

The Mulberry Bush School, a charity founded in 1948



Jay: a case study in meeting need at the Mulberry Bush School



The Mulberry Bush School



The School is a non-maintained special school and charity, providing specialist residential care, treatment and education to children aged 5-13

who have suffered early years trauma and abuse. As a result of these experiences they are unable to live within a family or attend school.

Jay: a case study in meeting need at the Mulberry Bush School



Attachment disorders: insecure; avoidant, and disorganised. Dockar-Drysdale, 'the frozen child' (1958)

Our multi disciplinary teams: Group Living, Education and the Therapies and Networks Team, provide an early intervention through relationship based work with children and their families.



Jay: a case study in meeting need at the Mulberry Bush School



Our therapeutic community approach enables children to internalise good relationships, enables them to live socially in a group, and be part of a community. An internalised attachment to people and place.

Our aim is to re-integrate children back with a family and to attend an appropriate school.



Therapeutic Provision

- All staff are trained in psychodynamic theory, attachment theory and reflective practice (we have our FdA Accredited by University of the West of England)
- All children have a Treatment Team who oversee the child's Integrated Treatment Plan and how we understand our work with the child and their family (key worker, teacher, therapist, family worker, team manager)
- Therapists provide consultation to teams as well as therapy to children
- Highly developed collaborative and multidisciplinary work



Therapeutic Provision



- All staff through the treatment team develop a 'shared therapeutic understanding' of their work with the child and their family
- Targets are set for children and progress monitored
- Meeting structures integrate different disciplines to ensure thinking is joined up

and an experience of consistency and continuity of service for the child and their family

- Reflective Practice meetings / supervision for all staff
- All departments monitor their quality and effectiveness

Three core values that underpin the Therapeutic work of the Mulberry Bush

- Psychodynamic approach
- Reflective culture
- Collaborative Working

Psychodynamic Approach:

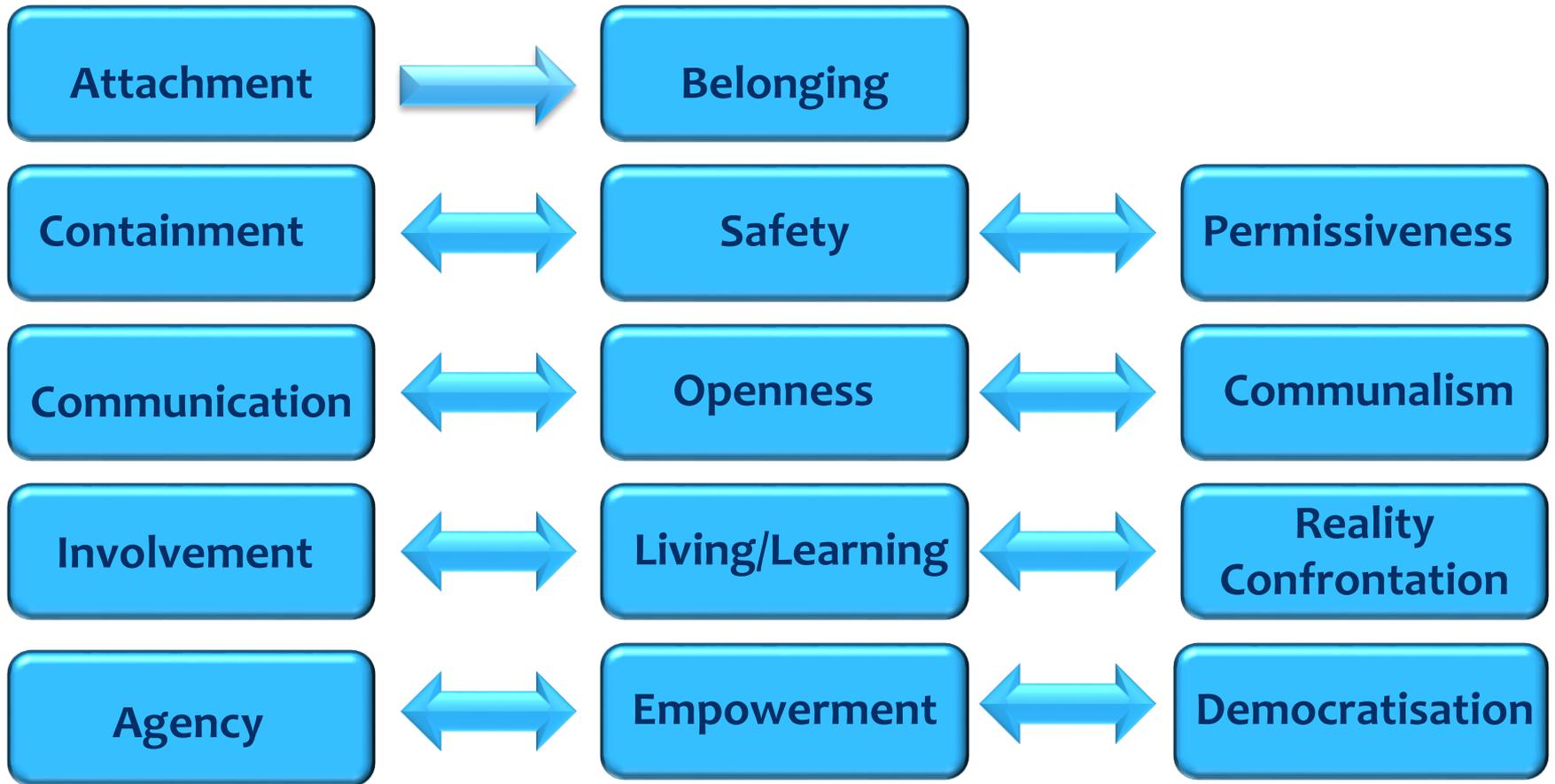
The key value that underscores all our work is the use of Psychodynamic Theory. The work of psychotherapists and those who work in a psychodynamic way is to try and change the person from within, that is to see behaviours as symptoms of inner conflicts and to try and address the causes of the symptoms rather than to rectify the behaviours.

