

With Compliments

DEDISHAM SCHOOL

SLINFOLD, HORSHAM,
WEST SUSSEX RH13 7RA

Tel. SLINFOLD (0403) 790257

Principal: Rosemary Siddles (Mrs)

Dedisham offers places to pupils on a weekly boarding (4 or 5 nights) termly boarding basis, and day school with negotiable respite care.

The fees for 1994/95 are: £38,826 termly
£31,992 weekly
£21,504 daily (plus respite care)

DEDISHAM

School for Autistic Children



DEDISHAM is pleasantly sited about 6 miles west of Horsham near the junction of the roads A29 and A281 and approximately 1½ miles by road from Slinfold, which is an attractive village and has a primary school, post office, public house and shop. Dedisham has been extended at various times since 1929, when the original Victorian house was adapted for use as a children's convalescent nursing home. Major extensions carried out in 1949 provided a large dormitory wing, classroom unit and kitchen facilities. Such additions made it possible for the National Autistic Society, in September 1970, to use the premises as one of the very first fully residential schools for autistic children with a national catchment area.

In September 1975 the further purchase of a house within easy walking distance of Horsham town centre provided the school with a residential annexe for seven pupils aged 15 years and over. The annexe pupil's main educational programme continues at Dedisham with the proportion of academic teaching and social training remaining flexible depending on each child's abilities and needs. Although separated by distance, this unit comes within the direct responsibility of the main school. The care team, led by the superintendent, is responsible through the school's Head of Care to the Principal for all programmes at the annexe.

The facilities at Dedisham comprise of five classrooms, a home economics area, a craft room, a gymnasium/play barn and more recently a well equipped work skills centre. Each class group is the responsibility of an experienced qualified teacher who has the help of either one or two assistants. The home economics area and work centre are each directed by a full time experienced instructor. Craft and typing are

subjects catered for by extraction from groups into a separate area. Special co-ordinated activities are organised in the area of language and communication and involve programme planning with the school's consultant speech therapist. Events outside or away from the school include the use of the public swimming pool, leisure centre and the R.D.A. equestrian centre. Children participate in these areas on a regular programme. Dedisham has its own covered, heated swimming pool suitable for use between April and October.

The main school has sleeping accommodation for twenty-eight children (seven girls; twenty-one boys) ~~on a termly boarding basis~~. Activities pursued in school are those normally found in school curricula and include music, art and craft, pottery, number work and language intervention.

Considerable attention is given to social competence, self-care and personal hygiene. Houseparents, who are responsible for 'out of school' time are in charge of such activities, and time is available during the school day to extend such training where necessary. Care of the children in the residential setting is the responsibility of Head of Care who leads a team of twenty houseparents, the children being grouped into house units with the girls in a separate but adjoining wing. Just as in the classroom it is felt important to present the children with carefully planned programmes and to link both school and 'out of school' activities as closely as possible to retain continuity.

In order to follow each child's progress, meetings are held involving all staff concerned and an annual report is compiled with parents also being able to add comments. This report would then be sent to Local Education Authorities sponsoring the child with copies to parents and

Social Services if necessary.

