

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St John's Catholic School for the Deaf
Church St
Boston Spa
Wetherby
LS23 6 DG

School URN	108120
School DfE Number	383 7016
E-mail address	abradbury@bostonspa.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Anne Winfield
Headteacher	Ann Bradbury
RE Subject Leader	Michelle Conway
Date of Inspection	17 th May 2017
Section 48 Inspector/s	Mr. P. Martin / Mrs K Spillane

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:

- *Outcomes for pupils,*
- *The provision for Catholic Education*
- *Leaders and Managers*

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

1

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

Summary of key findings: This is an outstanding school

- St John's School for the Deaf is a school that lives out its Mission Statement. There is an excellent shared understanding between all members of the community of the school's *ministry* to their young people.
- The headteacher works tirelessly to ensure that all involved with the school continue to provide an outstanding Catholic education for all its pupils.
- Pupils enjoy being part of their school community and they appreciate how staff personalise the teaching and learning styles to meet their needs. They make good and in some cases outstanding progress in Religious Education (RE) from very low starting points. They show respect to one another and are keen to do well. They enjoy their lessons and behaviour is outstanding.
- Since the last S48 inspection the time allocation for RE has increased to 10% of overall curriculum time and examination results have improved year on year.
- Pupils require personalised learning pathways and teachers skillfully ensure through detailed planning and modified resources that they have access to the curriculum.
- There is no provision in the sixth form for students to follow a general RE course.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Ensure continuity and progression in RE by introducing an appropriate and accessible general RE provision for post 16 students.
- Review the curriculum at Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) and plan for the introduction of alternative examination entries in 2017/18.

Information about this inspection

The Inspection of St John's School for the Deaf was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for

Section 48 Inspections approved by the Diocesan Administrator of Leeds. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2012).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The inspectors visited four Religious Education (RE) lessons covering Reception to Key Stage 4 groups to observe teaching and scrutinised pupils' written work. Inspectors also shared in collective worship with forms / key stage groups at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Examination of pupils' written work, teacher assessment and written feedback.
- Meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the RE subject leader, Chair of Governors, pupils and parents.
- Examination of school and department documentation including school improvement plans, policies, monitoring and evaluation records, planning and assessment files, meeting minutes.
- Inspectors also shared in the celebration of Form / Key Stage based Collective Worship (CW)

Information about this school

St John's Catholic school for the Deaf is a non-maintained special school for young people aged 3-19 years. The school has 57 pupils, 28 of whom are residential, staying at school from Monday to Friday. Pupils come from 21 different local authorities throughout England.

All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and the vast majority have additional needs to deafness: language and physical impairments, autism, learning difficulties or multisensory impairments. A very small number of pupils have significant communication difficulties without hearing impairment. The complexity of pupils' needs has increased since the last inspection and now includes a cohort of multisensory impaired children.

Many join the school at the beginning of the secondary phase but admissions can be at any age and at any time in the school year. St John's has - a primary department, a transition department for students with complex needs, a secondary department and a sixth form. The vast majority of students continue studying into the sixth form, which links with York and Askam Bryam colleges.

Pupils arriving at the school have attainment levels far below their non-SEN peers: commonly students entering Year 7 will have reading ages below 6 years and vocabulary ages of 3-4 years. A significant number of pupils are entitled to pupil premium. A number have English as an additional language to other spoken languages or British sign language.

All the teachers are additionally qualified as teachers of the deaf and other disabilities. The school employs three speech therapists, an audiologist and school nurse. The Religious Education department is led by an experienced qualified teacher of the deaf.

11% of the current population of 57 pupils is Catholic and 68% are from other Christian denominations.

Full report - inspection judgements

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

- Pupils are keen to feedback their experiences of recent retreats and visits. They contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic Life (CL) of the school. For example, those who had been on a retreat constructed a survey to evaluate the experience and followed this up by suggesting improvements that could be made as well as sharing their experiences with younger pupils. They enjoy making videos of key events in the church's year including one for Holy Week. This was used as a learning tool in one observed lesson. Pupils from primary to the sixth form, along with staff, were involved in a range of music, drama and craft activities to stimulate thought on the Easter story.
- Pupils discuss moral and spiritual issues with increasing confidence and they value the opportunities provided across all areas of the school. Sixth form students show a mature understanding of the dignity of each person as evidenced through a personal reflection following a presentation to students at Ampleforth School.
- Pupils respond very positively to the behaviour support they receive both from within the school and with other agencies. An excluded pupil talked about his situation and how being able to go to the chapel and sit in peace and quiet helped him to reflect on his misbehaviour.
- Pupils support a wide range of charities including "Mary's Meals" and the SVP (St Vincent de Paul Society). As many of the pupils are residential, donations come from their own pocket money rather than parents. Contributions can also be practical rather than just financial, for example when collecting backpack contents for "Mary's Meals".
- Pupils enjoy being part of their school community and they appreciate how staff personalise the teaching and learning styles to meet their needs. In the sixth form they have one-to-one support from learning mentors who also provide pastoral support to help them move towards independence. The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils move on to either university, a specialist college, employment or an apprentice ship.
- One pupil remarked that "the staff are very supportive when you need it; they help me to speak so that I can be part of the world out there". With the positive culture that is very evident in the school, pupils say that they are encouraged "never to stop until you achieve your goal" and that "the school has done many amazing things for so many people".
- The literacy and language skills required for RE are challenging but progress trackers show that across all groups, achievement is very high. Overall pupils make good and in some cases outstanding progress in RE from very low starting points. Analysis of pupil progress in annual departmental reviews also shows progress in RE is similar to that in English.
- Examination results have improved year on year since provision in RE was increased to 10% of overall curriculum time. Numbers are small but analysis shows that progress and attainment at KS4 are at least good with several outstanding results being achieved in recent