“Symptoms... could be viewed afresh as meaningful communications about inner states of conflict.”

(Bateman, A. et al, 2000: 9)

This approach is used to understand children’s behaviours as communications of unmet needs.

Links to Organisational Culture



Jay: his early years

- Jay's birth parents were serious drug abusers
- He experienced inconsistent and neglectful parenting, leading to early years trauma and no 'internal working model' of consistent attachment
- By age 2 he was wandering the streets
- He was taken into care and adopted. His adoptive parents separated after his arrival
- His behaviours continued to be very chaotic and high risk, including climbing onto high roofs and fire setting. These behaviours enacted/communicated his lack of trust, attachment and ongoing trauma

Jay: Statement of Special Educational Needs

- To develop emotionally.
- Develop his play, social communication and interaction skills.
- Develop his attention, listening and task focus skills
- Develop his literacy and mathematical skills.
- Develop his self esteem and self confidence.
- Control and manage his behaviour.
- Develop trusting relationships with others in order to develop secure attachments.
- Develop his independent learning skills.

Meeting Individual and Group Need

- Group Living team: managed his extremely dangerous behaviours: aggression, self harm, - putting himself at life threatening risk. Attention seeking behaviour is essentially attachment seeking behaviour.
- Trigger points: bedtimes, groups, mealtimes, transitions. He struggled when significant adults were preoccupied with other children.
- Required constant preoccupation by 1 member of staff –seeking attachment.
- Play therapy: engaged well but very aggressive to himself and therapist at times.
- Required individual settling after 7 pm
- Daily meeting with Headteacher, teacher and household staff to discuss/plan each day.
- Developing talents: Gymnastics club, football, dancing, humour, member of school council.

Reflective Practice

- Staff support focuses not only on the practical management of children's behaviour and feelings, but also on containing the anxiety and other strong feelings they provoke.
- A reflective stance is promoted and expected in all meetings at all levels of the school.
- The facilitator's role is to provide a space where despair and fear, and other strong feelings evoked by the work, can be felt and reflected on, without resorting to practical solutions, without joining in with or becoming mired in the feelings.
- Enables staff to feel more robust, resilient and self-aware which in turn promotes these capacities in the children

The Mulberry Bush 'Eleven Key Elements'

We aim for the children to make outstanding progress in their ability to:

- Build healthy and mutually trusting relationships
- Ask for help and make use of it
- Involve themselves appropriately in their care and the care of the environment
- Keep themselves and others safe
- Reflect on and communicate feelings rather than act them out
- Be able to play
- Be a successful learner
- Improve self awareness and value achievement
- Function appropriately in a group
- Make a contribution and become involved in the immediate and wider community

