

Disability is no bar to
achievement, safety and
happiness for pupils at Maldon
Primary School, as Cindy and
her son have discovered



Maldon Primary School
Inspiring success for all



Cindy Gosling and her husband Christopher have four children. Daniel, 16 and Benjamin, 12, both attended Maldon Primary School, whilst eight-year-old twins Alfie and Nieve are still enrolled there.

Parents' instinct

When Cindy and Christopher moved to Essex from London they were unfamiliar with the schools in their new hometown and were happy to be allocated a place at Maldon Primary for Daniel. Both he and Benjamin were

very happy at the school so when the time came for Alfie and Nieve to start, Cindy had no doubt that she wanted them to be able to go there, too. However, when Alfie was born with spina bifida and other significant disabilities, Cindy and Christopher had to take stock of the situation.

One-to-one support

Although Alfie needs continuous one-to-one support, his teachers and indeed the rest of the staff make sure that he retains as much independence as possible. There is wheelchair access by ramp and lift, disabled toilet facilities and the services of dedicated support staff. Alfie has been given a laptop to use as his fine motor skills are limited, making it difficult for him to hold a pen, and a hoist is shortly to be installed to help him in and out of his wheelchair and onto his trike: "The trike is a great asset and Alfie can get around on it brilliantly!" says Cindy. "He's so nifty on it that the school are going to find him a crash helmet, just in case!"

Treating children as individuals in their own right

Whilst Alfie is fairly noticeable in his wheelchair, Cindy is well aware that he is not singled out and is impressed that the teachers know all the children individually. "It is lovely to see every child being greeted by name at the start of the day. Even the Headteacher is involved completely with the children and knows them personally. Every child has their own needs and has something to offer, and that is acknowledged."

A strong association

Because she knew no-one in the area when she and her family moved to Maldon, Cindy elected to join the PTA at Maldon Primary in order to meet local people and make new friends. Having achieved that end, she is still a serving member of the PTA eleven years on. "I loved being welcomed as part of the life of the school, helping in the classroom, with swimming lessons and accompanying school trips. I feel so strongly about Maldon Primary that I am happy to do as much as I can to support it, as the school has supported my children. Parents' help is always greatly appreciated and is very rewarding for those of us who volunteer."

Children say

Alfie adores his school and would like to board there if he could! He says: "I like my one-to-one teacher and the after-school clubs best."

Nieve says: "I love my friends, and the after-school clubs, too!"

Every support for every child

Cindy is particularly glad that, largely because of Alfie and the young girl with whom Daniel was at school, improvements and innovations have been put in place which will benefit other children in the future. "Nieve also had a problem with her hip joints and her discomfort was addressed without a fuss. I have no doubt that any child with a disability or other form of additional needs will be in the best place at Maldon Primary. This school could not have done more to accommodate my children's needs in a sensitive and positive way, and we could not have asked for better support."

