

St John's Catholic School for the Deaf

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

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account good

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

Date of previous inspection: 17 October 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The pupils and students enjoy their boarding experience.
- The pupils and students make excellent progress socially. Consequently, their self-esteem improves.
- The pupils and students enjoy a range of social activities. This improves their life experience and social confidence.
- The pupils and students learn a range of skills that prepare them well for life after school.
- The pupils and students are kept safe and feel safe.
- The staff have positive relationships with the pupils and students. They value their opinions. This encourages pupils and students to behave well and try their best.
- The senior management team has high aspirations for the pupils, students and the school. They are determined to continually improve to help pupils and students achieve their potential.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard for residential special schools:

- 19.4 The learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary.

Recommendations

- Consider using the pupils and students' opinions in their care planning, target setting and in their behaviour support plans. (National minimum standards, standard 17)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The pupils and students' confidence and social skills improve due to the care they receive. As a result, they enjoy their time here and make friends. They learn to respect each other and enjoy good relationships with the staff. One parent commented, 'The school is excellent. My child has grown in confidence. Plus, they are amazingly happy there.'

The pupils and students' life opportunities improve. They develop essential social skills, which allow them to actively participate in group activities such as football matches, swimming, meals out and shopping. They also enjoy trips to the coast and abroad.

The pupils and students' communication skills continually improve. The pupils and students feel staff respect their opinions. The pupils and students have regular meetings where they are confident to voice their thoughts. In addition, the pupils and students actively contribute to the student council. The staff act on their wishes. Their requests are placed on a new 'you said, we did' board. This allows the pupils and students to see that their opinions are valued and make a difference.

The staff are developing an understanding of the additional communication needs of some of the pupils and students. The staff have undertaken training around different forms of communication such as the use of symbols and the use of picture exchange communication systems. Learning from the training is not yet fully embedded in practice.

Detailed individualised healthcare plans ensure that the pupils and students' complex health needs are addressed. The pupils and students receive outstanding support from the school nurse. She is passionate about developing the pupils and students' independence in relation to their personal health and self-care. The pupils and students' emotional well-being improves. They benefit from specialist input from mental health services, coordinated by the school nurse.

The pupils and students' academic achievement improves. Consequently, by the time they reach 16 they are well equipped with academic and social skills to successfully access local colleges. They then go to university, take on apprenticeships or gain employment. One student commented, 'The staff are amazing. They have helped me pass my driving theory first time and gain a place at university.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The risk assessment system has been updated. Risk assessments highlight the pupils and students' risks, and provide the staff with actions to follow to help keep the pupils and students safe. The staff complete work with the pupils and students to help them gain knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. Work is also done with

individuals around the dangers of issues such as substance misuse. Consequently, risks reduce.

There have been no incidents of pupils and students going missing from the residential provision. The staff demonstrate knowledge of what to do if any pupil or student did go missing. The staff have knowledge of wider issues which may affect the pupils and students, such as bullying, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. This allows them to identify the early signs of danger and take appropriate action to keep the pupils and students safe.

The staff benefit from outstanding training around internet safety. This training is led by pupils. It helps the staff to gain first-hand knowledge of the applications the pupils and students use. The pupils and students research the dangers and share their findings and personal experiences of using online applications with staff. It helps the staff, pupils and students to understand the risks associated with some applications and online abuse.

The staff team consistently implements boundaries and routines. As a result, behavioural incidents are rare. The staff have strong relationships with the pupils and students. This allows the staff, pupils and students to work through behavioural issues positively when they arise. Consequently, the use of physical intervention is rare. When physical intervention is used, it is used at a low level and for the minimum time necessary to keep the pupils and students safe.

The staff demonstrate an understanding of how to report any safeguarding issues. The senior managers respond appropriately to allegations and take immediate action to keep the pupils and students safe. Thorough recruitment procedures ensure that safe adults are employed to care for the pupils and students.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care demonstrates ambition for the students and pupils to achieve well. The head and deputy head of care lead the staff team by example, setting high expectations of care. One student said, 'The head of care has changed everything for the better.'

Improvements to the manager's overall monitoring systems allow him to identify areas of strength and areas he wishes to develop. Reports about the quality of care, undertaken by the independent visitor, support the head of care's oversight of this service. The governing body works closely with the senior management team. The governors raise challenge where appropriate to support the improvement of this service.

The staff benefit from a range of in-house training, which is centred on the pupils and students' specific needs. The staff have access to a new resource hub, which allows them space to reflect on their practice and access information relevant to their role. The introduction of a new training package for the residential care staff provides

them with a range of additional courses to enhance their care practice. The head of care has not evaluated the learning and development programme. Consequently, he cannot assess its effectiveness in practice.

The pupils and students benefit from a complete package of care and education. To make sure that this happens effectively, the head of care has good relationships with parents, carers and professionals involved in the pupils and students' lives. He ensures that the pupils and students' needs are prioritised and, where necessary, challenges other professionals to make sure the pupils and students receive the support they need.

The head of care actively encourages the pupils and students to put their views forward about the running of this service. The head of care is keen to show that their voice effects change, and has recently altered the morning routine to meet the pupils and students' requests. The pupils and students' voice is not as consistently clear in their care and behaviour management plans.

The staff feel well supported by the senior management team. Regular supervision allows staff to reflect on their practice, and it helps them to feel confident to undertake their role.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC001535

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mrs Ann Bradbury

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Jamie Richardson, social care inspector



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