



Boarding at Heathlands School has transformed Justin into a happy, confident boy

Overcoming loneliness and frustration

When Linda's son became isolated and frustrated at his local mainstream school she decided that boarding at Heathlands would provide a perfect solution for his loneliness.

"Justin attended a local mainstream school, but he was the only deaf child in his class and when he came home he just stayed in his room or went on the computer and sometime didn't even want to go outside," recalls Linda.

Linda Dean lives in Reading with her sons Justin, age nine and Jamie age seven.



Heathlands School

Nursery, Primary & Secondary Provision, Day & Residential

"He felt isolated and although he had a communicator he was in a class with 30 other children and was unable to communicate with them. He became stressed, frustrated and lonely.

"Some of my friends had attended Heathlands and the school had an excellent reputation. It sounded ideal for Justin. I had boarded at a deaf school myself as a child and knew how beneficial it could be. Justin began boarding in September, and absolutely loves it. In fact he's so happy that I'm sending my other son Jamie there later this year."

Dramatic improvements

Since starting at Heathlands School Justin's life has improved dramatically.

"Because Justin can work and play with deaf children all the time he now feels part of the team," says Linda. "He doesn't have to rely on someone to help him communicate so his signing skills and work have dramatically improved."

"He is now picking up British Sign Language from other children and adults. At mainstream school where he was the only deaf child in the class he had no way of developing his signing skills. All that has changed."

"Justin gets involved with so many things now that he is boarding. For example, every Tuesday he goes to Cubs and sometimes they go swimming. It's brilliant to see how much he has changed and how much happier he is."

Enhanced communication

New communication technology can enhance the whole boarding experience for parents and children.

"I talk to Justin all the time," says Linda. "We use Facetime to chat and if

ever there is a problem the school will text or Facetime me. The teachers are great at keeping me up to date with things the children are doing."

"Justin shares a bedroom with two other boys from Monday morning to Friday evening and comes home for weekends. He loves having so many friends to talk to."

Gaining independence

Linda has noticed that since boarding at Heathlands Justin has become more confident and independent.

"The staff are great and Justin has a good relationship with them," says Linda. "I've noticed that he has become more independent and his confidence has improved. He's also started to learn basic cooking skills. Cookery is now his favourite subject and when he comes home he sometimes cooks for us, which is lovely!"

Total engagement

As a deaf parent Linda also enjoys being able to relax and participate in some of the school's activities.

"I enjoy a lot of the activities the children do," says Linda. "For example, I loved seeing the children do their Christmas play. The play was fully signed so there was no need for an interpreter, and as a deaf parent I was able to feel totally engaged and involved, which was fantastic."

Sharing experiences

Linda is delighted with Heathlands and will happily share her experiences with any parents who are considering sending their children to board.

She says: "If anyone has any concerns about whether or not they should board their child at Heathlands then I would be more than happy to talk to them and try to put their minds at rest."

"I would recommend the school for any child, whether they attend as a day student or a boarder. Justin has achieved so much in such a short time and is so happy. His younger brother can't wait to come!"



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