



An unhappy teenager at mainstream school, Amy's life totally transformed on moving to Heathlands

Troubled times

Amy Lawrence attended mainstream primary education but became deeply unhappy at secondary school due to the isolation of being a deaf child in a mainstream school.

"Although Amy came through mainstream primary school the secondary school that her friends moved to was out of our area and so we had to send her to a school where there was no suitable peer group of British Sign Language (BSL) users," says Mandy. "There was a lack of deaf awareness and Amy quickly felt isolated, lonely and bullied, which was heartbreaking.

Mandy and Steve Lawrence live in Enfield with their daughter Amy, age 14 and son Alfie age 16.



Heathlands School

Nursery, Primary & Secondary Provision, Day & Residential

"Things became worse and there were concerns for Amy's emotional well-being so we began to look for a specialist school for her. It took two years to secure a place at Heathlands and Amy moved there in February 2013 in Year 8 and could not be happier."

Why Heathlands?

Anxiety over Amy's early experiences made Mandy determined to find the very best school for her. But why did she choose Heathlands?

"Heathlands is a specialist school for deaf children and it ticked all the boxes for everything Amy needed in terms of academic progress and social interaction with a peer group that she felt included in," explains Mandy.

"I was very impressed with the teachers who are all specialists in sign language and there is a great sense of inclusiveness and community spirit. I also met many parents that had sent their children to Heathlands, which has an excellent reputation."

Inclusion and enrichment

Heathlands places great emphasis on communication, language and literacy, but also provides inclusion and enrichment opportunities. Amy has now put her troubles behind her and blossomed into a very happy young girl.

"Since going to Heathlands Amy is completely different," says Mandy. "I would go as far as to say the school has totally transformed her and changed her life for the better."

"When she started the head teacher told her it was with a completely clean sheet and that is exactly what happened. Amy absolutely loves going to school now whereas she used to hate it. She does her homework and

has friends for sleepovers and stays at other children's houses. It's brilliant."

Support and communication

Mandy is quick to praise the staff and the level of communication and support that is offered.

"The staff are lovely and everyone is incredibly supportive and helpful. If there is a problem you can approach any of the teachers and they will help to sort things out. I would describe communication at the school as very good."

"The facilities are excellent and Amy gets involved in many activities – for example she is now part of the school football team and goes to many different places to play competitive matches. Prior to going to Heathlands she was so unhappy that she didn't even want to come out of her bedroom."

"Amy's favourite subjects are maths and history. Because she missed out on quite a lot of schooling she has had to work hard to catch up but she's doing really well and is on track to take her GCSEs in English and English Literature."

"I would recommend Heathlands to anyone. The staff have great awareness of the challenges that deaf children face and they do their best to help prepare them to deal with these. It is a wonderful school and I'm so glad that Amy is able to go there."

Children say

"I feel comfortable here and more confident," says Amy. "I have good friends and two best friends. The teachers help me a lot so I understand everything. I like maths, English and PE best. I want to get good grades in my GCSEs then go to college and get a good job, maybe working with horses."



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