

Caroline has **discovered** that no **challenge** is too great for Maldon Primary School and that it **cares** as much about her children as she does herself



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Caroline Radley and her partner, Shaun, live in Maldon with their five children. Chloe, Coral, Courtney, Caitlin and Taylor are 14, 10, seven, six and four respectively.

### **Positive changes**

Caroline has had children at Maldon Primary School for the last ten years and has seen quite a few changes during that time. She has also seen how the different needs of her children have been met in a positive way, even though things haven't always been entirely straightforward.

“Chloe struggled with her work ever since she started but unfortunately her problems weren't picked up until Year 6 by which time it was difficult for her to catch up completely. At around the time the school had a change of management her new teacher recognised her difficulties and made a lot of effort to help, so she was able to move onto mainstream secondary school. Maldon Primary has gone through quite a dramatic change recently, and I really like the new feel to it.”

## Calming influence

Caroline has a particular reason to be grateful for the practical approach taken by the school towards Courtney, whose behaviour could be very challenging and she has recently been diagnosed with ADHD. "Courtney could be difficult and was often disruptive in class," she says. "She even tried to run away from school a few times but the teachers were very good at preventing her getting away and keeping her safe, and they could usually calm her down. There was only one occasion when they felt they had to exclude her for one day, but this was to make her realise that she had potentially put herself and others in danger; it made Courtney realise how serious the situation was and it was an effective deterrent."

## Reassurance

Shortly after this episode, Courtney's teachers helped Caroline to obtain a formal diagnosis and have been very supportive since. "They make sure that Courtney takes her medication regularly, and they know the best way to handle any difficult situation. They have reassured me that they would never ask her to leave and that they want to do their best for her, which is a great relief to me. She is a very bright girl but needs careful treatment and I know that she is in the best place at Maldon, as they genuinely care about her future."

## An accommodating arrangement

Getting Courtney to school on time had also been a big challenge for Caroline, with the result that all the children were frequently late. To address this issue, the school suggested that Courtney should be allowed to start at 10am, giving Caroline the chance to bring the others in on time and then have time to prepare Courtney for the later start. "They were so accommodating and they understood how hard it was for me, so made arrangements to overcome the problem. It certainly made my life a lot easier."

## Commonsense and expertise

Caroline is quite prepared to admit that she hasn't always seen eye-to-eye with school staff but fully acknowledges their commonsense and expertise. "I am very protective of my children and have been known to speak my mind in no uncertain terms!" she says. "But invariably when I think things through, I realise that the teachers know what they are talking about and that they are generally absolutely right. They have been amazingly helpful and supportive; I have a good relationship with them and feel I can tell or ask them anything. The children also feel able to talk to their teachers if they are worried or unhappy about something and it's good to know they feel able to trust them."

## More ups than downs

With five children in a family there are always going to be ups and downs, but Caroline is sure that Maldon Primary will always be on her side.



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