

St John's Catholic School for the Deaf

St. John's Catholic School for the Deaf, Church Street, Boston Spa, WETHERBY, West Yorkshire, LS23 6DF

Inspection dates	16/11/2015 to 18/11/2015	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Requires improvement	3
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Requires improvement	3
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision requires improvement because

- Some areas of practice do not have a strong enough management scrutiny. As a result action needed for improvement does not happen. In addition one of the four areas identified at the last inspection has not improved.
- Safeguarding arrangements in terms of night time supervision are not sufficiently robust and risk management does not take account of all available information. Lack of maintenance on locks on bathroom and toilet doors does not protect residential pupils' privacy.
- Residential pupils really enjoy their time here and make good progress. Parents report that their children improve in their social skills, emotional wellbeing, behaviour and independence.
- Staff are caring and enthusiastic. They are very well supported by dedicated managers who are aspirational and seek to provide all pupils with positive experiences and prepare them well for their future lives.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards (NMS) for residential special schools:

- 5.3** Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for children that have appropriate privacy.
- 6.3** The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 12.6** Records of the use of reasonable force include the information in Appendix 2 of the NMS. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice.
- 13.4** The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 20.2** Monitoring visits include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- All the locks on the toilet and washing facilities need to be in good working order to allow children using them to have appropriate privacy.
- All information known about residential pupils including that held in confidential safeguarding files needs to be reviewed. This review must ensure that there are effective risk assessments, implemented in practice that contribute to pupils' safety at all times of the day and night. This includes the organisation and management of sleeping accommodation. Risk assessments must be reviewed in light of any future incidents that occur.
- Records of the use of reasonable force must accurately detail how force is used, where on their bodies pupils have been held, for how long and the type of hold used with direct reference to the behaviour management model used, for example two person standing escort'. Where other holds are used in emergencies, that staff are not trained to use, then records must clearly detail how force was employed.
- Pupil's voice must be part of the records in relation to using reasonable force.
- Senior manager's scrutiny of the use of reasonable force must show what action is taken as a result of shortfalls in recording. Senior managers must also be able to demonstrate what action is taken to improve outcomes for children where appropriate as part of this monitoring.

- The independent visitor's reports currently contain too much description. They must be more analytical and evaluative of trends, incidents, care plans, risk assessments and practice. Reports must include an evaluation of the effectiveness of care provided to residential pupils and whether they are sufficiently safeguarded.

Information about this inspection

The head teacher was given two and a half hours notice of the inspection. The inspectors spoke to a range of residential pupils, boys and girls, across different year groups, individually and in small groups, including the sixth form and representatives from the care council. Time was spent observing routines at breakfast, tea time and evening activities and how residential pupils and staff interact. Inspectors met with the head teacher, deputy head, head of care, chair of the governors, the child protection governor and residential staff. Parents' views were collated from: the Ofsted 'Parent View' website; parental survey forms returned directly to the school; and from direct contact during the inspection. Inspectors consulted with a representative from the local authority safeguarding team and examined a range of records, policies and procedures in relation to the safeguarding and care of residential pupils.

Inspection team

Simon Morley	Senior practitioner and lead inspector
Jamie Richardson	Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

St. John's School for the Deaf is a non-maintained day and boarding school for hearing impaired pupils aged 3 to 19 years. The school is located in the semi-rural village of Clifford, Boston Spa. Accommodation is in the main school building and is arranged in groups according to age and gender. There are four main residential areas including a post 16 group. Each group has their own lounge, dining room and kitchen area. The school's ethos is based on Roman Catholic values. There is great emphasis on supporting the development of pupils' spoken language. At the time of inspection the school had 60 pupils on roll, 35 of whom used the school's residential facility. The school's residential provision was last inspected as part of an integrated inspection of the whole school including the educational provision in February 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Requires improvement

Leaders and managers are keen to identify and take action about any areas for improvement so that all residential pupils have positive experiences and make good progress. Some aspects of residential provision that require improvement have not been fully realised by the senior management team. The potential for impact on residential pupils without further changes being made means that overall the school requires improvement.

The needs of individual residential pupils are understood very well and the care they receive is of high quality. Examination of the wider picture and the impact of a large number of vulnerable individuals sharing accommodation is not as well thought out and planned for. There is a responsible and sensitive approach to keeping everyone safe but at times this is reactive to incidents that occur. This is not robustly proactive enough to ensure that everyone's experiences are all positive and that safeguarding measures are as strong as they can be.

