



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Mulberry Bush School

**Standlake
Witney
Oxfordshire
OX8 7RW**

Lead Inspector
Clare Davies

Announced Inspection
11th November 2005 09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	Mulberry Bush School
Address	Standlake Witney Oxfordshire OX8 7RW
Telephone number	01865 300202
Fax number	01865 300084
Email address	john.diamond@mulberrybush.oxon.sch.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Mulberry Bush School Limited
Name of Head	Mr John Diamond
Name of Head of Care	Mr John Turberville
Age range of residential pupils	5-12 years
Date of last welfare inspection	07/10/04

Brief Description of the School:

Mulberry Bush School is run by a charitable trust and is approved and registered by the DfES as a non-maintained special school. It provides 40 weeks of residential care and education for 36 boys and girls aged 5-12 years who have experienced severe emotional damage in infancy and early childhood. The school specifically provides therapeutic treatment for children who have serious emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school is situated in a village in rural West Oxfordshire, 5 miles south of Witney. Four houses provide the accommodation and are located around a 'village green', the classrooms are in close proximity and the layout of the site creates the spirit of a community.

SUMMARY

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The inspection was an announced visit over two days. Two inspectors spent time with the children seeing their bedrooms, residential accommodation and joining in mealtimes. The inspectors spent time interviewing staff, reading records and observing staff interactions with the children.

Questionnaires were sent to a variety of people involved with Mulberry Bush School and responses were received from 20 parents, 24 children, 13 placing officers and 11 members of staff. Generally responses were very positive and comments were received from placing officers such as;

'I have total confidence in the placement being a safe environment with extremely caring and dedicated staff, children thrive here'.

'I am impressed by the quality of provision offered and by the way the school inform me of any significant events/concerns. Home/school links and support are excellent'.

'When visiting the school I was very impressed with the safety aspects of the school'.

The following comments were received from parents;

'I think they do an excellent job with some very challenging children'.

'They do an extremely good job. I trust the school and staff completely and have done since my first visit. Communication is excellent'.

'I can't praise the school enough for all they have done for my son'.

The inspectors would like to thank the children, staff, head of residential therapy and the director for assisting with the inspection.

What the school does well:

The Mulberry Bush school achieves its aim of providing a nurturing and containing environment. Health needs are met well and the school has appointed a nurse.

There is a good awareness of child protection issues and a behaviour management system that is comprehensive and consistently applied across the school. There is an integrated approach by a committed and skilled staff team.

The admission process is thorough and very child centred, supported by good quality documents. Once in placement the care plans produced are excellent and all staff contribute to them. Mulberry Bush school works well in partnership with families and placing authorities.

The accommodation is of a good standard and the grounds provide a safe place to play.

A strength of the school is the supportive relationships between children and staff. The director and the senior management team provide strong leadership and staff feel contented in their work with good support and training opportunities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The children's complaints procedure includes contact details for the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The child protection policy has been amended to meet the standard.

Risk assessments have been improved.

Parental consent has been obtained for the administration of first aid, medical attention and appropriate non-prescribed medication.

An improved procedure is in place with regards to non-prescribed medication.

The school has appointed a full time school nurse.

What they could do better:

Provide regular in-house training for all staff who administer medication.

Arrange for all kitchen staff to renew and maintain their food hygiene training.

Undertake a review of mealtimes in each house to see if any improvements could be made.

Replace some missing floor tiles and repair some interior plaster.

Apply consistency with recruitment records and ensure best practice.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

14 and 15

The physical and emotional health needs of the children are very well addressed in an ongoing and integrated way.

Consideration is given to a healthy diet; the planning of mealtimes and the dining environments could be improved.

EVIDENCE:

The new post of school nurse was taken up in September this year and the nurse is responsible for the management of children's physical health care needs. Existing health needs are identified before admission to the school, and all children are registered with a local GP. Written parental or main carer permissions are obtained for the management of regular and emergency health needs. Regular health reviews are held with the school nurse and children can attend the GP whenever necessary.

The inspector saw 2 individual health records detailing how the health needs should be met. Records were also seen of recent visits to the dentist and optician, and planned dates for future reviews were noted. Parental consent has been obtained for the administration of first aid, medical attention and appropriate non-prescribed medication but this needs to be extended to include optical or dental treatment when required.

Specialist health care professionals train staff to support children to take appropriate responsibility for their own health care needs, such as diabetes, and the school nurse is available for advice and support on a daily basis. Children's wishes regarding their health needs are taken into account, for example if they wish to see the nurse alone or accompanied.