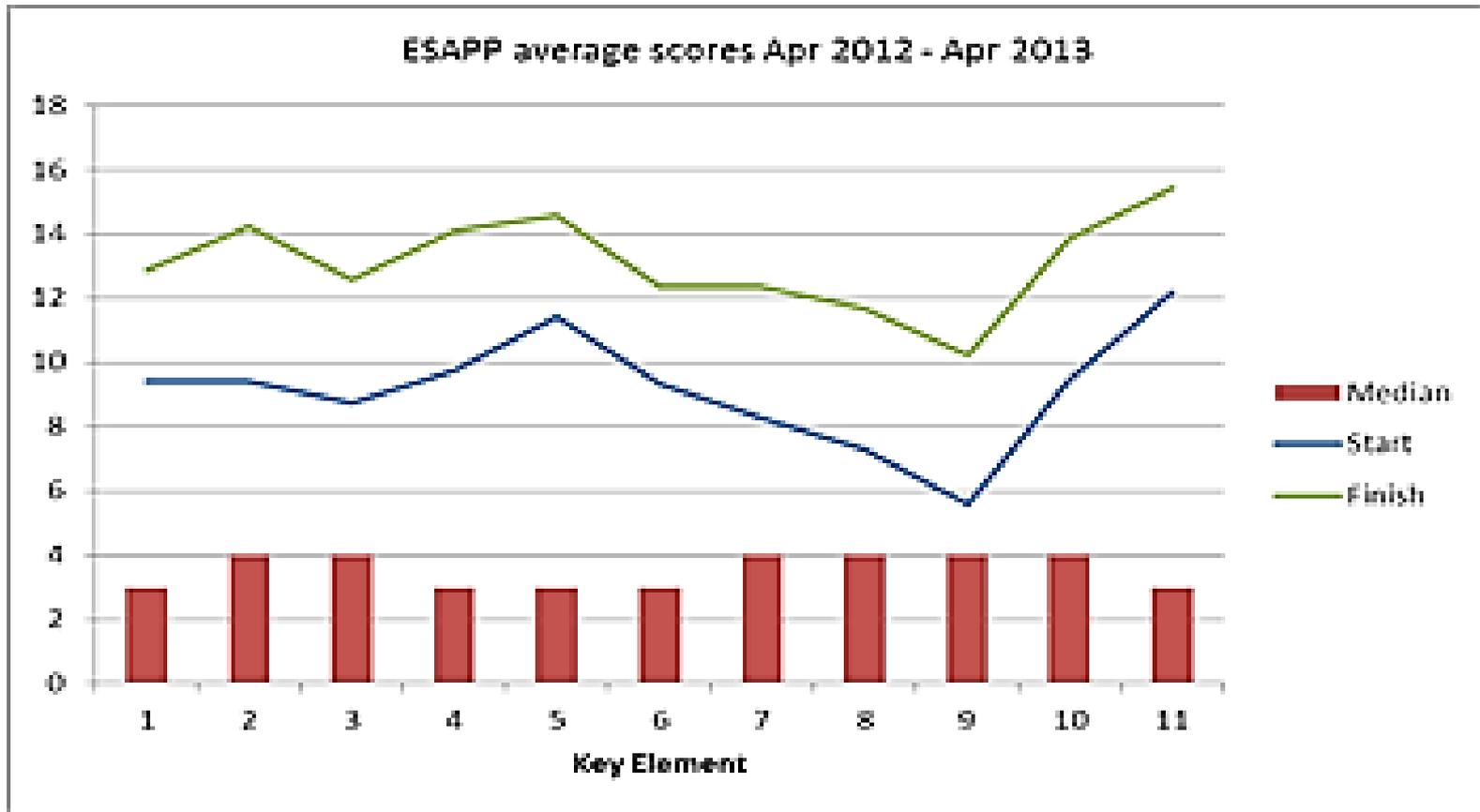
Adaptation of curriculum to meet Jay's learning needs

- Approaching his leaving date from school, Jay found it particularly difficult to access the curriculum and be a positive member of the class group. This would involve him putting himself in danger, attacking others and finding it very difficult to concentrate and stay still.
- I decided it was important to create a learning approach which could allow him to talk about his concerns as well as enable him to be able to re-engage with his learning as he had done so well in the past.
- He chose from a selection of topics to focus on for about 4 weeks. These included creating a restaurant, making a film, designing and running a fashion show.
- Jay selected designing and running his own restaurant. The initial point was brainstorming ideas for his restaurant and then he had a meeting with the teacher where they planned tasks for him to complete. These were decided using his target cards for Literacy and Maths and identifying other subjects which would be most beneficial to the project.