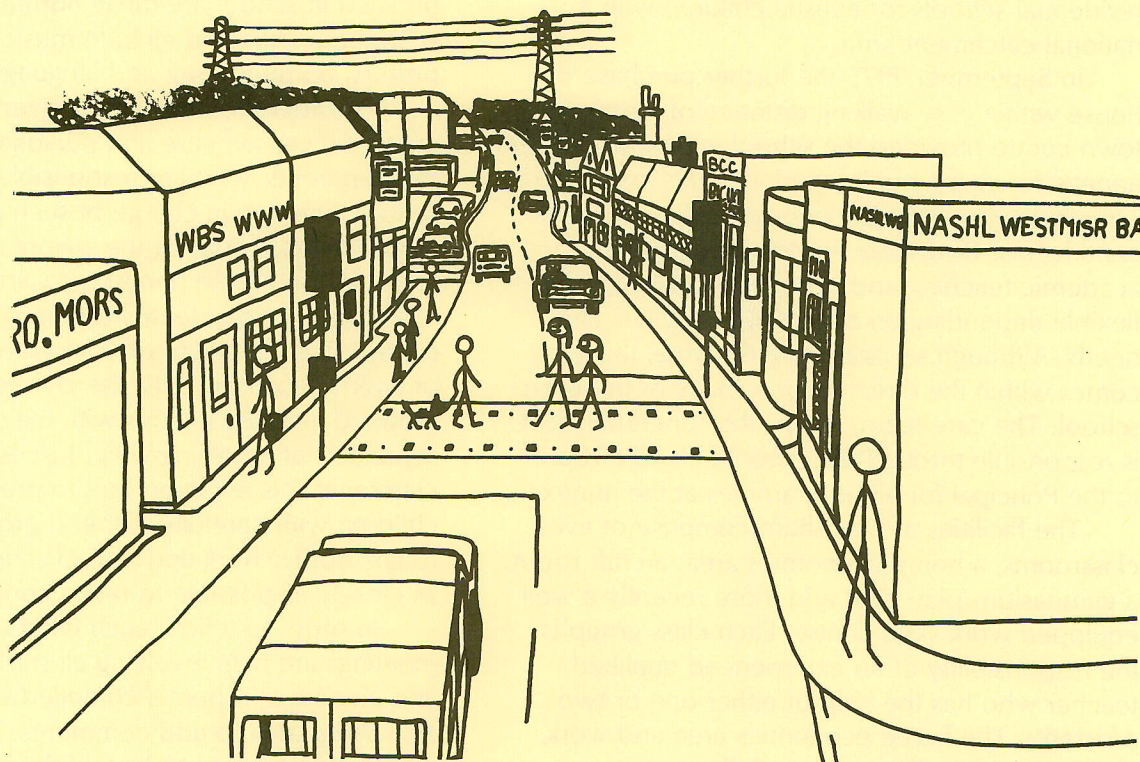
To assist with our assessment work, the school has the help of a consultant psychologist and psychiatrist. Also involved closely with our work at Dedisham is the school doctor, who makes weekly visits and keeps a check on the children's medical problems; Sight, hearing and teeth are also subject to inspection and treatment arranged either at home or at school. Parents do however have complete freedom to arrange for all such checks and for any subsequent treatment on a private basis.

The school terms follow closely those of West Sussex schools and include one weeks holiday at each half-term. Normally we would envisage three weeks at Christmas, two weeks at Easter and six during July/August/September. Parents or sponsoring authority would be responsible for transport arrangements. All bed linen, towels etc. are provided by the school, but

parents are expected to provide each child with clothing to comply with current clothes lists. The school maintains a number of mini buses for educational and recreational use, and although parents are not asked to contribute to the normal use of such transport, pocket money is requested to cover special occasions, sweets etc. Cooks and assistants are employed along with adequate daily domestic staff to ensure good standards of living and cleanliness.

The school has a management committee appointed by the N.A.S. and has both staff and parent representation. All members of this committee have an active role to play in overseeing the schools affairs. The school in turn is represented on the N.A.S. Executive Committee by one of these members. Fees for the school are set by this executive body and are paid termly at the beginning of each term.

Billingshurst High Street,
drawn by a pupil at
Dedisham School



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School for Autistic Children

RATIONALE

In an effort to produce a rationale for the school curriculum, it is necessary to relate to the broader aspects of education and by doing so determine the principles on which the curriculum should rest. Guidance has been taken from the Schools Council working paper which recognises six central issues in working out a curriculum. These have been listed and the nine relevant aspects related to our 'special child' emphasised; points I, II, V, VI perhaps relate most.

I. The overwhelming need for each school and for the country as a whole is to find a rationale for the curriculum now every child has a right to eleven years education.

II. Then to identify the irreducible minimum to which every pupil should have a right to access, the Council believes this minimum should reflect the complex diversity of human nature and the capacity schools have to contribute to every aspect of personal and social growth. The minimum curriculum should be broad and stimulating.

III. To decide what mix of subject discipline and kinds of experience a school should provide to meet the diverse needs of its pupils, and to achieve a reasonable balance over the eleven years of compulsory schooling.