Furthermore, aspects of management monitoring in relation to: the use of reasonable force; maintenance; and the quality of the independent visitor's reports all have shortfalls. This undermines the hard and often excellent work in other areas to ensure consistently high quality care for all residential pupils. It compromises their opportunities for privacy and safety.

Residential pupils enjoy staying at the school. They make friendships with their peers and form close and trusting relationships with staff. In particular by the time they get to the sixth form they consider the school community like an additional or extended family. The majority start in the lower school and stay until they are 18 or 19. Over this time they make significant academic and personal progress.

Everyone leaving the sixth form continues with their education, training or finds employment. One parent commented, 'Post 16 boarding plus work experience programmes provided by school play a key role in preparing children for adult life and integration into the wider community. Our son has thrived, needs met fantastically – would not have been possible elsewhere.'

Life chances significantly improve as residential pupils develop their communication skills, coping strategies and independence. The individual tailored approach to care and education helps meet their needs for the future. Progress is monitored; care plans and practice are adapted as individuals develop. Senior managers know the difference they make and their focus is on the strong impact the school has on the lives of its pupils.

There is a good range of extra curriculum activities although a very small number of parents felt the school could do better in this regard. Residential pupils benefit from work experience opportunities in the community and links with other schools, for

example a recent art project they took part in. They access the local Guides and Scouts group, go shopping, celebrate seasonal events like Halloween, take part in sports and use other community facilities. Individual interests and clubs are supported for example one pupil plays in a local hockey team.

Residential pupils' views are actively sought through group meetings the care and school council and daily interaction with staff. The focus on promoting good communication helps all children have a voice, even those with more challenging needs. There is good support to help individuals have a voice about sensitive personal and health issues. Complaints are taken seriously and appropriately responded to.

The quality of care and support

Good

Residential pupils enjoy being at a school where their individual needs are understood and they receive good quality care. Staff from different disciplines, audiology, speech and language therapy, residential and education staff all work closely together and promote the holistic needs of pupils.

While there is a strong emphasis on promoting spoken language there is excellent support for individual communication needs, whether this is sign supported English, British Sign Language, social stories, Makaton, symbols or pictorial. Residential pupils benefit from on- site services such as speech and language therapy to develop their communication.

Other needs around gender, behaviour race and additional disability such as autism are also promoted well. Managers and staff go the extra mile to develop individual timetables where needed. This helps residential pupils cope with the challenges of community living, become more resilient and develop their social and independence skills. Parental feedback is very positive about the care as indicated by this comment, 'He has become very confident, communication skills are really coming on. Uses his iPhone and iPad to contact friends. A lot more settled now he is aware there are others like him.'

There is good communication between staff with information about residential pupils being shared both verbally and in writing. This applies to individual care plans, behaviour management plans and speech and language plans. Resulting care is influenced by a range of professionals including children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). There are strong links with the local Deaf CAMHS service. Support residential pupils receive is therefore underpinned by expert knowledge and people who know them well.

Residential pupils' health is a priority. The nurturing care, consistency and boundaries promote a secure base, help residential pupils develop their emotional well-being and form strong attachments to the adults that look after them. The quality of individual work with residential pupils is high, an example is in reducing self-harm behaviour.

There is an emphasis on physical activity such as football, badminton and regular use of the school gym. A key strength is the work of the registered school nurse. Medication systems are safe and robust, residential pupils are also empowered to take control and learn to safely self-administer their own medication. There is also a strong inclusive approach to other health issues such as sexual health and contraception with sensitive one to one support for individuals who need it. The nurse ensures good co-ordination between care staff other services such as Deaf CAMHS, occupational and physiotherapy.

Meals provided to residential pupils have improved with fruit and vegetables encouraged more. There is a wide range of options at lunchtime and school staff listen to feedback about menus. The school nurse helps promote healthy eating with projects such as 'fruit of the week' and making smoothies in class.

The residential accommodation is clean, tidy and generally well maintained. Efforts have been made, led by the governors to make the building as homely and welcoming as possible. There is creative use of space allowing some residential pupils more intensive support and, or time away from their peers. Not all bathrooms and toilets had workable locks on the doors potentially undermining privacy when in use.

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement

The school generally keeps children safe within the residential provision but there are aspects of safeguarding practice that need to improve. Since the last inspection there have been two incidents when pupils have been out of bed during the night or early in the morning without staff being aware. One of these incidents led to a complaint by a parent. Senior managers have put in place additional measures to improve the levels of safety and supervision on a night time. These measures are aimed specifically at those pupils deemed to be at risk.

