

Mulberry Bush School Special Education Needs (SEN) Information Report

Updated September 2020

(This document is reviewed annually in September – next review September 2021).

Who we help

We help primary aged children who have been unable to live in a family or learn in school, who have deep and complex emotional troubles and have developed anti-social ways of being. We aim to support them to discover helpful ways of living with themselves and others, and to see themselves as learners and achievers.

How we identify special educational needs

All children who come to The Mulberry Bush School have special educational needs in the area of Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and the vast majority have an EHCP before joining the school. In exceptional cases where a child joins the school without an EHCP, the school will work with the family and network to request an EHCP assessment.

Many children who come to The Mulberry Bush School have additional needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, speech and language difficulties, working memory difficulties, ADHD, Autism. Sometimes these needs have been identified prior to the child joining The Mulberry Bush. All children undergo an extensive assessment in their first 12 weeks at the school and this is used to identify needs that should be explored further.

Through ongoing observation and teacher assessment, additional learning barriers are identified quickly. All children are assessed by an Educational Psychologist on entry to the school, and we also make referrals during the child's placement if further concerns are identified. We employ a Speech and Language Therapist who assesses the child during their first 12 weeks at the school, and provides ongoing advice and support in the classroom. We make referrals to an Occupational Therapist when needed.

Our arrangements for working with parents and carers and involving them in their child's education and care

We know that for children to make the most progress at the Mulberry Bush, families need to be involved and supported alongside their children. Families and wider networks are actively involved in reviews, and each family receives weekly contact from the child's key work in addition to regular contact from their Family & Network Practitioner.

We also know that children's progress is supported by families engaging in a process of thinking through the issues they face together and finding new ways of managing

some of these. We have a strong multi-disciplinary Therapies and Networks team that builds relationships and works with families, and provides consultation to staff and therapy for children. We talk with the family from their first visit about the issues they face and develop an understanding of what the work will be for them in support of long term change for them all as a family.

We run residential family weekends for individual families. These involve working with invited families for two or three days at the school. We have also worked more intensively in sessions on a one-to-one basis with the family or individual family members. This work can then be continued through the placement of their child.

We aim for school staff to be involved in the discussions and decision-making about a child's future. The Head Teacher, Household Manager and Therapies and Networks Team members aim to be closely involved in planning for the timing and type of future education and care planned for a child beyond The Mulberry Bush School. Plans for a child's visit to a prospective new school are made with the Head Teacher and Treatment Team lead who, if appropriate, arrange for a member of staff to accompany the child on such a visit.

Our arrangements for assessing and reviewing children's progress towards outcomes

We recognise the importance of all areas of learning: social, emotional and academic. We have a comprehensive Integrated Treatment Plan (ITP) that ensures that all departments are working to maximise the opportunities for learning. This use of the ITP also helps the child experience consistency from the adults and in the environment within the school. The ITP includes records that show the child's progress.

The child's placement is reviewed by the school at least twice a year at Internal Case Conference meetings and Treatment Team meetings as well as at other meetings involving relevant school staff. Information from these internal meetings is shared at Annual Education Reviews and Looked After Child Reviews. If it is felt desirable or necessary, other network meetings will take place between reviews.

In the classroom, children have the curriculum tailored to meet their individual needs. Regular tracking meetings ensure that any child making less than expected progress is noted and interventions are planned. A learning journal is maintained for all children that can be used to evidence progress. If progress is better than expected, then targets are adjusted to ensure that high expectations are maintained. EHCP reviews are held at least annually, alongside other reviews whenever possible.

How we plan and teach our curriculum

Children who are placed at The Mulberry Bush have frequently had 'patchy' prior experience of school, at best, and often have many gaps in their educational achievement. The school curriculum is targeted to fill these early gaps and to ensure that children acquire the most essential skills for future success in education and life. The focus of the curriculum is therefore on functional academic skills, learning to learn, and personal, social and emotional development.

The curriculum is organised into three stages of progress: Curiosity, Confidence, Independence. Within each subject, children learn a sequence of essential skills, starting with sensory engagement with learning and progressing to pursuing individual interests and enquiry.