years. Progress reviews of individual students are held termly and ensure additional support is put in place if a student is at risk of not making at least expected progress.

- Pupils are able to work effectively in group work, in pairs and individually. They show respect to one another and are keen to do well. They enjoy their lessons and behaviour is outstanding with pupils always engaged in purposeful learning. They interact with each other positively and show respect to other religious views and backgrounds. Pupil “learning questionnaires” are used to seek pupil feedback on their learning across all subjects and RE is often described as their favourite subject.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in CW even though most have had little experience of whole school liturgies in previous schools because of their communication difficulties. They take part in leading and preparing worship with increasing confidence, and relative understanding, as they move from one year group to the next.
- Pupils are at ease and behave impeccably when praying individually or in class liturgies. Many pupils come from different faith and cultural backgrounds but everyone respects one another as they feel they are just one family. They understand that Bible teachings are central to the work of the school and the opportunities afforded through CW help them to understand how they can share God’s message with other people.
- Pupils regularly feedback their views and suggest improvements as to how they would like to develop future liturgies and acts of worship.

The provision for Catholic Education is Outstanding

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils’ learning.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

- The two dedicated and knowledgeable RE coordinators, have a very clear view of the mission of the school. They have evaluated and revised the curriculum across all key stages to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all the children in the school. The RE scheme for primary schools introduced into diocesan schools to replace “Here I Am” was considered not a suitable scheme of work for children with complex learning needs and so the decision was made, in conjunction with the Diocesan RE coordinator to continue using the themes of “Here I am” as a basis for teaching RE in the primary phase of the school. At KS4 pupils study entry level RE or the GCSE short course. This is being reviewed as accredited courses that are accessible to the pupils are being withdrawn.
- Although the school is very special in its provision there have been opportunities planned within the Wharfe Valley Partnership of schools to share effective practice. With only two teachers teaching curricular RE it is essential to continue this partnership work as it will enable staff to look at teaching and learning in other schools, share effective practice and avoid the risk of becoming inward looking.
- Pupils require personalised learning pathways and teachers ensure through detailed planning and modified resources that they have access to the curriculum. Teachers skilfully take into account the very limited language skills pupils have and the detailed planning ensures that pupils can make good and sometimes outstanding progress from a very low baseline.

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are passionate about their work and with the pupils they care so much about. Learning objectives are clearly displayed and discussed at the beginning of each lesson. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development is appropriately provided for within RE as it is throughout the school along with a contribution to the development of literacy skills. During one observed lesson children asked challenging questions about the events leading up to the Ascension of Our Lord. The teacher's questioning was very skillful and led to the children deepening their understanding of the feelings of the apostles and why Jesus ascended into heaven. This lesson was supported by a creative activity during which the teacher developed the children's language and supported their sometimes quite deep and searching questioning. Work is marked effectively and feedback given in various forms taking into account the need of the individual.
- The curriculum draws on the experience of other adults within and beyond the school. Pupils themselves make an outstanding contribution by acting as excellent role models for each other by talking about their lives in a spirit of mutual respect and affection for one another. Cross-curricular links with art, drama and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) offer opportunities to further explore topics covered in RE. Provision for Education in Personal Relationships is in the process of being reviewed but it is clearly mapped out across the curriculum and follows the church's teachings.
- Various well organised and resourced events throughout the year enrich the curriculum. They are adapted and modified to ensure that all pupils can take part whatever their needs. For example, during Interfaith Week, pupils learn about different faiths as well as talking to others about their own faith and culture. All of Year 10 take part in the annual school pilgrimage to Rome and Year 11 take part in a retreat day organised by the school chaplain. At present there are plans to introduce a retreat provision for KS3 towards the end of the summer term.
- Preparation takes place for first Sacraments in the school and is done in a caring and sympathetic manner because the staff understand the needs of the children.
- There is no provision in the sixth form for students to follow a general RE course due to being off site for most of their education and training. Plans are at an early stage for introduction of a general RE course for the sixth form in academic year 2017/18. There is a need to continue the excellent work in RE started in the earlier years by providing a suitable course.
- Leaders provide a range of interesting stimuli including music and visual aids as well as a selection of religious objects and items to help engage all pupils in CW. Liturgical events are modified and adapted so that all pupils, whatever their special needs, can take part. All pupils are therefore involved in CW with care taken to ensure that no one is overlooked or excluded from purposeful prayer and reflection.
- An annual liturgical calendar with themes based on the church's year is drawn up and key stage assemblies are prepared each week using the given theme. Leaders ensure that a number of these themes also make pupils aware of other world religions and festivals, reflecting the range of faiths at the school. Daily acts of worship take place either at the beginning or end of the day led by a form tutor and are held within a designated classroom area. The week begins with a liturgy in the chapel for the secondary pupils led by the headteacher. A representative from the primary phase takes The Word out from the liturgy to the rest of the school. This exemplifies the teamwork and close relationships that exists within the whole school and which is nurtured by the enthusiastic and committed headteacher.
- CW in class is very high quality and involves the children as much as possible. These liturgies also enrich and inform the spiritual life of the staff who appreciate the quality of this experience.

