

Keeley is keen to gain independence and The Brier School helps her to achieve this



Hayley Jones and Warren Turner live with daughters Keeley, nine and Lea, five in Kingswinford.

Simply the best

Since Keeley moved from mainstream school to The Brier she has made fantastic progress and mum is delighted.

“Keeley has Down’s syndrome and moderate learning difficulties,” says Hayley. “She used to attend mainstream school but at the end of year two it was obvious that she had started to regress. I managed to secure her a place at The Brier and it’s the very best thing I ever did. I wish I’d put her into a special needs school from the beginning.”

Home from home

Hayley is particularly impressed by The Brier’s warm, happy atmosphere.

“I like the small class sizes and the fact that the teachers are so welcoming,” she says. “The Brier is like one big, happy home where everybody knows everyone and treats everyone the same. It’s a lovely environment for children.”

Increasing independence

Young Keeley longs to be independent and the school helps her to develop this.

“The children can go to breakfast club each morning and they can do little jobs helping with the preparation of the food, which helps to increase their independence and Keeley loves that,” says Hayley.

“She’s also keen to travel to school independently on the bus and to help prepare her for this I drop her off at school and the staff watch whilst she crosses the pedestrian crossing on her own.”

Care and support

Parents who struggle to resolve behaviour problems can seek support from staff.

“There are lots of clubs and workshops for parents,” says Hayley. “They are particularly helpful for anyone who is struggling to understand a diagnosis or deal with a problem. The school really supported me.

“For example, Keeley sucked her thumb a lot and the school worked with me and supported me so that we could break this habit.”

Rewarding effort

Keeley has made good educational progress and the school rewards her efforts to help maintain motivation.

“Keeley is doing fabulously well,” Hayley explains. “She’s really come on in her reading and the staff encourage her and say how proud they are of her. They also put happy faces on her reward charts and there are other rewards such as going donkey riding at a local donkey sanctuary. They are always taking the children out and about.”

Young adults

Children can stay at the Brier until they are 16, and are treated as young adults as they grow older.

“When the children go into Year 7 they begin to be treated like young adults, and they are encouraged to become as independent as possible,” says Hayley. “I also like the fact that the children can integrate with children at the neighbouring mainstream schools. Keeley can integrate with my younger daughter, Lea at the primary school to



Keeley says: “I love my school because I have golden time when I do my work and I get to have fun with my friends. I love my teachers the best because they love me!”

the left and also with children at the secondary school. Lea gets to go into The Brier and watch their Christmas performances and Keeley goes into Lea’s school so all the children feel included, which is brilliant.”

Happy future

“I really recommend The Brier,” says Hayley. “I have never known a day when Keeley has not wanted to go. It is a very calm environment and because the children can stay at the school until they are 16 it means that Keeley will not have to start over again at a new place, which is great. The Brier really is the best.”

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