

“A willingness to work together and listen to parents” is why Anne feels Meadowside School is the right choice for her daughter



Anne and Gary Archer live in Bromborough-on-the-Wirral peninsular with their children Jack 10 and Helena, 17. Helena has cerebral palsy and joined Meadowside School aged 11.

The right learning environment

Helena's cerebral palsy means she uses a wheelchair full time and has some learning disabilities; she can also experience heightened emotions. Gary and Anne were impressed with the primary school Helena attended; they felt it catered well for both her physical and learning needs and were keen to find a secondary school which could continue to address both sets of needs equally. "We looked at other schools but

we felt Meadowside had the right learning environment for Helena. I liked the layout of the school and the atmosphere - it felt right for her," explains Anne.

"As a school which caters for special needs, we remember Helena settled in very well. There was nothing in particular that they needed to adapt for her that wasn't already in place, which was reassuring for us.

Supportive staff

One of the key strengths for Anne is the level of support offered by staff. "I like how open they are to your ideas about how to improve your child's provision. For example, I do a brain development programme with Helena which aims to work with her cerebral palsy needs and I've found the school have been very receptive in supporting me with this."

Willing to listen

Anne adds; "If I've got any concerns at all, they're ready to listen and act on my ideas, which as a parent is exactly what you want and need."

"I approached them about a new reading scheme I was keen for them to try with Helena. It wasn't a scheme which was available here in the UK, but they were willing to listen and as a result they introduced further reading provisions using a similar scheme that we felt would benefit her."

Approachable and willing to adapt

As parents we know our children best; Anne has always felt that Meadowside School also believes this. "For health and development reasons, we've chosen a gluten and dairy free diet for Helena and the school have supported us in this decision. Their catering team have been very good at adapting meals for Helena, which I've really appreciated.

Anne adds; "We've found them very good at listening to what we feel is best for our child and in doing what they can to support you in meeting this, it's something we have really valued."

Working together for positive progress

Now in post-sixteen education, Anne and Gary feel the school's willingness to work together has resulted in some positive changes in Helena's development. "Her speech has progressed nicely with support from Speech and Language Therapy and Physio and we've worked hard on this at home too," explains Anne. "We feel the school has helped her social skills to improve and her ability to work with others, which are all key skills for the future.

"We believe staff are doing all they can to prepare Helena for life after Meadowside. We're not yet sure what the next stage will be for Helena, but we know that we will be supported in whatever that decision may be."

The right choice

Anne adds; "Meadowside is a school which offers approachable staff who are willing to take your concerns on board and who will work in the best interests of your child. When choosing a school to meet Helena's needs, we certainly feel we made the right choice."

Children say:

Helena says: "I like my friends at Meadowside School and my teacher makes me laugh!"



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