



“This is so much more than just a good school. It has been a lifeline in so many ways”

Sarah and Brian live in the Weymouth area and have three daughters. Rose is 18, Robyn 13 and Esmay is 11.

Extra time

Esmay is in her final year at Chickerell Primary Academy, having taken an extra year there in order to help her catch up because of her additional needs. Robyn was also a pupil there until she moved up to a secondary setting.

All three girls are neurodivergent, with the two older ones on the autism spectrum and Esmay diagnosed with ADHD.

Hardship

This family has been through an extremely difficult few years. Aside from the fact that the girls all have mental health challenges, the recent pandemic left both Sarah and Brian without jobs or income and they found themselves homeless through no fault of their own, and for a while were housed in emergency accommodation.

Struggling to survive

“It’s hard now to contemplate what an awful time that was,”

explains Sarah. “We were struggling to cope, both financially and to care for three children with special needs. We moved to Chickerell during the early stages of the Covid crisis but needed a school for the girls. In a huge piece of good fortune, we found Chickerell Primary Academy and it’s not too much to say that I don’t think we would have survived without its support.”

Credit where it is due

Both Robyn and Esmay will be attending a specialist setting at secondary level, but Sarah is convinced that it is Chickerell Primary Academy which should take the credit for keeping them in a mainstream setting for their vital early education.

Sarah sums up her feelings thus: “The difference between Chickerell and some other primary schools I have seen is like the difference between night and day.”



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