The school nurse has recently reviewed the system for managing medication, and is working towards meeting the Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidelines. It is recommended that all care staff who administer medication have training

and the school nurse intends to develop and implement an appropriate programme as soon as possible. It was recommended during the inspection that a bound book be used as a drugs register and this was arranged immediately after the inspection.

The school has a psychotherapy department and an individual psychotherapy assessment is conducted soon after a child is admitted to the school. An individual programme of support is provided if necessary. During the inspectors' visit it was clear that children are supported throughout the school by an integrated approach from the staff, so that emotional needs are recognised and addressed consistently. Therapeutic care staff have sessions with the psychotherapist to understand the school's therapeutic approach, and have formal regular support to enable them to care for the children.

The inspectors joined the children at mealtimes in their houses, saw the house menus and discussed food issues with the cook and care staff. The children participate in menu planning, a food committee meets regularly and where possible local food is supplied. Lunches are prepared by a central kitchen and delivered to the houses, care staff cook evening meals and breakfast in each house and eat together with the children in the kitchen/dining room. Children with dietary needs have appropriate meals provided.

Drinks are available where appropriate and children are assisted to prepare snacks at reasonable times. The majority of the children reported in the questionnaire that the food was 'ok'.

The inspectors observed mealtimes and recommend that a review is undertaken to consider how improvements could be made to address; the lack of dining space, inconsistent approach to address table manners and the inefficiency of serving meals (as observed in one house).

The two part time kitchen assistants had basic food hygiene training in 1991 and 1996, and the cook had intermediate training in Jan 2002. Refresher training is now needed, and an online training package from the Royal Institute for Public Health started recently. Most care staff had training during 2004 and 2005.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

3,4,5,6,7,8,10,26 and 27

Child protection knowledge amongst staff is good and the school has been proactive in working with the local authority. There is a great awareness to address any incidents of bullying. The behaviour management system works well with all departments reporting in the same manner and identifying how to meet individual needs.

Thorough risk assessments are in place. The school site is well maintained. The recruitment procedure needs to be more consistent to meet the National Minimum Standard.

EVIDENCE:

The privacy of the children is well respected and information handled confidentially. A complaints procedure is in place, known to the children and the inspectors saw how it had been used. It is recommended that the wording is slightly amended in the first question to make it clearer for children.

The individual children's guide encourages the children to talk to an adult in their house or class and the complaints procedure is on display throughout the houses. The procedure provides details on how to complain and this includes contact details for the Commission for Social Care Inspection and more importantly the contact details for the independent visitor from the organisation Voice for the Child in Care who visits the school monthly. The inspectors were made aware of good examples where children were being listened to and concerns were taken seriously to involve the support of external agencies.

There is a good awareness of child protection issues amongst all staff and training is arranged through studying 'Caring for Children and Young People' at NVQ levels 3 and training sessions delivered by Oxfordshire Social and Health Care. Training sessions by the local authority are regular to provide refresher courses for established members of staff. The Mulberry Bush has been proactive in approaching the local authority Children and Families assessment team to discuss and agree thresholds of significant harm that would require a referral to the local area office. The inspectors saw a letter confirming these arrangements and a senior member of staff from the local authority Assessment Team has agreed to visit the school termly to review any records of incidents that were not referred to the Assessment Team in order to monitor that the agreed thresholds are being adhered to. This practice is to be commended.

There is a bullying policy in place and information posted around the school and houses to address such issues. Children were asked to complete a questionnaire towards the inspection and were asked, 'Are you being bullied at the school at the moment?' 7 children replied 'Yes, most of the time', 5 said 'Yes, often', 9 said 'sometimes', 1 child said 'Hardly ever' and 1 child said 'Not at all'. The inspectors considered these responses carefully but concluded that there was not an unusually high level of bullying given the nature of the children's very difficult early life experiences, which mean they find it hard to get along with others. The therapeutic approach provides an opportunity to learn how to live with others.

The school meeting each morning provides staff representatives from every department with an alert to any child(ren) who pose a high risk of bullying in order that a consistent response can be given to address such behaviour.

The Mulberry Bush school appropriately informs the Commission for Social Care Inspection of any events relating to the protection of children. Parents and placing social workers who completed questionnaires towards the

inspection reported very positively that the school is good at letting them know of significant events involving the children with only 3 parents saying 'sometimes' and 1 reporting that they do not feel informed.

The school has clear boundaries to contain the site yet it is not a secure place and neither should it be in promoting a therapeutic community. At times of distress if any children leave the grounds the staff have clear written guidelines to follow as agreed by Thames Valley Police. Due to the levels of supervision it would be difficult for any child to leave the site without the knowledge of the staff. Local contacts have been established with neighbours and other community resources who can be alerted to assist with searching when any child leaves the school site without permission. The school has a good relationship with a local police officer who can be called upon at such times.