The risk assessment process and practice in place does not take account of the wider picture of day time incidents and vulnerabilities of residential pupils across the whole school. In this respect the management and organisation of residential accommodation is not yet good enough.

While staff are good at managing residential pupil's challenging behaviour there are shortfalls in the quality of recording and management oversight in relation to some incidents. The voice of pupil's is weak, their views and opinions with regard to staff use of physical intervention is lacking. Records are not sufficiently detailed with regards to how residential pupils have been physically held, for how long and what the rationale is when staff use techniques they have not been trained in. Monitoring by senior managers is not robust in its accountability of these shortfalls and upholding safe practice.

Despite this, practice is sensitive, consistent and in line with individual behaviour management plans. These plans are comprehensive, with multi-agency input and regularly reviewed. As a result the frequency of incidents decreases as residential pupils

learn different coping strategies, improve their behaviour, social skills and communication.

Staff do understand the individual vulnerabilities of residential pupils and take appropriate action to keep them safe in their day-to-day lives at school. Staff communicate well with them, know their triggers, are aware if they are distressed and able to help them manage their emotions.

One to one work is completed about relationships, sexual health and e-safety which enhances the work taught in school. Residential pupils commented 'We know all about grooming.' Overtime as pupils grow up they become equipped with skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe in the community.

Residential pupils know how to complain, their views and those of their parents are listened to. For example the head teacher amended a sanction when a parent objected to its appropriateness. Concerns raised by pupils about bullying are swiftly addressed. Residential pupils commented, 'Respect is number one in this school.' Acceptance and tolerance of difference is promoted well for example the recent 'Inter-Faith' week in school.

The head teacher has developed links with the local authority safeguarding team and police. There has only been one incident of a residential pupil missing from the school and there was an effective, comprehensive response to ensure she was safe. Safeguarding incidents are reported in line with statutory guidance which helps ensure any incidents are thoroughly investigated and promotes pupil safety.

The physical environment is safe and well managed. There are regular checks of equipment and fire safety procedures. Improvements to fire safety have been made and there are individual evacuation plans for residential pupils who do not respond well to the fire alarm. The recruitment process for new staff is very robust and ensures that only people who are suitable to work with children are appointed.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

Senior managers are qualified, experienced and work closely with the head teacher so that the residential provision is fully integrated in the school. A new head of care was recently appointed who has plans for improving: induction, supervision and appraisal systems; the model and record keeping of behaviour management; and evidencing progress of residential pupils.

The head of care networks with other special schools. The head reviews practice both good and bad identified in other schools and uses this as training for staff. This helps maintain good standards of practice and also learns lessons from areas of weakness. There is good oversight from governors who hold the head to account for the school's performance. For example inspection of the homeliness of accommodation and auditing the safeguarding procedures.

Three of the four recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. There is more fruit and vegetables on the menu, fire safety checks are up to date and progress of residential pupils is tracked better. The last recommendation about promoting the pupils' voice in relation to behaviour management has not been met. In addition aspects of five of the national minimum standards are not met, compromising the safety of residential pupil and requires improvement in aspects of management.

Monitoring of the residential provision by the independent visitor takes place, subsequent reports are seen by the governors and the head teacher is required to implement any recommendations. Reports are mainly descriptive and often lack effective evaluation of how well residential pupils are safeguarded and the quality of their care. This undermines the head teacher's commitment to continuous improvement as they are not robust enough in realistically challenging further progress.

The staff team is well established, with very little turnover which provides stability and consistency for residential pupils. Staff have the recommended level 3 qualification and undertake a range of training so they are equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge. Supervision and appraisal of staff performance is being more formalised with the aim to develop staff capability further.

All staff have high expectations and aspirations for residential pupils; this is driven by the head teacher. Effective leadership was evident during a recent period when she was away and the school continued to run smoothly. The aims, objectives and ethos are clearly lived out in practice, respect, promoting excellence, wanting to hear everyone's voice, focus on individual needs and Christian values. The head teacher is open to change for example she commissioned an external audit of the school and acted on the findings.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number

<School URN>

Social care unique reference number

SC001535

DfE registration number

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school

Residential Special School

Number of boarders on roll

66

Gender of boarders

Mixed

Age range of boarders

3 to19

Head teacher

Ann Bradbury

Date of previous boarding inspection

10/02/2015

Telephone number

01937 842144

Email address

info@stjohns.org.uk

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