

# Katie despaired about finding a school which could address her son's needs. And then she found Chickerell Primary Academy

Katie and Kyle have two children at Chickerell Primary Academy. Roman is six and Indy, four.



## Who can help?

Katie and Kyle had only recently moved to the Weymouth area when it was time to enroll Roman in school, and they began trying to find a suitable setting for him. Roman has a range of additional needs, including global development delay and autism, so they needed a school which could address those issues.

## Last resort

"We were torn between a specialist provision and mainstream options but as Roman didn't have eligibility for an EHCP we approached various mainstream schools. Virtually all said that they did not have the resources to deal with his range of needs so when friends whose children attended Chickerell Academy suggested we apply, we did so, as we were running out of ideas."

## Stability

Roman had been out of education until he was four years old, partly because an appropriate setting couldn't be found and partly because his parents felt it was better to keep him at home until he was legally obliged to start school at five. "We needed to make sure he had some permanence, some stability," says Katie, "so we were delighted when Chickerell was so accepting and told us: 'Let's see what we can do.'"

## Fantastic support

Although Roman is still undergoing assessment of eligibility for an EHCP, the school was more than happy to make accommodation for his immediate needs, including a dedicated 1-1 teaching assistant and restricted hours. "The level of support has been fantastic," Katie says. "All the staff are fully invested in Roman's welfare and take their cue from what he needs, and his interests, so that he is completely comfortable with them."

## Palpable progress

Although Roman has only been attending the school for a short time, his progress has been palpable.

From being unable to read, write or even hold a pencil, he is now able to write his name, count to ten and read simple sentences. He is even progressing in his speech development which gives his parents much joy.

## Professional backup

Katie and Kyle are still hoping that Roman will soon be awarded an EHCP, which in turn will enable the school to access additional funding for his needs, but in the meantime, Katie is confident that the current level of support will continue. "The SENCO has been a huge help in going through the LA mediation process with us, giving her professional opinion as to Roman's situation, and backing us up with her knowledge and expertise."

## Care and compassion

Parents of children with special needs face a range of challenges, and Katie feels more than lucky she found a school which, she believes, has as much interest in her son's welfare as do she and Kyle. "I honestly think they are completely on our side. Roman loves the school, and his teachers, and has made a special bond with them; that speaks volumes about the quality of care and compassion which abounds at Chickerell."

## Encouragement to achieve

Katie and Kyle's daughter, Indy, currently attends Chickerell Nursery School and as she also shows signs of autism spectrum, with the full support of the school, is delaying the transition to Reception until she is five. "When I had concerns about how Roman would cope in a mainstream school, our experience with Chickerell completely changed my mind. Seeing how being alongside other children has encouraged him to achieve has convinced me that this is absolutely the best setting for him and will be for our daughter, too."

Katie's experience has taught her that the best help comes from unexpected sources. "So many other schools said 'we can't help'. Chickerell said 'we can'."