

For a child with special needs the right school is vital, and Ania has found at Brookhurst Primary School people she can trust completely



Minimum disruption

For Ania and Mark, one of the most important aspects of any school they chose for Lara was that it should have linked Infant and Junior sections in order to accommodate Lara's particular requirements. As she has a range of special needs including difficulty with adapting to new surroundings, they were anxious to ensure that she should have as little disruption as possible, at least in her early school years. "We looked at several schools but the Infant and Junior classes were in different premises to each other and that would have caused problems," explains Ania. "When I heard about Brookhurst, and it was recommended to me by other parents, I realised that it could be the answer so we enrolled her there without a second thought."



Ania and Mark Kaiser live in Warwick with their daughters Lara, eight and baby Olympia who is nearly two.

Blossoming

The decision could have been risky but Ania is delighted that they made it. "Lara is a different child now to the way she was when she started there," she says. "She used to be very shy and insecure so it is wonderful now to see how much she enjoys taking a speaking part in a school production or opening her class assembly by welcoming the parents as she did recently. She has blossomed under the support she has been given at Brookhurst and I could not be happier."

The right setting with the right support

Lara has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and was allocated a Teaching Assistant to provide one-to-one help in the classroom as well as speech and language therapy, and such has been her progress that this support is now becoming less and less necessary. "There is still someone there to help if she needs it and she knows she can ask, but she has always been encouraged to work on her own as much as possible and that has paid dividends. She is keeping up extremely well and that convinces me that putting her into mainstream education was absolutely the right thing to do."

Complete trust

Ania concedes that not every school might have been able to offer the same level of support, however, and she has nothing but praise for the teachers who, with many years of experience in special needs education, have played a major role in helping Lara to achieve what she has. "Their knowledge and experience count for a great deal, but it is also their calm, patient and empathetic approach which has worked wonders. They have taught me a lot, too, and I trust them as I would members of my own family. When you have a vulnerable child, being able to trust someone to that degree is absolutely invaluable."

New enthusiasm and new confidence

Something which surprised Ania was the realisation that confidence and good social connections can play a significant part in improving a child's learning ability;



Lara's new enthusiasm for joining in with school events and the new friends she is so happy with would seem to bear out this theory. "Lara's teachers have told me how important they believe social development is for children like Lara, and that self-confidence in social situations would help with her academic achievements. That appears to have been the case with Lara and it really is lovely to see how she has developed and progressed in so many ways. I give Brookhurst much of the credit for that."

Positive outcome

Ania is very impressed with her experience of Brookhurst's approach to those who need extra support. "Everyone has been very understanding and very accommodating, and has inspired Lara to thoroughly enjoy her learning experience. She actively engages with all her lessons and has recently become fascinated with Roman History and with the Ancient Egyptians; that's a very positive outcome for any eight-year-old."

Children say

On a recent journey to start her day at Brookhurst, Lara made an unprompted comment to her mum, saying how much she liked school. And then she added, "I like this school."

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