

# Approachable and adaptable staff who go that extra mile is what makes Meadowside School stand out for Nathalie



Nathalie Rubio and Tim Fowler live in Greasby with their daughter, Helena 13 months and Nathalie's son Tony, 15, in Year 11. Tony was diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder when he was five years old. He has some complex needs including learning difficulties, coordination needs and communication difficulties.

## The perfect setting for additional needs

Whilst moving up to secondary school was a massive change for Tony, Nathalie remembers how quickly he settled into Meadowside School. "Due to his Autism, Tony doesn't like change so we were expecting a more turbulent time, but he was happy to attend school very quickly. The school was chosen for us by the Education Authority. We have been very happy with Meadowside; it is the perfect setting for Tony's needs."

## Welcoming and willing to adapt

Nathalie puts this down to the environment created by the staff at Meadowside School. "The whole school is so welcoming. When we knew Tony was to move up to Meadowside, they sent some of the teachers who would be working with him to his primary school so he could meet them and familiarise himself with them. I think this was really positive for Tony and it shows how willing the school is to adapt to the needs of children with ASD and other conditions."

## Confidence building

"On starting, the staff worked with us to help increase Tony's confidence. They encouraged him to get involved in relaying simple messages to different parts of the school, like taking the register for example. This way he got to know the school and the staff and it helped with his communication."

Nathalie has been impressed with the changes she has seen in Tony's communication skills. "His communication has developed well. When he first started his speech was limited and the school really pushed Makaton to help him communicate. I also believe involving him in the choir the way they have has worked really well for both his communication and his confidence."

## Integrated support

"Tony also had speech therapy which was integrated into his classes, so that the teachers were aware of how best to work with Tony's individual needs. The school really tries to encourage verbal development too and we've seen some great changes in Tony as a result. He has a terrific sense of humour!"

## Excellent communication with parents

For Nathalie, the school's open door policy has been reassuring and encouraging. "The school is always very happy to speak with you. If you have any fears at all, they are approachable and willing to hear your concerns and will do what they can to help."

"Tony and I were both anxious about him going on a residential visit. I met with his teacher who took time to explain what the trip would entail. He gave Tony a detailed timetable so he knew what to expect and could feel prepared. Nothing feels too much trouble."

## Building foundations for the future

Another strength of the school for Nathalie is the work experience opportunities available at Meadowside. "Tony has been involved in horticulture and cooking and I like how the school has communication with mainstream colleges to prepare him for the future."

"They have a wide range of activities on offer and also teach the children skills for independent living, such as getting the bus and paying for things with their own money. I believe the school is providing Tony with good foundations for the future," says Nathalie.

## Best interests at heart

Nathalie adds, "Meadowside School goes far to reach every child's individual needs. All of the staff really do their best for each child and have their best interests at heart."

"Everyone is incredibly friendly and it all makes for a welcoming and accepting atmosphere, which is very reassuring as a parent."

## Children say:

Tony says: "I like the teachers, the staff and the activities at Meadowside School. I really enjoy swimming."



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