The Mulberry Bush school has a behaviour management policy where great emphasis is given to success and achievement for the individual and rewarded openly with praise and certificates. The staff are clear about the policy and apply appropriate sanctions such as; early bedtime, withdrawal of privileges, grounded to the house and financial restitution. The children were asked in the questionnaire if they thought staff were fair. 5 reported 'very fair', 2 'quite fair', 2 'usually OK', 3 'quite unfair' and 5 'very unfair'. The inspectors concluded that sanctions are given fairly and monitored by senior staff to consider consistency and appropriateness.

A staff team called Shifford provide support to children who are displaying difficult behaviour and disrupting the classrooms or houses. The team employ positive interventions with the aim of enabling the children to learn and live alongside others. The team is available to support children between the hours of 8am and 10pm.

The school has a good system to monitor all incidents across the school; in the classroom, within group living and when supported by Shifford. All three departments use the same grading system to record types of behaviours and this information is collated to identify any specific problems that need addressing and graphs are produced. The behaviour of all children is discussed at a weekly meeting and strategies may be put in place as a result. The weekly meeting selects a focus on the behaviour charts to consider if there are any themes emerging eg; location, gender, time of day, etc.

The inspector saw records of any physical restraints that had occurred. These were documented clearly, monitored regularly by senior staff and graded to feed into the behaviour charts. Staff are trained in restraint techniques through Proact-SCIPr-UK, 2 school staff are trained as instructors to deliver the training. Children reported that restraint has been used;

To break up fights
To stop damage

And to prevent someone getting hurt.

It is recommended that consideration is given to document children's views against a record of physical intervention.

Risk assessments for each child are incorporated in their integrated treatment plan; consideration is given to bullying & discrimination, activities, outings, use of tools/equipment etc. The school is very well maintained by on site maintenance staff, whilst walking around the school the inspectors identified issues that need to be addressed.

The inspector observed a fire drill evacuation and it was evident that the children were familiar in how to react. Records evidenced that drills occur and that the fire system undergoes regular testing.

A sample of recruitment records was inspected and generally all relevant documents were in place though 2 references had not been verified until after the staff member had commenced employment (5 weeks delay and 3 months delay). The same two staff had received clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau after they had commenced employment (4 months and 2 months delay). Mulberry Bush school had not verified that the school nurse was registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council but this was actioned once identified by the inspectors.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12,13 and 22

There are good links between school and care staff that assist in supporting the children's educational progress, this is underpinned by the integrated approach.

Activities that are arranged are varied and enjoyed. Individual treatment plans ensure that support is provided to meet particular needs. The school provides a nurturing environment to enable children to grow socially and emotionally.

EVIDENCE:

The integrated approach ensures that care staff and education staff have close communication and work together on shared goals for the children. Care staff take children to the classrooms each morning and collect them for lunch. This provides many opportunities for face-to-face discussions about the children and further meetings take place when the children are returned to the classroom for the afternoon and collected at the end of the school day.

To assist with educational attainment the school has a system called 'catch up' where children who have not performed well in school remain after the school day and are supported in catching up with their work or supported in addressing some inappropriate classroom behaviour.

Each child has an integrated treatment plan that is a live document available on the school IT system and this also promotes close working with residential staff, the education team, the Shifford support team, the family team and the therapists.

The Shifford Team provide valuable support to children who find it difficult to manage their behaviour in the classroom or houses. The Shifford team have a designated area in the school and provide space for time out as decided by teaching or house staff, or self selected by children who recognise they need space to be supported and reflect on their behaviour. A staff member's dog is a respected member of the Shifford team and for some children, the dog contributes towards the therapeutic environment provided.

Older children in the final stage of their education are prepared for the possibility of returning to a mainstream school after leaving the Mulberry Bush. There are links with a local primary school where the Mulberry Bush children have a pen pal. Visits to the school take place and the Mulberry Bush children wear the local school uniform and are supported by Mulberry Bush staff whilst attending the mainstream setting.

The children reported that there is a wide range of activities available at school and in the community such as; football, swimming, bowling, playing in the grounds, playing drums, riding bikes, computer games, films and trips out. Whilst the children enjoy the activities listed they also spoke of their pleasure at being able to play. This is indicative of their early childhood years where many have missed out on the opportunities to have the freedom to play. When asked in a questionnaire to tell the inspector about some of the good things to do at the Mulberry Bush school, many said, 'we get to play' and they reported how they enjoyed the gardens, the swings and climbing. Consideration is given to safety with each activity.

