



Jo had to face more family problems than most parents but The Bursar Academy has been **there for her** throughout them all

Joanne and Ian England live in Cleethorpes with their daughter Lucy, ten, and son Kieran, who is six.

## Family first

Jo has many reasons to be glad she trusted her instincts when she and Ian chose The Bursar Academy for Lucy. Having been to the school many times with her nieces and nephews, she had always liked the friendly and family-orientated feeling and the welcoming atmosphere. "I believe that a school should focus not only on education but on the social and emotional welfare of the children, too," she says. "In our case at least, Bursar Academy has more than fulfilled these criteria and supported us as a family throughout Lucy and Kieran's time there."



## Pressure

This support has taken various forms throughout the years, starting mainly when Ian was diagnosed with what was initially believed to be terminal cancer. "Lucy was only six but old enough to be frightened about her father's illness and I couldn't tell her for certain that daddy wasn't going to die. The stress of Ian's condition, and the fact that Kieran was beginning to show signs of a behavioural disorder put me under a great deal of pressure and eventually I became severely depressed. If it had not been for the kindness and understanding shown by the staff at Bursar Academy life would have been even more difficult for us all."

## Discretion and sensitivity

Through intervention from the school, Lucy is a member of the Young Carer's Association and has regular meetings with one of the Association's representatives. In addition, her teachers and other staff members are prepared to make allowances if, for example, she has been unable to complete a homework assignment. "They know that Lucy has a lot to deal with at home and that sometimes this can impact on her work," Jo explains. "There have also been occasions when I have been unable to take the children to school and so someone has been to collect them for me. Everything the school has done for us has been handled discretely and with sensitivity, and without a big fuss."

## Getting the best out of the children

As far as Kieran is concerned, the school has not only been accepting of his difficulties but put measures in place to address these. "Kieran has been diagnosed with dyspraxia and is currently being assessed for possible ADHD and autism," says Jo. "His teachers have been behind us all the way in getting him the help he needs and are working closely with specialists such as Occupational Therapists and an Educational Psychologist so he is able to keep up with his work. In fact, he is a very intelligent child and it is reassuring that his education is not suffering through lack of the right support – the school knows how to get the best out of him."

## Care and understanding

In fact, despite the difficult circumstances, both Lucy and Kieran are achieving well academically and Jo does not feel that they would have done better elsewhere. "Certainly Kieran would not have coped well in a bigger school, and Lucy has benefitted from the genuine care and understanding demonstrated by her teachers. They keep an eye on her without being intrusive and are always there for her if she is feeling down."

## Practical support when it's needed most

Thankfully, Ian's illness now appears not to be life-threatening and Jo's depression has not re-occurred, but Jo will always be thankful for the sensitivity shown by her children's school and the huge support it has given the whole family. Despite the immense difficulties she has had to face, she is positive and accepting: "When life throws things at you, you just have to try your best to get on with it but sometimes it can be a struggle. Knowing that I had the absolute support of Bursar Academy, the practical help and advice and that my children were being looked after emotionally as well as in academic terms has meant a great deal to me, Ian and to Lucy and Kieran themselves."

## Children say

**Kieran:** "I love playing and golden time. I like playing my favourite games my friends and the teachers."

**Lucy:** "It's kind and happy environment and lessons can be really fun. My teachers are all really kind and helpful. It's a lovely school to be in."



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