



Little Down
School



Sarah and Richard Reed live with their sons, Freddie, aged 12, and Alfie, aged seven, at Iver in Buckinghamshire. Alfie, who has been diagnosed with ADHD, started at Little Down Special School in a dual role with his mainstream school, but now attends Little Down full time.

Alfie is learning to focus on his work in the **cosy, safe environment** of Little Down School

Good support

Sarah and Richard can't praise Little Down enough for the help the school have given their family. 'Alfie is now thriving in the small, safe environment that the school provides and is doing well academically. At the end of last year it was a proud moment for us when he won an award for academic achievement,' Sarah says.

First school

Sarah and Richard obtained legal guardianship of Alfie, who is their great nephew, when he was three. 'Alfie started to attend a mainstream primary school in Slough but exhibited challenging behaviour because of separation anxiety and attachment disorders. He would become violent and put other people and himself at risk.'

Caring staff

It was suggested Alfie attend Littledown for half the week and his mainstream school for the other half, with the intention of eventually reintegrating him into mainstream education. 'Although his mainstream school tried hard with him, it quickly became clear Alfie coped better in the smaller environment of Littledown where he was surrounded by adults who understood his behaviour,' Sarah says.

Right move

'When he moved into Year One from the nurture unit at his mainstream school he was struggling. It was agreed he would attend Littledown full time from September 2016 and he was given an educational health care plan. At the same time he started on medication for ADHD. He went into Year Two at Littledown but found the transition from the nurture unit into a classroom with new teachers difficult.

Self regulation

'The staff were brilliant with him because all of them knew him really well and are well trained in attachment and behaviour issues,' Sarah says. 'There are five children in his class looked after by three adults most of the time. If he feels out of control Alfie can become disruptive but he is now learning to recognise when he is struggling and ask if he can sit in a quiet area away from the classroom. The staff are teaching him the skills to regulate himself if he can't focus. They work with great insight and flexibility, always looking for ways to encourage him to learn and he is deriving great benefit from art therapy.'

Enjoying learning

'The school communicate with us well and let us know every day how he is getting on. Alfie's ability to focus and his enjoyment of learning have improved. He was below par in most subjects at his mainstream school but Littledown have given him confidence. His reading is better, his writing is good and his Maths has improved. He is now working at the right level, or even exceeding his targets.

Making choices

'Alfie gets on well with other children and shows great empathy towards them. I love the way he tells me when he feels other children have made bad choices. To begin with he had to miss out on the trips that reward the children for good behaviour, but after doing some work, the ones who stay behind do something they enjoy, such as baking or art,' Sarah says.

Getting help

'He has now started going on the trips and enjoyed horse riding last week. He understands the points system that decides whether children are rewarded or not and grasps accountability. The school allow a psychotherapist to come into Littledown to work with him rather than interfere with his routine and the head teacher has spoken up for us at appointments to get him the help he needs. I can honestly say that when Alfie started at Littledown School it was a life saver for us.'

Children say

Alfie says: 'I like the teachers at Littledown and enjoy doing activities outside.'

