

The Mulberry Bush School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

JOB TITLE: TEACHING ASSISTANT

Responsible/Accountable to:	Class Teacher
Conditions of Employment:	As set out in the Staff Handbook
Hours of Employment:	37 hours per week including a lunch break
Overall Purpose of Job:	To provide emotional and practical support to individual or groups of children as directed by the teacher and senior teaching assistant within a classroom setting

Background

As a member of the education team, to work as a member of the school community in providing care, treatment and education for severely emotionally troubled primary aged children. The education team provide high standards of education, observation, and boundary setting in order that children at the School are helped through each day in a manner, which ensures the greatest possible meaning, continuity and healthy emotional containment. Within this structure, the differing individual needs of children can be respected and met, providing positive encouragement and affirmation to the growing sense of self of the child.

The emphasis on observing the children implies a distance that enables adults to think as a team about the needs of the individual child or of the group. We do not want adults to offer deep relationships with the children as these can, with such disturbed children, lead to inappropriate and complicated attachments, often repeats of past patterns. This process avoids the 'gap filling' relationships, and the promise of something special. The children's needs, once identified by the team, will then be met in conscious and planned ways. Through these processes the child can internalise an experience of close management, being cared for, role modelling, and a re-education in social/emotional awareness.

Many of the children in our care have developed coping mechanisms built on attracting attention through negative behaviour. We look to provide children with ways of re-defining themselves and their personalities through positive experiences, focussing on their strengths, understanding their regressive tendencies and providing nurture when needed.

At the core of this professional task is a commitment by each adult to the conscious use of themselves within the staff group to make sense of and understand the work at all levels and the feelings engendered by it. The difficulty of this task should not be underestimated and all adults are expected to be honest and open with their understanding of the processes within the groups and groupings. Adults for this reason need to be mature, as well as emotionally and physically resilient. Given the crucial interpersonal nature of this activity with such children, and the fact that long term hurt requires long term work, the School requires a commitment from all workers to maintain their involvement for a minimum three year period. The children

do not need and the School does not wish to appoint people seeking to spend a brief periods of employment, gaining valuable experiences for themselves but without sufficient regard to the impact on the children and the adult team of their premature departure.

The School is also clear that any workers remaining at least for that minimum commitment will themselves have experiences which will offer enormous opportunities for their own personal and professional learning and growth, not only in the field of therapeutic education and the management of such provision, but also in a wide range of related fields. For example, further professional training in education, social work, clinical psychology or child psychotherapy.

Key tasks:

1. Leads the learning process with pupils or groups of pupils with their tasks or activities following the direction and guidance of the teacher to enable their difficulties to be minimised and support children in working to their full ability.
2. Works with each individual or small groups both inside and elsewhere to encourage independence, maintain personal confidence and enable full potential to be reached ultimately with the minimum of supervision.
3. Supports and assists pupils with social integration, advises them on strategies to deal with problems they encounter; seeks appropriate professional help when necessary referring to the class teacher or SENCO for advice.
4. Liaises with the class teacher in advance of the lessons to identify necessary preparation. Creates learning materials in consultation with the class teacher. Helps maintain a well organised, tidy and stimulating classroom environment.
5. Identifies issues of concern and positive feedback to be shared with care staff and, following discussion with the teaching team, liaises with care staff.
6. Keeps a routine record of events and progress, bringing issues of concern to the teaching team.
7. Provides a good level of basic child care including administering simple first aid, changing children who have soiled and liaising with qualified first aiders regarding any medical issues.
8. Supervises pupils who are off task during the school day maintaining a level of health and safety. This may include having to physically restrain a child.
9. Provides some continuity to the running of the classroom in the teacher's absence.
10. Works as a member of the Education Team attending team meetings and participating in training and development work and assisting in the planning and preparation of the classroom.
11. Undertakes other reasonable duties of a similar level and nature to the post as directed by the class teacher or Head teacher.

All new staff employed in the Education area at the school from January 2009 will be expected to undertake the Mulberry Bush Foundation Degree in Therapeutic work with Children and Young People. Some of this training will need to be completed in

their own time. We are keen that all members of staff have the opportunity to access the school's training, and we are committed to having a well trained work force, with relevant accredited qualifications. For staff who already have this level of qualification they will be required to take part in the Foundation Degree training, but we will give them the option of whether or not they wish to complete the assessed parts of the course.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Job Title: Teaching Assistant		Department: Education
	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good standard of literacy and numeracy skills • Basic knowledge of Information Technology or a willingness to learn • Willingness to participate in training and developmental opportunities offered by the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of professional development or study
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of establishing positive relationships with children • Experience of working with or caring for school-age children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with children who have special educational needs, particularly social, emotional and behaviour difficulties • Experience of work in socially and culturally diverse setting • Experience of working in a multi professional setting

Skills, Abilities and Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to use language and other communication skills that children can understand and relate to • Ability to demonstrate active listening skills • Ability to empathise with the needs of children • Ability to relate well to children and adults. • Ability to reflect on and learn from experiences • Good communication skills with colleagues • Ability to think reflectively • Ability to show resilience • Good organisational and time management skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to contribute to whole school developments and initiatives • Willingness to participate in extra-curricular activities • Good sense of humour
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have an understanding of the needs of children placed at the school • To understand the importance of good team work • To have an understanding of classroom roles and responsibilities • To understand the importance of maintaining an appropriate emotional distance with children who have attachment difficulties 	
Other Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to remain calm and pleasant under pressure • Adaptability and flexibility • Good interpersonal skills • Ability to work in a team • Ability to follow policy and procedures • Ability to use initiative • Being able to give at least a 3 year commitment to working at the school 	