



Georgina Pantling and Matthew Hughes live in Leighton Buzzard with their daughters, Taylor, aged 13, and Ruby-Lei, aged eight.

Ruby-Lei is now flourishing and enjoying learning in the caring atmosphere of Leedon Lower School

Fresh start

It was like turning a corner and coming into the light for Ruby-Lei and her parents when she started at Leedon Lower School at the age of five. Her Mum, Georgina, says: "Ruby-Lei made a fantastic start at the school considering she was unwell and her condition

had still not been completely diagnosed. The staff at Leedon did a lot to help her, she made new friends and she soon started to blossom."

Understanding staff

Ruby-Lei has subsequently been diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome and possibly also has Inflammatory Bowel Disease. Georgina says: "The staff did not understand her at her first school, but at Leedon they have been marvellous with her. They have gone above and beyond the call of duty to try to help Ruby-Lei and us, as her parents."

Showing they care

Leedon arranged a care plan with Georgina before Ruby-Lei even started at the school. "And now they regularly invite me in to ask me how I am and how things are going. I have never experienced this with any other school before," she explains.

Warm welcome

The Education Welfare Office recommended Leedon Lower School to Georgina and Matthew. "I liked Leedon straight away when I went to see it. The school had a warm, welcoming atmosphere and I felt very reassured. After Ruby-Lei started, I was impressed with

the excellent communication between members of staff. Everyone knew about Ruby-Lei's situation, including the reception staff and dinner ladies. They all understood something was not quite right even though Ruby-Lei's condition hadn't been fully diagnosed when she first started," Georgina says.

Help with learning

Educationally Ruby-Lei soon began to pick up. "She was really behind when she started at Leedon and couldn't even recognise her own name because she couldn't pick out the letters. As parents, our main priority was for Ruby-Lei to be happy and comfortable at school, but the staff started her doing extra reading and writing and she has now caught up and is doing well and enjoying her lessons," Georgina says.

Kind reception ladies

"Ruby-Lei likes all the friends she has made and she particularly likes the ladies on reception who are brilliant with her. If she is having a bad day they will care for her. Knowing she can go to these ladies helps her continue at the school and means she doesn't have to stay at home if she is a little bit unwell in the mornings. I am comfortable that she can give it a go at school knowing that she will be looked after," Georgina says. "I can't praise the reception ladies highly enough for all the help they have given her. The dinner ladies are brilliant too and know what she can't have to eat and never try to persuade her to eat too much."

Friendly atmosphere

Georgina would wholeheartedly recommend Leedon to other families. "It is such a friendly, caring environment for the children and nothing is too much trouble for the head teacher and the staff. If you have a query they sort it out quickly even though they are such busy people. If you ask about something at the beginning of the day they will give you the answer straight after school. It is very reassuring for the parents," she says.

Children say

Ruby-Lei says: "I enjoy learning Spanish at school and helping out the reception ladies."



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