

# Attending Bristol Gateway School has been a life-changing experience for Jamie and his family



Samantha and Mike De Coensel live in Westbury-on-Trym with their daughters, Georgie, aged 15, and Rubie, aged eight, and their son, Jamie, aged 13. Jamie has been diagnosed with extreme ADHD, ODD and Tourette's syndrome. He moved from a mainstream primary school to Woodstock School and joined Bristol Gateway in Year Seven.



## Caring staff

Samantha says Bristol Gateway have thrown her family a lifeline since Jamie started there at the age of 11. "I can't praise the school enough for all they have done. Although Jamie still has problems he has made amazing progress since he started, thanks to the care he has received from the wonderful staff."

## Taking part

Jamie now does more school work, gets along with other people better and takes part in more activities. Samantha says: "He was doing very little work when he was in mainstream schooling and he wouldn't take part in anything so I have seen a big change in him since he started at Bristol Gateway."

## Turning point

Jamie went to a mainstream primary school when he was four but had to leave by Year Five because the school couldn't cope with him. "He was out of control by then and causing damage. He kept running off and was a danger to himself as well as to others. The school didn't understand him at all and the other children called him names," Samantha says. "He was sent to a Pupil Referral Unit until he was statemented and then offered a place at Woodstock School. Starting at Woodstock was a real turning point. It was a big change for him and he struggled with everything at first but then he settled down and started to enjoy it."

## Settling well

"We were very lucky that Bristol Gateway agreed to take him when it was time for him to go into Year Seven. The staff are an amazing bunch of people and he has developed strong bonds with them. When he started at the school he struggled with the work initially but he felt the teachers understood him and so eventually he settled in," Samantha says.

## Joining the band

Jamie likes music, maths, design technology and he enjoys most sports, in particular football, rugby and running. "He now plays the drums in the school band and yet he wouldn't do anything in front of other people before. The school have identified that he has a talent for it and while he's playing he's focusing and concentrating and so he gets a release from his problems," Samantha says.

## Extra support

"Bristol Gateway is good for Jamie because the class sizes are small and so he gets lots of attention from the teachers. He needs extra support and they help him. They've got plenty of time for him and they understand him. They know exactly what to do if he gets upset or agitated," Samantha says. "We can see a big difference in him and although he still has his difficulties we now have some good times with him at home as well. He has a good heart and he knows the difference between right and wrong."

## Support and advice

"As a family we have worked with the school to help him improve and I can't praise Bristol Gateway enough for what they do for their pupils. They have been life savers for us. I can ring and speak to the staff and they will give me advice whenever I need it. They have been a tremendous support to me," Samantha says. "I would always recommend special needs education for children with problems. Children should be educated somewhere where they can make progress and learn and not be made to struggle in mainstream schools."

## Children say

Jamie says: "I like playing football and enjoy learning the drums at school."



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