Children are taught through play and exploration, outdoor learning, targeted individual and small group lessons. There is a high ratio of adults to children (at least 3:8) in each class.

The expertise and training of staff

All new staff are supported through an extensive induction programme.

Since 2008 all of our teachers, teaching assistants and residential care staff have completed our Foundation Degree in therapeutic work with children and young people, which is accredited by the University of the West of England.

Staff regularly think and work together and share practice and expertise. This includes acting as 'critical friends'. All staff take part in regular individual supervision, group supervision and reflective groups, which ensure that good practice is shared, modelled and developed collaboratively.

Staff have access to regular internal and external CPD.

Evaluating the effectiveness of our provision

If our provision is effective, children will make progress throughout their placement, in their social, emotional and academic skills. This progress is monitored through termly pupil progress meetings, twice-yearly ICCs, treatment team meetings, LAC/PEP reviews and the leadership team's Clinical Overview meeting.

Subject leaders also look at progress across their subject and take steps to ensure that they respond to any delay in progress.

How children with SEN are enabled to engaged in activities available to those without special educational needs

A range of extra-curricular clubs are available, for example, football, juggling, choir, swimming, horse-riding, War Hammer.

Efforts are made to ensure collaborations with other schools wherever possible, for example football matches.

In addition, children's treatment teams consider their need for 'secondary experiences' as they make progress in the school – these can include attending clubs beyond the school, eg Scouts, church groups, rugby.

Support for improving emotional and social development

Ensuring our pupils are emotionally and physically healthy, safe and supported is central to the school's task and ethos. Modelling the support of our staff is central to enabling them to provide this for the pupils. All staff are highly trained and enabled to share similar ways of understanding the pupils' needs. The staff are involved in regular case conferences, consultations and treatment meetings. Therapists are part of treatment teams and provide consultancy to the task. Pupils are actively encouraged to become involved in understanding their own needs and working with staff to have these needs met.

The Therapies and Networks Team, as well as providing consultation, guidance and support to teams, provide individual psychotherapy and drama and music therapy to

those children whom we identify as having a need for, and the capacity to make use of, this element of our service.

We have good links with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) service and regularly have consultation phone calls and clinics with our link psychiatrist.

How the school involves other bodies

The Therapies and Networks team works very closely with a range of other bodies, including local safeguarding teams and CAMHS. The school employs a Speech and Language Therapist and an Educational Psychologist, who work closely with the Education and Group Living teams. Other support is out-sourced, e.g. Occupational Therapy.

We use external professionals and agencies to work with children and support staff in their work. We have developed a range of links with local agencies that are available to support our work. These include our local GP practice, Hearing Impairment Service, Speech and Language Unit and external Educational Psychologists.

Arrangements for handling complaints

We don't always get it right and we hope that when this happens we are very open to talking things through to find ways of resolving the issue. If matters are not resolved to your satisfaction we would encourage you to complain to our School Complaints Officer, Lee Wright (lwright@mulberrybush.org.uk). It is always helpful if the complaint is put in writing and as well as knowing the content of the complaint it is always helpful if you indicate the outcome that you feel will resolve the issue. There is a clear complaints procedure for the children and forms are available from any staff member. We will ensure that any complaint is dealt with promptly. If the Complaints Officer is unable to resolve the matter, the complainant should write to the Chair of Trustees at: The Mulberry Bush, Abingdon Road, Standlake, Oxfordshire, OX297RW. Children are able to contact an independent advocate at VOICE by phone from their households if they wish.

Contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
SENCO	Jessica Hooper	jhooper@mulberrybush.org.uk 01865 300202 extension 250
Head Teacher		
Deputy Head Teacher	Eric Gill	egill@mulberrybush.org.uk
House Managers & Treatment Team Leads	Nicky Turberville (Rainbow House) Rebecca Lutman (Jigsaw House) Mike Bowring (Sunset House) Joy Oldfield (Pegasus House)	01865 300202
Teachers	Rupert Stace (Evenlode) Ariel Lambert (Evenlode) Emma Knipe (Cherwell) Laura Dennis (Windrush) Anna Traer (Thames)	01865 300202
Family & Network Practitioners	Stuart Harragan John Agudelo Di Nixon	01865 300202