The Leadership and Management are Outstanding

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

1

- The overall effectiveness of the school is Outstanding. St John's School for the Deaf is a school that lives out its Mission Statement. There is an excellent shared understanding between all members of the community of the school's *ministry* to their young people. The provision for Catholic Education at the school comes under the brief of a governors' sub-committee. The headteacher and other leaders are challenged as well as supported by governors to ensure that the school's mission is constantly being monitored and areas for improvement clearly identified. The chair of governors and the headteacher work very closely and effectively, ensuring that the school continues to provide an outstanding Catholic education for all its pupils.
- All staff at St John's School work as a very effective team, ensuring that the very best provision is available for all pupils. Each morning a handover meeting is held with the residential staff, the headteacher and deputy headteacher in which any issues are highlighted and discussed. There is also a weekly meeting with support staff to exchange information and there is an opportunity to pray together. Working together as a team in God's name permeates all activities at St John's school and ensures that the school's mission statement, "Working together to communicate, learn, enjoy and achieve", is the aim of everyone in the community. Management are aware of the stresses that the staff can be under and take their responsibility to nurture and develop the staff's spiritual and emotional needs very seriously. Staff retreat days are planned and strategies to support the staff are encouraged. Induction arrangements are in place for new staff and they are given the staff handbook, "Celebrating Together" as guidance on prayer and worship.
- The school has a robust system of self-evaluation of CL, CW and RE and this is coordinated by the headteacher. She is ably supported by a team of committed leaders who between them ensure every area of the school is accurately monitored and recorded in the school's SEF48 document. Monitoring and evaluation of CW is undertaken across all key stages by the RE leader and follow up support and CPD is clearly identified. Leaders were able to provide strong evidence of outstanding outcomes with respect to pupils preparing and leading CW.
- The annual improvement plan for RE, which includes the plan for improvement in CL and CW, is a separate document. School leaders ensure that CL and CW are central to the work of all at St John's and they should consider embedding them within the whole school improvement plan.
- The nature of the sixth form with nearly all students attending one of 2 post 16 colleges provides the school with a challenge as to how to provide a general RE course. The students are well provided for pastorally with respect to the transit, care and support whilst off site. There are some plans to introduce general RE work next year when the school will have some common time set aside with students onsite. The challenge will be for leaders to ensure continuity by building on the excellent provision and outcomes at KS4.
- Leaders and managers ensure that pupils are prepared for independent living wherever possible. Outstanding pastoral, social and health care work provided by all staff within the

school contributes very effectively in supporting pupils to managing the difficult transition periods especially from school to college and then beyond into adult life.

- Leaders ensure that parents are involved in giving feedback as to how well the school is providing for their child's education. The school is held in high esteem by both parents and the community. Parents speak confidently about what they say is an "outstanding" school. They are kept informed through a weekly planner, identifying what progress their child has made. One parent said that her son keeps telling her that he "loves life here". Communication between home and school is regular and very informative. Opportunities are offered throughout the year for parents to meet with staff. Parents feel the staff are very caring and approachable and all concerns are quickly dealt with. The process of transition into school is well planned and supportive and ensures that children settle quickly into the school. One parent remarked that when their child began attending St John's everything changed for him and his needs began to be catered for.
- Displays and a range of stimuli are used in classrooms, on corridors and around the school which clearly reflects the mission of this Catholic school. The school adopts diocesan policies for RE, Collective Worship and EPR after discussion with the committees of the governing body.