

A last-minute switch to Bristol Gateway School was the best thing that could have happened to Charlie



Claire and Mike Barnard live with their children, Jordan, aged 16, Charlie, aged 13, Kai, aged 11, Danny, aged 10, Libbi, aged nine, Cayla, aged nine, and McKenzie, aged seven. Charlie had behavioural problems when he was at primary school and joined Bristol Gateway in Year Seven.



Good progress

A late decision to offer Charlie a place at Bristol Gateway when he was about to go to secondary school worried his Mum, Claire, at the time. But now when she looks back she realises it was the best thing that could have happened to him. "Within a couple of weeks of Charlie starting in Year Seven, I felt reassured that Bristol Gateway was the right school for him and he has progressed in leaps and bounds ever since," she says.

Late change

Charlie had been preparing to attend a mainstream secondary school but at the eleventh hour the school said they couldn't take him because he had been statemented, Claire says. "He had been to look round the school and we had even attended an open day but at the very last minute they sent me a letter saying they couldn't take him."

Improved school

As a result, he had never seen Bristol Gateway until the day he started. "He was thrown in at the deep end without having had chance to get used to the school. I wasn't happy at the time because the school had a bad reputation years ago and so when I was first told Charlie had to go there I was naturally concerned. But the school has improved a great deal in recent years. There is more discipline and everything is more structured and organised than it was reputed to be in the past," Claire says.

Happy at home

Charlie had attended a mainstream primary school but after he got in with a bad crowd he started to get into trouble regularly, Claire says. "He was eventually sent to Woodstock for the nine months he had left before he was due to go up to secondary school. His behaviour started to improve at Woodstock and he is now absolutely fine. He is doing very well at school and at home he behaves like a typical, happy teenager."

Playing sports

Claire says Charlie's favourite lesson is PE and he also enjoys football and indoor climbing. "He plays football after school on Thursdays. Then a teacher takes him indoor climbing at a centre not far from the school. Charlie is dropped off home at about half past six, by which time he is worn out."

Working well

"Charlie has good relationships with the teachers. They have small classes so he gets plenty of attention, much more than he would get in a mainstream school. He is doing well in all his subjects and is working at the right level for his age. He will take his GCSEs at Bristol Gateway and then plans to go to college," Claire says.

Settled in

Because the family have now moved a considerable distance from the school, Charlie has to travel there and back in a taxi. "He is happy to do that because he has settled in well at the school and made plenty of friends there," Claire says.

Supportive staff

"The teachers at the school are always really supportive to both Charlie and myself. When Charlie had an issue outside school they supported us well all the way through it. I feel I can always ring the school for advice and help if I need it. I am so pleased now that he attends Bristol Gateway. Looking back, it was the best thing that could have happened to him," Claire says.

Children say

Charlie says: "I like all my teachers and enjoy playing football at school."



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