Great emphasis is given to identifying each child's individual needs and then plans are made as to how the school collectively can meet them. This may be through, 1:1 time with key worker or teacher, health care, psychotherapy and may also include external support from, social worker or a community service. The inspectors observed a very committed staff team who are committed to the integrated approach in order to provide clear consistent boundaries to the children whilst providing structure. A strength of the school is its ability to provide a containing yet nurturing environment where children are supported in developing a sense of self worth and taught the skills to be able to form positive relationships with others.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2,9,11,17 and 20

Children are consulted and involved in decision-making. There are excellent relationships between the children and staff. The school has a thorough admission process that is child centred. Contact with families is good.

EVIDENCE:

There is good involvement of children in decision making in a variety of ways. On an individual level this may occur with a teacher or residential worker or through the keyworker system. Each house has circle time daily before lunch and this provides a forum for children and adults to reflect on their day and express their feelings.

Annual review meetings involve the input of children's views and the use of a review feedback form provides another opportunity. Children elect representatives to form the school council and the inspector observed a council meeting and was impressed how the children involved embraced their responsibility as advocates for all the children. Responses from the children's questionnaire indicated that they considered that the school council was a good forum to raise their views.

Parents reported through the questionnaire that they felt fully informed by the school about their children and when asked if the staff ask for their opinion before any big decisions are made about their child, 12 parents reported 'Yes', 3 said 'No' and 2 said 'Sometimes'.

Placing officers were asked how well the school works in partnership with them and 8 reported that they were 'very satisfied', 2 'OK for the most part' and 1 reported that 'It's a bit patchy'. The last comment referred to not having received any documents from the school about the educational planning for a child who was relatively new to the school.

The excellent relationships between staff and children are a strength of the school; the integrated approach creates the sense of a community. All staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities and are able to set and maintain safe consistent boundaries that the students need. When children were asked in the questionnaire to list things that they don't like about living at the school the responses were generally referring to a sanction, missing home or other children being annoying. Any dislike referring to staff was due to being restrained.

Admission to the school is very well planned and following initial written referral a professionals meeting is arranged to discuss the child's 'lived experience'. The Director next undertakes a home visit to the prospective child and their family or carers towards the assessment process as to the suitability of offering a placement.

A prospective child and their family are invited to visit the Mulberry Bush school for a day and the staff have an opportunity to observe and comment on how they feel the child may fit in at the school. Before leaving the child is invited to choose from a supply of new duvet covers in order that when they move to the school the chosen cover will be on their bed to welcome them. The inspectors thought this was a simple yet very thoughtful offer to make to assist in relieving some of the anxieties of coming to stay at a new school. Another child will be asked to act as a buddy to a new child.

The school produces a personalised children's guide to the school with photographs of buildings and key staff. The inspectors thought this was a very good child-centred document. Details and pictures can also be accessed online by visiting the school's website. On the day of admission, a 'getting to know you' meeting is held to establish routines the child has been used to, likes/dislikes etc. Contact with parents/carers is agreed at this meeting in order that there is some structure that everyone agrees to. Any new child to the school, regardless of age, joins in the foundation stage of education where structured experiences are provided in helping the child learn to play.

Children who leave the school in a planned way are supported with whatever transition they are going to make. Usually there is a distance involved and the

school have shown their commitment by travelling to wherever the next identified school is located in order to assist with the next placement.

An initial assessment is undertaken to produce the integrated treatment plan (ITP). The ITP's seen were very good documents involving all concerned at the school and were subject to regular review. The majority of the ITP's had been placed on the school's intranet to ensure they were live documents available to all staff, plans were in place to ensure that all of them would be available on the intranet soon.

Contact with families, where appropriate, is maintained through telephone and post. Parents reported in the questionnaire that they were all encouraged to visit the school and were always made to feel welcome. The Family Team develop specific links with families and undertake home visits to discuss the progress of the children and provide strategies on how to respond to certain behaviours when the children return home for weekend visits and holidays. A self contained flat is available for families to use when visiting the school. Placing officers were asked in the questionnaire, 'How closely do you consider the school works with the child's family?'. 11 reported 'Very well' and 2 reported 'Pretty average'.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

16,23,24 and 25.

The school site is well maintained and provides a homely environment. The accommodation is of a very good standard

EVIDENCE:

Children wear their casual clothes after school and uniforms are provided by the school. The staff in each house stores pocket money securely and the children are assisted in spending it wisely during outings.

