

# Caroline and Steve are thrilled with the way Bleasdale School have helped Jessica become more independent

Caroline and Steve Gill live at Grimsargh near Preston with Caroline's son, Sam, aged 16, and her daughter Jessica, aged 14, who is a boarder during the week at Bleasdale School. Jessica is severely autistic, non verbal and has learning difficulties and complex needs.



## Consistent approach

Caroline believes Jessica has made great progress since becoming a weekly boarder at Bleasdale three years ago. "We like the way the curriculum is continuous over 24 hours and that activities in the evenings carry over from what the children were doing during the day in school. Jessica has great opportunities to do things she couldn't do at home and gets the best of both worlds by boarding during the week and spending the weekends at home," Caroline says.



**Bleasdale  
School**

Learning Together / Achieving Together

## Good facilities

"She attended a special school near where we live until the age of 11 but we wanted her to go on to somewhere that would meet all her needs. Bleasdale was head and shoulders above all the other schools we looked at and had the capacity to provide a sensory curriculum which benefits Jessica. We are pleased she is now with other children working at a similar level so that she knows what is going on in the classroom," Caroline says.

## Working and playing

Jessica's school day runs from 9 am to 3.30 and then she goes across the road to a beautiful, old house where she stays from Monday to Friday. Caroline says: "She has a lovely, girly bedroom with lots of her things from home. She is able to work alongside other children and then play with them in the evenings. It is important for Jessica to be with other people. Her brother goes to sleepovers with his friends and, in a way, she is experiencing this as a boarder at Bleasdale."

## Part of community

"All the staff at Bleasdale are friendly and understand Jessica's needs," says Caroline. "They work hard to get the children integrated in the community and invite local people into the school for special events. Jessica loves being taken out on trips and goes to Guides with another pupil one evening a week. Before she started at Bleasdale she was entirely in her own world but now she communicates in her own way with us. If she wants to go outside she pulls us to the front door. She never came and sat with us before but now she comes into the living room and sits next to us on the sofa. She lets us know when she wants her music on and when she's hungry she goes and sits at the dining room table to let us know she wants her lunch."

## Gaining independence

"When Jessica comes home every Friday she goes straight to her toy box in the kitchen," Caroline says. "Her brother and grandparents are able to see her at the weekends and we go out in the village where everyone knows her and says hello. What makes Jessica happy at Bleasdale is that people understand her and give her the chance to be Jessica and express herself. She loves listening to music and going in the hydrotherapy pool at school. They let her be independent and walk in and out of the pool on her own and there is also space for her to walk around in the classroom and also around the grounds of the house."

## Progress

"It was a huge decision for us to have to make," says Caroline, "but we believe Bleasdale is the best place for Jessica and she has made a lot more progress there than we could ever have hoped for."



### Contact us

**Headteacher:** Mrs Kairen Dexter

**Deputy Headteacher:** Mrs Sue Wildsmith

Bleasdale School  
27 Emesgate Lane  
Silverdale  
Carnforth  
Lancashire  
LA5 0RG

**Tel:** 01524 701217

**Fax:** 01524 702044

**email:** [admin@bleasdaleschool.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bleasdaleschool.lancs.sch.uk)