

Jill and David are **foster carers** and **adoptive parents** to four boys, three of whom currently attend Sandbach School



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Challenging times

When Jill and David first became foster parents they realised that there might be challenging times ahead and, whilst this was something they were prepared to accept, they were initially unaware that their boys would need a certain amount of extra support. It is for this reason they have been immensely grateful to the staff and teachers at Sandbach School who have been so understanding and supportive.

Sensitive approach

One of the boys had had a difficult start at another secondary school, where he had found it hard to settle and his teachers felt unable to address his needs so Jill and David decided to withdraw him. "We approached Sandbach School instead, explaining in detail the situation and our concerns. We were reassured by the fact that this school was prepared to give Johnny a place and that they took their duty of care very seriously, and their sensitive approach has shown very positive results."

Encouraging results

Although he had previously been under-achieving at school, Johnny is a bright and intelligent student and now that he is settled at Sandbach, has caught up so much that he helps to mentor some of the other pupils. "He is now on target for A-grades in his GCSEs," says Jill, "and that is something I am quite certain would not have happened without the commitment and dedication of Sandbach School."

Discovering new talents

As far as the other two boys are concerned, Sandbach School has offered them the chance to shine in other ways, too. Both are very sporty and have thoroughly embraced every opportunity offered by the school. "They play rugby, hockey and cricket and have done so well that they now represent other clubs they play for outside school," Jill says. "That is certainly not something they would have done without the chance to discover their talents, but perhaps the best thing about it has been that taking part in team sports has taught them a great deal about sportsmanship, discipline and social interaction and like Johnny, boosted their confidence. They had also struggled at primary school but are now where they should be academically, or above target. Both David and I are convinced that it is almost entirely a result of the input of the school."

Home/school communication

With three children in different years at school, keeping up with everything can be a daunting task but David and Jill are impressed with the home/school communication which means they can check on anything they need to know. "The website is updated constantly with everything from class grades to homework assignments or school information and if we have a query about something we will almost invariably receive a response within the hour, or often less," says David. "We also have an excellent relationship with the staff, who work hard to make sure that all the students are treated as individuals and offered tailored additional support where necessary."

Mutual respect

Jill and David believe that the mutual respect in evidence between staff and students helps to inspire the high standard of behaviour they always notice when visiting the school. "The boys are all expected to be polite and demonstrate good manners, something we feel is an important part of their education. As we have three children at the school we tend to go in fairly often and at no time have we been disappointed in the conduct we see amongst the students. The environment is healthy, productive and pleasant and our boys are all very happy there."

As carers and parents, Jill and David could not be more delighted by how the school has helped them in their role. "The support has been exceptional in every way," says David. "I honestly believe there is nowhere else to match what we and our boys have been fortunate enough to experience at Sandbach School."



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