Adaptation of curriculum to meet Jay's learning needs

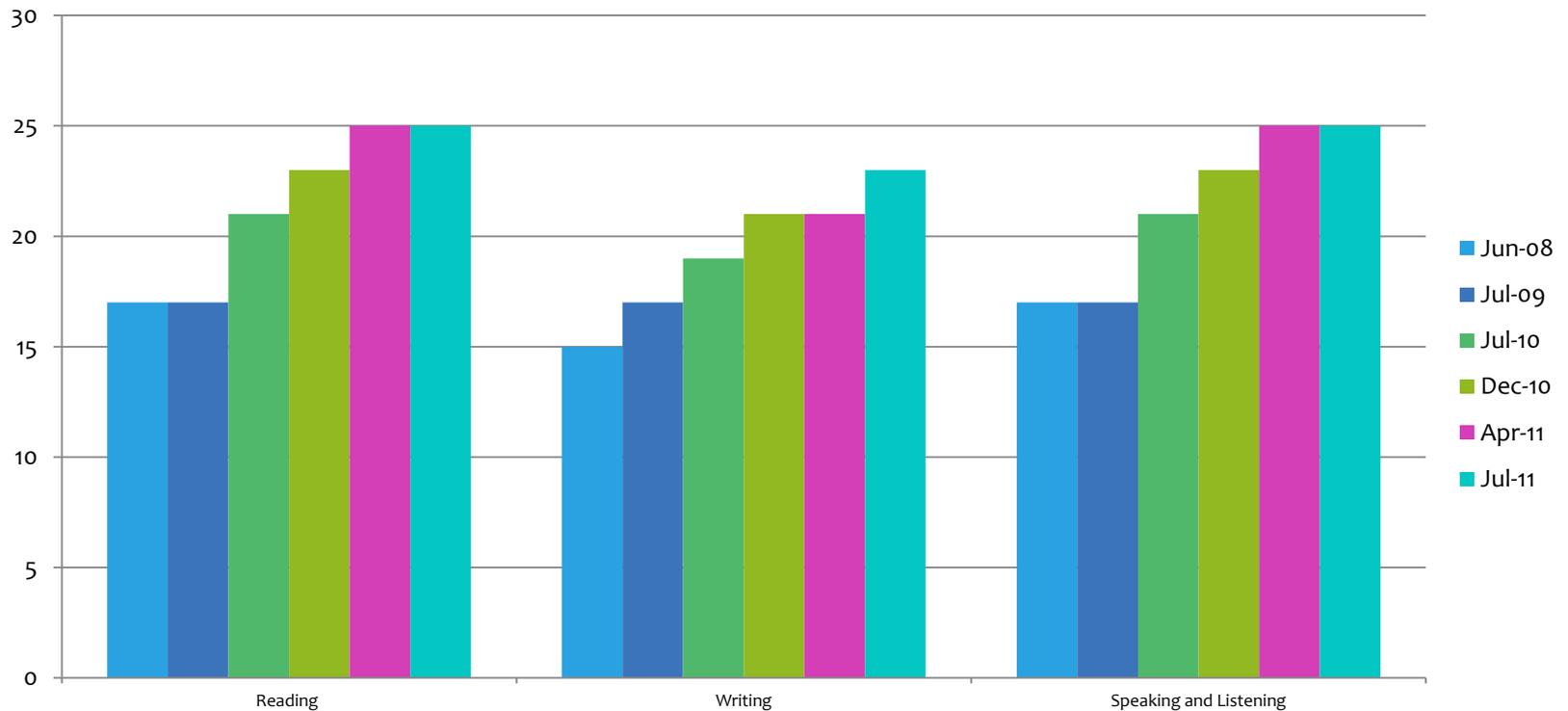
- He loves Sushi and decided to create his own sushi restaurant. One of his working tasks was to visit a Sushi restaurant, interview the staff there, take photos of the décor and examine the menu.
- He produce a logo for his restaurant, a menu, he interviewed his 'staff' (other pupils), created uniforms for his staff, rearranged the classroom as a restaurant (including decorating it), used the internet to research the food and drink he would require, bought the food from the supermarket, wrote invitations to his guests, he prepared the food and drink, he wrote a newspaper report for the opening night for the restaurant, he calculated the money he would have spent and made.
- The project also required him to produce a large display of the work he had done for the project which was displayed for both the children and the adults to explore.
- Jay really enjoyed creating his restaurant. He was very proud of his achievements; in particular he really valued sharing his learning with all members of the school community. The project also enabled him to continue his targeted learning throughout a period of time in which his anxiety levels were high.

