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AMBER HAS BECOME CONFIDENT IN HER OWN ABILITIES THANKS TO THE HELPFUL TEACHERS AT SWANMORE COLLEGE



Maxine and Mike Hennessy live in Newtown with their children, Amber, aged 15, and Matthew, aged 13.

Speaking up

Amber and her parents are delighted with the way staff at Swanmore College have helped her become confident enough to speak out about issues that affect young people. Her Mum, Maxine, says: "In Year 9 Amber was given the opportunity to stand for the UK Youth Parliament and in November 2017 she took part in a televised debate in the House of Commons. This is all thanks to the staff at Swanmore who encouraged her to believe in herself."

Smooth transition

Amber says Swanmore College was recommended to the family by neighbours and friends who had children there. "They all said it was really good and so I was looking forward to going there. In Year 7 there were two people from my old school in my tutor group and I also quickly made new friends. I had no problems adjusting to the work. All the teachers were helpful and I never found I was struggling. There were two groups for Maths and Science and people could move up or down depending on how they were getting on. English catered for all different abilities. I really enjoyed PE and sports after school."



New friends

"When I moved up into Year 8, I was in different classes and didn't really know many people, but it was a good thing because it forced me to talk to other pupils and I made new friends. The teachers were really helpful, especially with art and drama, which I was not naturally good at. They encouraged me to try and taught me different techniques which helped me become more confident."

Enjoying study

"Year 9 seemed to go really quickly. There was a lot more work and more homework but the teachers made it fun. It was very hard choosing subjects for GCSE as the teachers all wanted you to pick their subjects. I decided to do History, Geography, French and Business. I almost chose PE because I really liked it but decided French would be a useful subject. We still do some PE and I am also a sports leader and coach the younger kids."

Surveying opinion

"When I was at a school council meeting one of the teachers mentioned an opportunity to stand for the UK Youth Parliament. I decided to try and was elected as one of the representatives for my area. I did assemblies for different year groups and carried out surveys to find out which topics were the most important to the other pupils. Having a Curriculum for Life and Voting at 16 came out top."



Future policy

Maxine says: "The proposed Curriculum for Life will cover a lot of important things such as budgeting, health and safety, sex education, security on line and politics. The Youth Parliament put forward the views of young people and the speaker, John Bercow, who chaired the debate, is to take the results to parliament to shape Government policy. The event was very interesting and well organised."

Enjoyable day

Amber says: "I thoroughly enjoyed mixing with about 300 young people from all over the country. I stood up and waved my papers to try to catch the speaker's eye but unfortunately did not get the chance to speak on the day. I will hold office until February 2019 and will get the chance to attend another vote in November this year."

Enthusiastic staff

Maxine says: "I am impressed with how supportive the school are with things the children are interested in. Matthew is in a rock band and the teachers have really encouraged him. One teacher, Mr Cole, has put on a lunch time club and an after school club, giving up his own time for them. I have always been impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm of staff at Swanmore College."



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