IV. To take account of implications of having externally examined outcomes for most pupils.

V. To negotiate a match between the desired curriculum and the staff, accommodation, equipment and materials available, and —

VI. To think out ways of discovering whether the planned curriculum achieves what is hoped of it.



We have deliberately referred to schools instead of education. There are other paths to knowledge and education than school. The influences of home, neighbourhood, peers and the media often greatly exceed the influence of school. Children spend a relatively small part of their lives in school, and most leave school before they reach maturity. These factors limit what schools can realistically hope to achieve on their own. At the same time schools have potential allies who can add greatly to their capacity for education.

Following the Schools Council working paper it is seen to indicate that schools have the capacity and the will to help their pupils in at least six ways, again these are listed with an indication made of those most relevant to this school.

Certainly, we would wish to see points I, and V, as desirable aims together with point VI, but self motivation in the latter may well be impossible to achieve.



RATIONALE continued

More specific aims of the school are defined separately and although bearing some relation to those suggested by the Council, inevitably vary considerably to allow for our particular children's handicap and prognosis.

I. To acquire knowledge, skills and practical abilities, and the will to use them.

II. To develop qualities of mind, body, spirit, feeling and imagination.

III. To appreciate human achievements in Art, Music, Science, Technology and Literature.

IV. To acquire understanding of the social, economic and political order, and a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs.

V. To prepare for their adult lives at home, at work, at leisure and at large, as consumers and citizens.

VI. To develop a sense of self-respect, the capacity to live as independent, self-motivated adults and the ability to function as contributing members of co-operative groups.

EACH PUPIL SHOULD BE MOVING FORWARD ACCORDING TO AGE AND ABILITY IN ALL THESE WAYS.

SCHOOL'S POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the National Autistic Society -

1 To select for admission to its schools those autistic children who do not benefit from integrated education. This will include the classically autistic child, the child with autistic tendencies and those children who have handicaps in addition to autism.

2 Maintain a high ratio of staff to pupils. This will ensure that each child is offered continuity of personal integration, support, security and positive intervention which should help to make possible the process of development which is otherwise usually erratic.

3 That within its schools each individual child should be encouraged to progress academically, socially and personally within the limits imposed by the idiosyncratic range of abilities.

The National Autistic Society recognises that autistic children may place intolerable pressures on those who live with them. It is, therefore, policy to assume that the role of its schools is more than narrowly academic. It emphasises training in social and practical skills, encouragement of acceptable behaviour and development of communication skills. Residential provision is made where appropriate.

It is N.A.S. policy to equip an autistic person for life. It is assumed that every functional skill will have to be systematically taught for his long-term future whilst not forgetting his personal daily satisfaction. Every aspect of education will be deliberately designed to improve the quality of life for each individual.

DEDISHAM

School for Autistic Children

CURRICULUM

In order that we can attempt to meet our aims, it is necessary to determine what subjects or aspects of subjects should be included in the curriculum. With particular reference to our children, any subject planning must be very basic and flexible in its interpretation.

However, there are a number of very obvious choices of subjects that can be seen to help the autistic child, and very often it is easier to build the general school timetable around such subjects.

ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM (CORE)

- i Environmental Studies
- ii Social Competence
- iii Communication
- iv Creative Activities
- v Physical Skills
- vi Cognitive Skills
- viii Maths & Scientific Enquiry

To achieve objectives within the 'Core Curriculum', it will be necessary to provide:-

- a) Structured individual teaching sessions
- b) Creative unstructured activities
- c) Group structured activities
- d) Group creative activities
- e) Dormitory or evening activities

1. ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Geography of school buildings, beginning with classrooms and dormitories. Geography of local area, beginning with school in relation to neighbours. Use of local or area facilities such as transport, telephone, shops, cafes. Care of own environment - gardens, classrooms, dormitories etc. General knowledge of environment.

2. SCHOOL COMPETENCE

Self-Help

- Toileting - at school and in public toilets
- Feeding - at school and in public places
- Dressing - including awareness of appearance
- Washing - including hair

Domestic Skills

- Laying and clearing tables
- Washing and drying dishes
- Cooking
- Bedmaking
- Cleaning and dusting
- Laundering clothes

Progress in all areas will develop from being helped and supervised to working independently and will include all chores necessary to everyday living.

cont'd/.....

3. COMMUNICATION

Development of Language - Use of Speech or signs.

Development of needs/choices - To help each child assess their needs and make choices.

Social Awareness - Consideration to others and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour patterns.

Reading and Writing - As a general aid to communication and not just part of a formal education programme.

4. CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Music - Rhythm, use of instruments, singing, music therapy.

Art - painting, drawing, claywork, canework etc.

Representational Play/Drama - Development of symbolic play, using toys appropriately, dressing up, pretend play leading to acting out everyday situations and simple drama performances.

Movement - Linked with music and drama to develop both gross and fine skills.

Creative Writing - Part of communication and an extension to formal classroom work.

5. COGNITIVE SKILLS

Concept Formation - Analytic sorting and grouping

Perceptual Skills - Visual discrimination, differences between pictures and objects, visual tracking as pre-reading exercises.

Sequential Skills - Ordering in sequence, to follow, memorise and extend a pattern whether it is shapes, words or numbers.

6. MATHS & SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY

Number - Quantity, time, money, measurement

Science - Plants, air, wind, rain/water, electricity

Maths - A subject going right across the curriculum, one-to-one correspondence, names for numbers, big and little, problem solving etc.

Scientific Enquiry - Beginning with sand and water play, discovering how properties change, watching seeds germinate, understanding hot and cold involving all aspects of nature study.

7. PHYSICAL SKILLS

Gross Motor Co-ordination - Simple positions in space, throwing, catching, running, hopping, skipping, swimming, horse-riding.

Fine Motor Co-ordination - Peg boards, inset boards, threading beads, button fastening, laces, sewing, holding pencils correctly, holding knives and forks etc.

It is intended that throughout a child's stay at Dedisham, he or she will be guided towards achieving the maximum level of competence within each of the seven main areas of the curriculum. If not able to achieve the maximum, then a basic minimum acceptable level will be the over-all objective.

Many areas of the curriculum are inter-related and in applying the curriculum it will be seen how the individual areas affect each other.

In addition to the development within the curriculum, it will be necessary because of the peculiarity of our children's handicap to include a development record of abnormal or problem behaviour and to record improvement in such areas as part of their over-all progress.

CURRICULUM ACCESS

"The purpose of education for all children is the same; the goals are the same. But the help that individual children need in progressing towards them will be different;....for some, knowledge will not be spontaneously acquired and will have to be elaborately taught."

[Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Education of Handicapped Children and Young People - 1978]

At Dedisham, staff will take into account the individual needs of pupils and ensure that all pupils have access to as much of the curriculum as is possible and appropriate for them.

All programmes of study ensure that pupils will be engaged in a wide range of purposeful and age-appropriate activities. There is, however, a core of early development skills and experiences common to all subjects which pupils at Dedisham, with their special needs, may not easily assimilate.

It is these skills and experiences which the school presents in its guidance materials as the first stages or 'stepping stones' towards progression from passive to pro-active stages of development.

Not all children will follow the same route, and an account will be taken of individual needs of each pupil in designing individual teaching and learning programmes. These programmes will enable pupils to address a variety of approaches, both within an attainment target and across a range of attainment targets.

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WHAT WE FEEL AT DEDISHAM ABOUT OUR PURPOSE AND AIMS

Each and every child at Dedisham will be valued as an individual; they will be treated with dignity and respect. Being part of the school family and cared for as a child first, is an important attitude that we, at Dedisham, accept along with ensuring each child's safety.

To know that each child has these rights, is an important element of the school ethos.

The distances that separate termly boarding pupils from home means that good, strong, clear relationships have to be established between school and home, in order to maintain a working partnership. To this end, we feel communications between home and school to be a vital formal, and informal, part of the school routine.

Teaching or learning programmes have to be very individual, and whilst the school is working towards accessing the National Curriculum through our own planned 'stepping stones, the very special difficulties associated with autism means that priorities are given towards achieving independent living skills and social acceptability.

It is essential that the learning process is presented, where possible, through real life experiences that can present the child with opportunities to understand the world around them.

CLASS 5

ASSEMBLY - ALL CLASSES

CARE POLICY DOCUMENT - THE DEDISHAM CONCEPT

Foreword

At Dedisham our aim is to develop awareness of self and sensitivity to others, via developing necessary skills for coping with everyday problems. We therefore assist our young people to achieve at an appropriate level of physical, manipulative and communicative skills in domestic, vocational and leisure contexts. Young people are regularly accompanied on shopping trips, swimming, occasional concerts and visits to local places of interest. Young people with autism do not engage in imaginative play, therefore the staff take an active part in play activities, teaching the children how to use toys and apparatus appropriately. Individual programmes are planned following a detailed assessment of each child's strengths and needs: by parents, teachers, and Residential Social Workers.

