



Dana has had her life turned round and is now making good progress helped by caring staff at Kingsmead School

Dana, who is 15, lives with her grandmother, Sandra, and her younger brother and sister, near Enfield.

Attentive teachers

Dana is very happy in Year 10 at Kingsmead School and feels her voice is being heard by the supportive staff, who have shown her they are prepared to take time to listen to her. She joined Kingsmead School after moving to live with her grandmother. "Dana had attended two previous secondary schools, where she had not been happy, at a time when her mother was unwell," her grandmother, Sandra, says.

Happy time

After spending time out of school, Dana joined Kingsmead School in Year 9. "Since she started, she has been much happier. The staff have had a lot of time for her and she has known who to turn to for support," Sandra says. "The staff work with me to help her and we have had support from the Safeguarding and Wellbeing teams at the school. Dana's experiences at Kingsmead have been positive, whereas at the other schools she attended, nobody cared that she had been having a difficult time."



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Understanding staff

Sandra says Dana would get into trouble at her previous schools for things such as colouring her hair, which was against the rules. "I wanted to pick her up in the afternoons from the other schools and asked them to hold on to her until I arrived, but they didn't listen to me. At Kingsmead, the staff knew I had to pick up her younger brother and sister from school first and didn't allow Dana to go home alone but held on to her until I picked her up."

Warm welcome

Things improved quickly for Dana after she started at Kingsmead. "The staff were very welcoming and did everything they could to give me the support I needed. At Kingsmead, they took the trouble to find out what was causing Dana's problems. The first improvement I noticed was that Dana was wearing her uniform correctly," Sandra says.

Learning responsibility

Dana has recently enjoyed doing work experience as a youth worker. "She was placed in a youth centre in Colindale and I thought she wouldn't be able to cope with the journey, but she managed it. It helped her develop more personal responsibility. Dana's Head of Year told me they had received a phone call from the centre saying they were pleased with her," Sandra says.

Good listeners

"The difference with Kingsmead School was that the staff would listen to her and allow her to voice an opinion. They were also prepared to work with me as a team. After a worrying time, it is great to see her happy and doing well at school now."

Kind teachers

Dana says she likes Kingsmead because she knows if she ever needs anybody to talk to, she can speak to one of the staff. "When seeing me in a negative mindset they always check on me instead of ignoring my wellbeing. There are teachers I know I can turn to during difficult moments. In my old schools, I wasn't offered

work experience, so it was all new to me. I enjoyed seeing what it is like in the real world. Having my own responsibilities and helping children also encouraged my dreams of becoming a mentor."

Media experience

Dana found hosting a culture day video for the school great experience. "I enjoy speaking out about things and the video helped me to show my perspective of Kingsmead. I also enjoyed meeting Tom Kerridge when he visited the school. It was thrilling to see myself on a TV programme afterwards that lots of my family members watch. I received lots of compliments from loved ones and from school. I'm grateful for being given opportunities my old schools couldn't give me."



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