

Andrew and Lisa are delighted that The Brier School is helping Joe to become a confident and happy, young boy



Andrew and Lisa Woodfield live in Pensnett with Joe, 12.

The right choice

Choosing between a mainstream and special school is a major decision, but Lisa and Andrew know they made the right choice.

“Joe has been at The Brier since he was four,” explains Lisa, who is a parent governor. “He was born with the corpus callosum missing from his brain, which causes mild learning difficulties. He was assessed for mainstream primary or a special school and at the time was borderline, but when we visited The Brier we decided it was perfect for him. He did go for a lesson once a week at a nearby mainstream primary but it was obvious he couldn’t cope and we knew we’d made the right decision.”

Care and support

The Brier is a happy school, supporting children with a range of mild learning difficulties.

“The facilities are excellent and with only 12-14 children in each class everyone gets lots of individual attention,” says Lisa. “The younger children can enjoy a soft play area and there is also an outdoor gym, which Joe loves.”

After school fun

As well as a packed curriculum, the school provides a range of after school clubs.

“Joe loves reading and number work but also goes to an after school club twice a week, and loves this,” says Lisa. “Joe is very creative and enjoys arts and crafts and he loved the jewellery making they did.”

Out and about

A packed programme of educational and social activities is also provided.

“I think Joe has a better social life than me!” laughs Lisa. “They often take the children to places such as the theatre, as well as local trips to the shops or library.”

On target

Lisa says any problems are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

“Joe experienced a few problems when he moved to his new class,” she recalls. “He didn’t want to play with the other children but I spoke to his teacher who observed him and it is now one of Joe’s targets to join in games with other children. This has really helped, and I am delighted.”

Giving confidence

Staff work hard to help parents overcome challenges.

“When Joe started at The Brier he was not toilet trained, but the staff were very helpful and gave advice on this,” recalls Lisa. “He also needs daily medication, which the staff give to him. They are always so helpful and relaxed that it helps me to feel relaxed and confident too.”



Joe says: “I love doing art and craft activities and I look forward to golden time at the end of the week.”

Good communication

Lisa is impressed by the standard of communication between staff and parents.

“Communication is excellent,” she says. “Joe has a home diary and we check it every night to see if there have been any problems. One week I noted that he had he got a bit upset in class but I wrote in the diary that this was probably because his sleep routine had been disrupted due to decorating work at home and things quickly went back to normal. I am so pleased they take such good care of him.”

Outstanding reports

“The Brier is excellent and has had two outstanding OFSTED reports,” says Lisa.

“Joe has come on so much and I love that the children’s views are always taken into account. The staff encourage him to become more independent by giving him little jobs such as ringing the assembly bell or taking the register to the office and he loves it. It’s a fantastic school.”

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