Specific attainable targets are set thus ensuring some degree of success. Considerable attention is given to social competence and life skills.

This document is published with a view to conveying the Dedisham Concept! The provision of dignified, home-like surroundings which gives the young people fuller, richer enjoyment and helps in learning how to live. Most of the practice portrayed is not necessarily original because it stems from the gradually unfolding opinions of both professionals and lay people who have worked intimately either with their own autistic child or in a professional environment.

A Consultant-Psychiatrist, Psychologist and Speech Therapist assist all the staff in the assessment of young people, while the school medical officer visits weekly.

N.V.Q. - As a participant in the N.V.Q. Scheme, Residential Care Staff at Dedisham are able to have their competency as carers assessed through a nationally monitored body thus enabling them to build up a portfolio of assessed 'work activities' which would be recognised by most employers.

This is not only about practical applications of work activities, but takes into consideration the caring aspect of respect towards colleagues and pupils.

We are anticipating that a large percentage of our Residential Care Workers, having had their skills recognised, will eventually achieve a National Vocational Qualification award.

The framework of this award is there for them to ensure personal development. This award will gradually cover most aspects of employment and will eventually be available to all employees.

Group-Living

The differences in the development in our pupils and those of other young people may be largely due to them having additional autistic problems which can hold them back in most areas of development. With this in mind our objective is to provide our young people with extra stimulation by carefully organising their experiences.

The domestic and informal living groups provide natural training and learning opportunities. The small homely settings are good working tools in the hands of Dedisham's Residential Social Workers each one of which would be allocated directly to a pupil in a key-worker capacity, their task being to collate all information regarding the young person and be accessible to parents and other professionals. Independence may not be an attainable aim for most of our young people, nevertheless it is our aim for all of them to be able to contribute to the running of their home.

They receive every opportunity to learn and practice things like laundering and ironing, laying tables, washing-up and house care, as well as the self toileting and normal patterns of behaviour that make for self respect and acceptability.

The care of the young people in the residential setting is the responsibility of the Head of Care who leads a team of twenty-one Residential Social Workers.

Because of the geographical structure, all children/pupils at Dedisham experience the stimulation of a rural setting in which they are encouraged to absorb the natural beauty of the countryside.

Therapeutic

"It has been shown by independent evaluation that the provision of the right kind of education, management and environment can as far as possible, minimise handicaps and maximise potential skill". (Wing)

The impairments of social interaction, social communication and imagination and the rigid respective behaviour are the central core of the autistic spectrum.

The nature of these impairments and how they are expressed in many and varied ways are often expressed in very challenging behaviour. Understanding and skilled teaching developed through experience and training is at the base of the care provided. Socially impaired young people are effectively helped to cope with a world they cannot understand.

Dedisham staff whilst being sympathetic to the young persons idiosyncrasies, are able to work alongside the children in their care in order to implement programmes towards acceptable behaviour.

Purpose, humour and happiness permeate throughout the environment of Dedisham. The staff are lively and imaginative constantly seeking to understand the problems that autism presents and to respond with a respect and tolerance for the person as an individual.

The Annexe

"Adults who are autistic have needs which fall into five main categories:- 1) Physical health, 2) Safety, security, structure 3) Relationships, love 4) Confidence, self-esteem 5) Self-fulfilment, autonomy. These are needs which are common to all humanity: the main difference lies in ease of attainment". (Meldrum)

Seven of Dedisham's more adult young people live together in a house in Horsham and are able to have close links with the community.

Where possible the four RSW's promote independent, self-care, social participation, self respect and general personal enhancement through attending local clubs and activities, using public transport, help with the shopping and the daily running of the household.

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CLASSROOMS

Groups within the school are organised into classrooms appropriate to age and ability, with Classes 4 and 5 representing the older groups incorporating those pupils preparing to leave school.

The aim of the two 'leavers' classes is to work each child through programmes to help prepare them for leaving school and taking up places, where possible, in either Adult Training Centres or Residential Communities. Although one of these two groups will have an emphasis towards developing more fully their 'academic' skills, it is still closely linked with a practical programme for 'life skills' which is common to both classes.

