



Claire and Gavin Kelso live in Stevenage with their two daughters Iona, 13 in Year 8 and Hazel, nine.

Avy is thrilled with the specialist support available at Knightsfield School and believes it meets his son's individual needs perfectly

The whole package

Gavin and Claire chose Knightsfield School for its consistently excellent OFSTED performance, the modern and tailored facilities that they felt only Knightsfield could offer and the specialist, skilled staff available. They feel the important links with a mainstream school and later a mainstream college, means Knightsfield offers the whole package for life preparation.



**Knightsfield
School**

Specialist Sensory Academy

A wonderful family feel

The smaller class sizes on offer were also an important consideration. "Following meningitis as a young child, Iona has two cochlear implants; Knightsfield School has a wonderful family feel to it and with only around eight children in each class we felt it would be a supportive and nurturing environment which would benefit Iona.

"She's settled in very well and has made some good friendships," says Claire.

Reassuring

Since joining Knightsfield School, Claire has noticed a real growth in Iona's confidence. "As parents you do worry about how your child is going to settle. At her mainstream school there were three other deaf children and I got the sense that Iona found play difficult," explains Claire. "She's much happier now and I can see she enjoys all aspects of school life. As a result we've seen a growth in her confidence and it's really eased our fears of what life is going to be like for her when she's older."

A nurturing environment

Claire and Gavin find the teaching staff are excellent at getting to know each individual child and believe this has been instrumental in some positive changes in Iona. "We genuinely feel the staff know and understand her; we're sure the specialist skills of the staff and the smaller class sizes allow this. As a result Iona's confidence has really grown and her speech has improved greatly, which has been wonderful to see.

"Iona shaved her head for charity and spoke on radio about it which really shows the progress in her confidence and her speech."

One step ahead

For Claire one of the many strengths of the school is their knowledge and understanding. "When Iona first started in Year 7 she was finding maths difficult and was a little unsettled. I was going to write something in the communication book, but when I went to do so they had already picked up on it. They always seem to be one step ahead, which is very reassuring."

Excellent communication skills

Claire is also impressed with their ability to explain and communicate with the children. "If Iona is ever uncertain about anything or is experiencing any difficulties with friends, the school is excellent at reassuring her, sitting down and talking through and explaining everything, which is teaching her a great life skill for the future."

"The communication book is a good way of sharing any issues but honestly, they're very good at anticipating what might cause a concern for a deaf child and they deal with it very quickly, which is fantastic to know as a parent."

Strong links and integration

Claire and Gavin consider the strong links with the neighbouring mainstream school, Monk's Walk important. The children there are taught about deaf awareness and encouraged to face each other when speaking to enable lip reading. Knightsfield links with this school for a number of lessons. "We think this kind of integration is really positive. It's giving Iona confidence to be around both deaf and hearing peers and preparing her for adult life in a working environment with hearing peers," says Gavin.

They add: "Knightsfield is a nurturing school which we feel offers the whole package. We can't recommend it highly enough."

Children say:

Iona says: "I like Knightsfield School because I can make friends easily. I like the smaller classes and that there's lots of help!"

