



Michelle Donovan lives in Slough with her children, Scarlett, aged eight, and Freddie, aged six. After becoming anxious and aggressive at his mainstream primary school, Freddie was given a dual placement and now attends Littledown Nurture Group 'Shooting Stars' for part of the time, spending the rest of the week at his mainstream school.

## Freddie is now making **good academic progress** since starting to attend Littledown School

### Learning environment

Michelle is really pleased with the progress Freddie has made since beginning his dual placement, attending Littledown in addition to his mainstream primary school. 'Freddie is now meeting his academic targets, whereas he wasn't before, because when he is at Littledown he is in an environment where he feels secure and can learn.'

### Difficult situation

Freddie had a very up and down time when he started in the nursery at his mainstream school, Michelle says. 'There were a lot of other children and he struggled because he didn't have enough adult attention. In the reception class he got even less attention and really struggled in the environment. When he was uncomfortable with the situation he found himself in, he would try to leave the classroom. And when they tried to stop him he would become aggressive. He was excluded four times, for head butting, for biting and for lashing out at the staff twice.'



## Anxious time

'When Freddie gets anxious and uncomfortable he can't verbalise his feelings so he just lashes out,' Michelle says. 'He becomes anxious if his routine changes for any reason because he just can't cope with change. For instance, after the half term holiday in February, Freddie was anxious about going back to school the next day and was awake during the night and crying because he was so worried. But the next day he went to school and had a good day there.'

## Two schools

'When it became obvious he needed help we were referred to Littledown. The idea of a dual placement was suggested because I said that I eventually want Freddie to be able to cope in mainstream education. A decision will be made later this year about whether he will reintegrate full time to his mainstream school or stay at Littledown permanently,' Michelle says.

## Managing emotions

'Since starting at Littledown there have been fewer bad incidents at his mainstream school because Freddie is already getting better at recognising for himself when he starts to feel anxious. So far the dual placement seems to be working well. At Littledown they do a lot of emotional management with him. They talk to him about his feelings and how he deals with them. He really loves Littledown and more of his meltdowns have happened at his mainstream school. Then he can't talk at all and explain his feelings. But he has great conversational skills when he is happy and wants to talk to me about something and I am already seeing an improvement in his behaviour at home.'

## Rewards system

'The points system they operate at Littledown is a great motivation for Freddie to do well so that he can go on the school reward visit on Thursdays, which he really enjoys. He also really loves doing Forest Schools and building things out of wood,' Michelle says.

## Good lesson

'But after playing up on the minibus on his way to school one day he lost points. We thought he would have to miss out on the trip but then the school phoned me and said he would miss Forest School. Freddie loves Forest School and said he would prefer to miss the reward visit, but I told him unfortunately he doesn't get to choose. I could see him really thinking about it and now he understands what will happen to him when he loses points, so it was a good lesson for him to learn,' Michelle says.

## Children say

Freddie says: 'I like Littledown because I like playing outside and building things.'

