

MORAG AGE 11

Morag is the youngest of four children. Her father moved to London from Scotland to obtain work. Shortly after he moved to London he met his wife who was a Nigerian student. Their relationship was positive and they seemed to have provided a good, happy family life for their children although they had little contact with their extended families because they lived so far away. Morag's father worked to support the family but her mother stayed at home to care for the children. Morag's first year of life was uneventful. She was a wanted, happy baby and achieved all her normal milestones. When she was 15 months old, however, her mother was killed in a road accident. Her father found it hard to cope with the loss of his wife particularly as he felt isolated in London. Eventually he returned to Scotland to get support from his family. His parents and sister, however, disapproved of his marriage and rejected the children. He began drinking and neglecting the children. The older children provided much of the basic care that Morag required. The situation continued to deteriorate and the children were all eventually received into care when Morag was four years old. She was separated from her siblings and placed with foster carers. This placement provided a settled experience for a few months though Morag was distressed by the separation from her siblings whom she saw infrequently. This placement terminated when the foster father became seriously ill. Morag had been about to start primary school and had been well prepared for this experience. Her new carers lived some distance away and she therefore had to start in a different school where she knew nobody. She experienced racist bullying within days of starting school but did not feel safe enough to tell anybody. In this placement she was angry and difficult. The carers found her impossible to engage and resistant to affection. This placement quickly broke down and she had several moves during the next few years some of which necessitated a change of school. Eventually, aged 10, she was placed in a residential unit and began another new school. The unit and school have developed a very good working relationship and communication and planning for Morag is now excellent and Morag has begun to enjoy school much more.

She rarely sees her father who has now married a white Scottish woman and has a new baby. She has, however, maintained strong relationships with her siblings one of whom is now in the same placement as her. This has allowed her to settle down in the residential unit and begin to make positive relationships with staff and other young people.

Although Morag is very bright she has not achieved her potential in primary school. She has made progress during the last year as she has a very good relationship with her class teacher who has put a lot of time and effort into supporting Morag's learning and her social experiences. Morag has considerable artistic talent which has been recognised and nurtured in the school. She has recently entered and won a national competition and is very proud of this accomplishment. Morag is very anxious about her transition to secondary school. She found the physical environment of the secondary school frightening on her recent three-day visit and was uncomfortable with the frequent changes of class although she did enjoy her experience in Art and Science.