All new pupils, because of age, are generally accepted into one of the junior school classes. It is the aim of these classes to develop an awareness of self, together with skills that will enable each child to make progress socially and academically with the introduction of work skills for the older children, which will lead them into the main 'core' of the two 'school leavers' groups.

In addition to the classroom structure, there is a framework of language assessment and intervention available on an individual extraction basis to all children in all groups. The language programme employed is guided by a Speech Therapist working at a practical level with all staff.

Of equal importance to all programmes within individual class groups is the opportunity to be involved with 'Home Economics' or 'house craft skills'. Such programmes enable all children at whatever level to participate in basic cookery and kitchen management. Each class on a weekly basis have access to work under the direction of our 'Home Economics' Instructor. A purpose built, well-equipped "work" centre is available as a resource for the school leavers programme. It is hoped soon to have horticultural facilities which can also be accessed by the entire school in relation to classroom science projects.

The resources available in the above areas, together with programmes for 'Life Skills', enable us to develop still further skills in Home Management, which will all eventually be an essential part of adult life, whether living at home or in a community.

A recently built "Sensory Therapy Unit" is now available and accessed by all pupils on a timetabled basis.

NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY

DEDISHAM ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mr Bryan Jones Secretary: Mrs Peggy Everard
Staff Rep. (Teaching) Mr W Buglass

Dr Lorna Wing, Mrs Sandra Baker, Mr Jack Leaman, Mrs Wendy Lines, Mr Kenneth Loveday
and Dr David Mathias

Staff Rep. (Care) Mr A Blamire

Deputy Principal - Mr W Buglass

Principal - Mrs Rosemary Siddles

Head of Care - Mr A Blamire

TEACHING STAFF

Cl.1 Teacher: Mrs S Riches
Cl Help Mrs G Buckley/
Mrs C Kavanah
Cl.2/3 Teachers: Mrs W Thompson
Miss S Tindall
Vol: Mrs K McPherson
Cl Help Mrs H McCabe/
Mrs B Pusey/Mrs P Connold/
Mrs J Garratty
Cl.4 Teacher: Mrs R Jones
Cl Help Mrs L Cundy
Cl.5 Teacher: Mrs B Miller
Cl Help Mrs M Hall
Sensory Th: Mrs A Buglass
Home Ec: Mr G Curran
Workshop: Mr C Tester
Horticulture: Mrs C Flynn

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
(Senior Secretary)
Mrs J Bott
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
(Secretaries)
Mrs J Bennett (part-time)
Mrs L Wood (part-time)
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
(Accounts)
Mr D Hicks

CARE RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL WORKERS

A Mrs L Bennett, Mr C Ansell
Mr H Childs, Miss M Davey
B Mr G Flint, Miss C Farningham
Miss E Duncan, Mrs P Londal
C Mr M McEnery, Mr D Blake
Miss I-Mariott, Miss N
Matthews, Miss C Wales
G Miss V Eliot, Miss J Domichan
Miss S Foster, Miss N Rae,
Mr D Cairns,
AXX Mr D Holden
Mr V Young
Miss S Buckingham
Miss E Mitchell

RES. SOCIAL WORKERS (NIGHTS)

Mrs E Connor
Mrs M Edwards
Mrs R I-Mariott
Mr R Rajendram
Mrs G Wickham

MAINT/GARDENER DOMESTIC & CATERING

Driver/Handyman: Mr J Moore
Groundsman: Mr H Adsett (p/c)
Gardener: Mr J Cheer
Cook-in-Charge: Mrs I Elliott
Cook: Mrs M Dungate
Ass. Cook: Mrs S Pentecost
Kitchen Ass: Mrs P Woodason
Laundress: Mrs R Rice
Cleaners: Mrs D Laker
Mrs J Timms
Mrs S Rhoades
Mrs S Tolley
Mrs M Waller
Wkend Kitchen Ass: Miss A
Pentecost

CONSULTANT SPECIALISTS:
Psychiatrist: Dr Mike Shaw; School GP: Dr David Mathias; Dentist: Mr Derek Debusse; Clinical Psychologist:

to be replaced Music Th: Miss H Thorpe; Speech Th: Mrs H Bradley