The school is located in a village approximately 5 miles from Witney and stands in reasonably sized grounds with a central green for the children to play on and separate gardens for each house. The site is maintained to a high standard and provides the children with a safe space and freedom to play and let off steam.

The four residential houses provide homely comfortable accommodation. No house is significantly in greater need than any other for redecoration, they are all in good decorative order and retain their individual characteristics. Each house is inviting with good use of colours, furnishings, plants etc. Bedroom areas are mostly single rooms with some children sharing a double room.

Most children have taken the opportunity to personalise their space with posters, photographs, toys and other belongings.

The inspector raised a concern that staff overnight accommodation for 2 of the houses is quite some distance from the children's bedrooms and on a different floor of the building. Staff reported to the inspector that the use of an auditory alarm was very effective and nighttime supervision had not posed any difficulties, as staff do not retire to bed until the children are settled. It is recommended that nighttime supervision is kept under regular review.

Each house has adequate washing and toilet facilities, there are located near to the children's bedrooms and provide suitable privacy.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1,18,19,28,29,30,31,32 and 33.

Mulberry Bush school is well managed with good leadership. Staff have clear delegated roles and work towards an integrated approach for the benefit of the children. There are good records and documents throughout.

There is a high commitment from staff who in turn feel supported with good training opportunities.

EVIDENCE:

The school prospectus, statement of purpose and associated publications are well written and provide clear information for parents, children and placing authorities. The school aims are clearly set out with the intention of working together with families and local authorities to meet the needs of the children.

The school maintains very good records of development, progress and individual needs. Generally the records seen by the inspector were clear, comprehensive and up to date with evidence of senior staff monitoring the records. Good monitoring systems are in place with regular meetings of staff.

Staffing levels are adequate with planned duty rotas for residential staff. It was evident that the whole school staff team are very committed to the philosophy of the school and many spoke with enthusiasm about their work and their desire to support the children in reaching their goals.

Training opportunities are very good for staff with an appointed training and development officer. Internal courses have been arranged for fire safety, first aid, SCIP, behaviour management and food hygiene. The foundation training programme identifies the links with the NVQ level 3 programme. Following the foundation programme, seminars are provided to develop skills and knowledge in a therapeutic setting.

At the time of the inspection 12 staff were in the process of undertaking NVQ level 3, and 2 staff had achieved this award. This is lower than the minimum ratio of 80% as required by the National Minimum Standard but due to the nature of the therapeutic work undertaken at the Mulberry Bush the inspector will consider what qualifications can be recognised as an alternative to the NVQ child care awards.

Staff reported how they were supported by the school in accessing external training; eg Masters in Therapeutic Child Care, attendance at the Tavistock clinic and various UK conferences.

Staff from a variety of positions held within the school all reported how well supported they felt by the school and the structures within it. There is good leadership at the school with the director supported by a strong senior management team. The head of residential therapy, responsible for the residential provision, reports to the director and attends senior management meetings. Staff indicated in discussion and through questionnaire responses that they value their supervision (individually and as a group), reflective spaces and access to the psychotherapy team. When asked in the questionnaire 'How well supported are you in your work?' all 11 respondents said, 'we receive a lot of support and guidance'.

In addition to meeting these National Minimum Standards the school is a member of The Charterhouse Group that defines another set of standards for therapeutic communities to aspire to.

The inspector read reports on visits made by trustees in accordance with Standard 33. The trustees meet regularly with the director and the chair is appraised of any significant issues.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	3
15	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
4	3
5	4
6	3
7	3
8	3
10	3
26	3
27	2

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4
13	3
22	4

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	4
9	4
11	4
17	4
20	4

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	x
23	4
24	3
25	4

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	4
18	3
19	3
28	3
29	4
30	4
31	3
32	4
33	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS14	The school nurse should provide training for staff on the recording and administration of medication. Parental consent should be obtained for the school to seek optical and dental treatment when required.	28/02/06
2	RS15	The school should undertake a review of mealtimes to consider how they may be improved.	31/03/06
3	RS15	All kitchen staff should undertake training in food hygiene.	31/03/06
4	RS4	The school should amend the first question on the complaints form to make it clearer for children.	01/01/06
5	RS10	The school should consider how children's views could be recorded in records of restraint.	28/02/06
6	RS26	The school should arrange to replace the missing floor tiles and repair damaged plaster around doorframes.	28/02/06
7	RS27	The school should consistently apply recruitment procedures.	17/11/05
8	RS24	The school should keep the staff sleeping-in arrangements under regular review.	31/03/06

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