain is also given to pupils. In replies to questionnaires and in discussions during the visit, boarders said that they know how to complain and that they feel able to do so.

The school's staff recruitment procedures are robust. A small number of staff files were examined during the visit. All the checks had been completed as required, prior to any person starting work at the school and the files were in order.

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):

12 and 22

Quality in this outcome group is excellent. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available, including a visit to the school.

There is good communication across the school, which helps to make sure that the residential provision actively supports the educational progress of the pupils. Boarders are given individual support that is in line with their needs.

EVIDENCE:

Every young person has an identified key worker and in their replies to questionnaires, boarders said that they feel they can talk to their key worker. A number of children identified several people who they would go to if they have a problem. Boarders also said that they would let their parents or families know if they have a problem at school. It was clear from discussions with staff that they have been given good information about the needs of pupils in order to help them to develop care and placement plans and that they understand the needs of individual pupils very well. There was a great deal of written information available on files about the ways in which support is sought for pupils from agencies outside the school. The psychologist who works with the school is able to work directly with specific boarders and to give advice to care and teaching staff.

Care staff said that they believe that communication with teaching staff is good. The children are taken across to school by care staff each morning and collected at the end of the school day. In this way staff are able to exchange information about individual pupils. There is a daily meeting of staff that is attended by both teaching and care staff where relevant information can also be shared. Care staff also supervise and support pupils with homework

sessions at the end of the school day. In discussion, boarders confirmed that they get help from staff with their homework.

A small number of parents said that they think communication between staff could be improved but the majority of parents said that they think communication within school is good. All parents who responded to questionnaires said that they are always kept informed about their child's welfare and are encouraged to contact the school and made welcome when they visit.

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, 17 and 20.

Quality in this outcome group is excellent. This judgement has been made using all the available information, including a visit to the school.

The needs of pupils are properly assessed and they are given many opportunities to express their opinions about how the school is run and to make decisions about their lives. Family contact is encouraged and supported.

EVIDENCE:

Every pupil has an individual file that is securely stored and that contains full information about them, including a Statement of Special Education Needs. Individual placement plans are drawn up from these statements and from the assessments that take place at school prior to the admission of any student. Placement plans record the boarder's needs and how the school will work to meet them. A number of pupil files were examined during the inspection visit. These showed evidence that plans are reviewed and updated as required. Care staff said that they contribute reports to boarders' annual reviews and attend the meetings.

The school uses a number of different ways to make sure that pupils are consulted about their care and are able to have an influence about how the school is run. The school council meets on a monthly basis and young people spoke enthusiastically about their involvement in these meetings. They were

able to identify things that have changed as a result of discussions at school council. House meetings also take place once a week after school and staff and boarders said that issues that are brought up at these times, can be fed into the school council meetings. Young people are also asked to fill in questionnaires to give feedback on how they feel about the school and about boarding.

During the visit, staff were observed to make great efforts to communicate with children and to understand their point of view. There is an emphasis on oral communication throughout the school, but young people also sign. Staff were seen to use whatever method of communication was most appropriate for the young person concerned, although they also encourage young people to 'use your voice' as much as possible. Young people themselves told inspectors that they believe they are listened to and that their views matter.

Staff said that family contact is important and they encourage and support young people to phone home regularly, using the mini-com system or to text their parents using their own mobile phones. Young people themselves said that they like to keep in contact with their parents during the week when they are away from home and that the staff help them to do so. Staff also said that parents keep in touch with them by phone and that they provide weekly written reports to parents about the welfare and progress of their children.

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):

24

Quality in this outcome group is good. This judgement has been made using all the evidence available, including a visit to the school.

Young people live in an environment that is appropriately maintained and that is equipped to meet their needs.

EVIDENCE:

During this visit, it was possible to see the boarding accommodation and the communal and sporting areas that are used by the children out of school time. Overall, the accommodation is well maintained, comfortably furnished and homely. Younger boarders share bedrooms and older pupils are able to have single rooms. Showers and bathrooms allow young people to have a good degree of privacy.

The decoration in some parts of the accommodation is in need of some attention, but it was evident from the inspection, that the school has continued to repair and refurbish the boarding houses. The Head of Care confirmed that there is a rolling programme of repair and redecoration and said that health and safety matters are prioritised for maintenance tasks. In their replies to questionnaires and in discussion during the visit, the majority of young people said that they like their rooms. Bedrooms offer young people sufficient space and privacy.

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):

1, 28, 30, 31 32 and 33.

Quality in this outcome group is good. This judgement has been reached using all the evidence available, including a visit to the school.

The school is well managed and young people are cared for by staff who are enthusiastic and committed to their welfare.

EVIDENCE:

There is a clear management structure in place in the school. The Senior Management Team meets very regularly and all staff spoken to during the visit, confirmed that information sharing throughout the school is good. Care staff said that senior staff are supportive. Members of the Senior Management Team said that are keen to learn from other schools and to share good practice. To this end, different groups of staff have visited schools in the locality and further visits are planned.

Information about the school and about boarding is contained in the school prospectus and guide. This information is made available to parents and placing authorities. The Head teacher said that it is regularly reviewed and updated as appropriate.

The school is staffed in accordance with the guidance produced by DfES circular 11/90. The Head of Care said that any vacancies are covered by part time staff working extra hours. She explained that as the numbers of pupils on roll had fallen in the past months, some care staff had reduced their hours. In their replies to questionnaires and in discussions during the visit, some staff said that they felt that they and young people would benefit from extra staff on shift. At the time of this visit, inspectors saw that there were sufficient staff on duty within the houses to allow boarders to take part in activities and to be appropriately supervised.

Since the last inspection, which took place in February 2006, the Head of Care has split the supervisory duties between herself and the Deputy Head of Care. Staff said that they are able to have a formal supervision meeting at least once each term. Records show that generally sessions have taken place on a termly basis and the Head of Care confirmed that it is intended to make sure that all staff have a formal meeting once every half term. Staff said that they believe they are supported by their managers and that they feel they work within a supportive care team. All staff have written job descriptions and copies of the school's policies and procedures. Team meetings take place regularly.

Staff said that they have continued to work towards gaining a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, although the school has not yet reached the required target of 80%. The Head of Care has an NVQ at level 4 in management and is currently completing an NVQ at level 4 in working with children and young people. She has many years experience in working with children with special needs in a residential setting.

At the time of the last inspection, there were few written Governors' reports available. The Head teacher said that there is a full Governors' meeting every term and that the Chair of Governors visits the school at least once a fortnight. A newly appointed governor works for the NSPCC and the Head teacher said that this governor will undertake the regular half termly visits. She confirmed that work is ongoing to develop an appropriate format for the written reports on these visits. The Head teacher, who is newly appointed to her post, also said that she has regular meetings with the Board of Governors and that she will be providing written reports of the welfare provision for children. There was evidence throughout the records that the Head teacher regularly monitors the work of care staff and the welfare provision within 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

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	4
15	x

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

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

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	4
9	x
11	x
17	4
20	4

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

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

yes

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	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.	
2	RS31	The school needs to make sure that at least 80% of the care staff team has a qualification at NVQ level 3, or equivalent.	

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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