Emotional and Social Progress



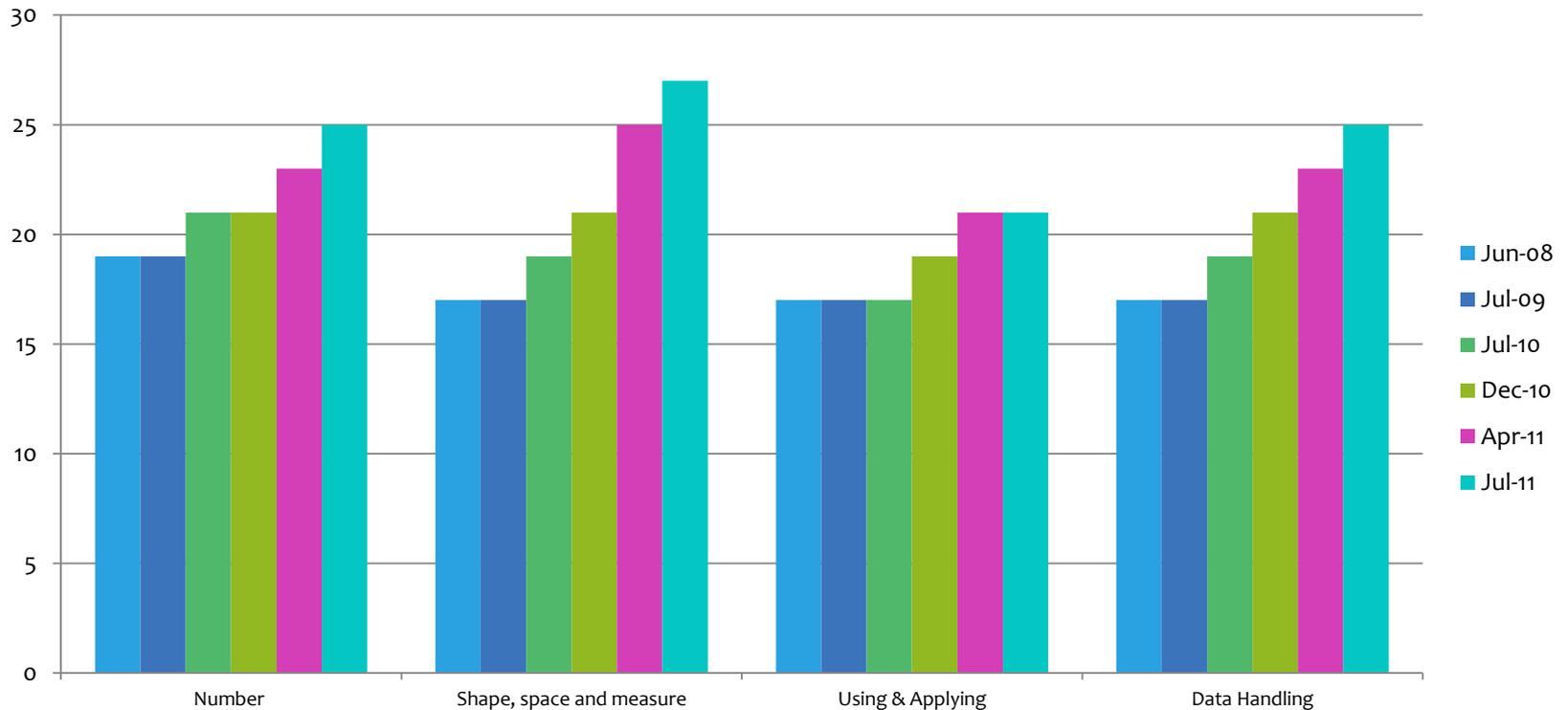
Education Tracking Document

Literacy Tracking



Education Tracking Document

Numeracy Tracking



In conclusion



- Jay doing well at a weekly boarding school.
- Lives with Mum, but sees both parents.

- 93% of children who, on entering the school, were unable to be placed long term with a family are able to by the time they leave the school.
- 100 % of children are able to be placed in a suitable school on departure, being able to learn and be taught.