

Mulberry Bush School Special Education Needs (SEN) Information Report Updated December 2025

This document is reviewed annually.

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 behaviours that can be challenging, unwanted or unsafe. 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, Sensory Processing Disorder. 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 assessment by their teacher and other key professionals, additional learning barriers are identified quickly. 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 also seek advice from external specialists such as Educational Psychologists and Occupational Therapists when needed. The school nurse is on site 3 days a week and is able to provide advice and support for the children's physical needs.

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 worker 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 aim for school staff to be involved in the discussions and decision-making about a child's future. The Head Teacher, SENCO, 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 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, PEP meetings and Child Looked After 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. Progress is monitored using Earwig. Termly pupil progress meetings between the head teacher and class teacher ensure that any child making less than expected progress is noted and interventions are planned. EHCP reviews are held at least annually, PEP meetings 2-3 times a year as well as other reviews when appropriate.

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 core skills in reading, writing, maths, PSHE and spoken language. A broad range of content is taught through a topic-based approach (Learning Means the World – Dimensions curriculum), covering science, art, DT, IT and humanities.

Within each subject, children learn a sequence of essential skills, starting with sensory engagement with learning and progressing to pursuing individual interests and enquiry. We use Sounds-Write for phonics, NCETM Maths Mastery programme and White Rose Maths, Pie Corbett's Talk for Writing

and the PSHE Association SEND Framework, which includes the statutory guidance for RSE. Other non-statutory guidance such as the DFE guidance on writing are also incorporated into our provision

Children are taught through play and exploration, outdoor learning, targeted individual and small group lessons with opportunities for both discreet and embedded application of skills and knowledge. 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. All of our teachers, teaching assistants and residential care staff complete our Foundation Degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People, which is accredited by the University of the West of England.

Reflective practice is at the core of our work and staff regularly think and work together to develop their 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, EHCP annual review meeting 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, choir, swimming, drumming circle, dance, film making, lunch-club and lunchtime crafts.

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, e.g. rugby, climbing, athletics, tennis, cricket, football, horse-riding, drama club, dance club, art club.

Where appropriate, children may experience joining a class or extra-curricular activity with another local school or provision.

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. Providing support for our staff is essential 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. Children 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, drama and music therapy as well as life story work for 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. When required we work with our colleagues in CAMHS to support children who present with risk taking or unwanted behaviours due to their prior experience.

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 School Nurse, who work closely with the Education and Group Living teams. We also buy in an Educational Psychologist and Occupational Therapist to do assessments and give advice. 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, dentist, opticians and local hospitals.

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 will always help us if the complaint is put in writing. As well as understanding the reason for the complaint it is 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, OX29 7RW. Children are able to contact an independent advocate at Coram Voice by phone from their households if they wish.

Contacts

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