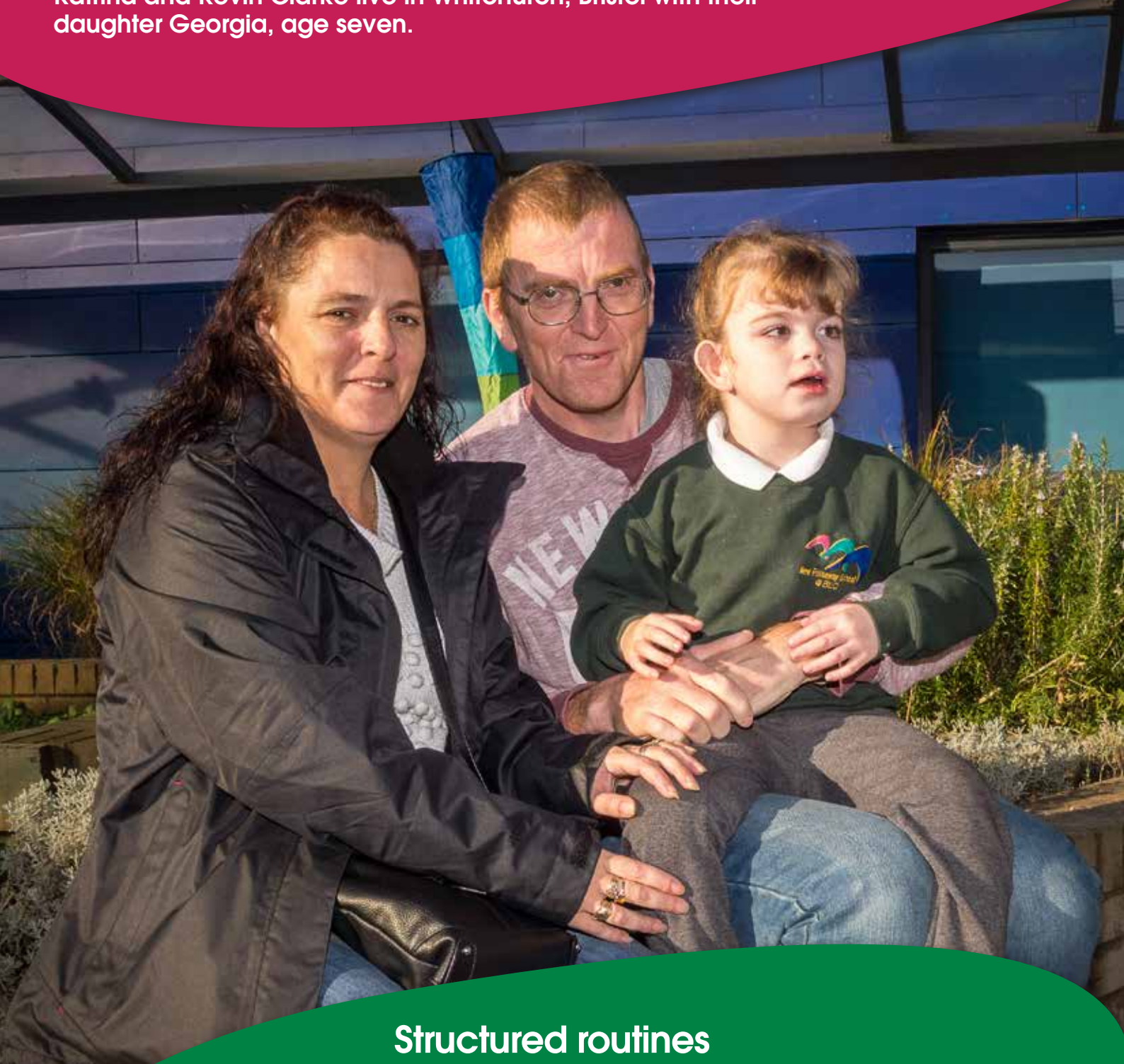


Every city should have a school like New Fosseway, says Katrina

Katrina and Kevin Clarke live in Whitchurch, Bristol with their daughter Georgia, age seven.



Structured routines

Katrina's fears that Georgia might be unhappy on moving to New Fosseway proved unfounded.

"Georgia has uncontrolled epilepsy, she doesn't speak or eat and has severe visual and mobility problems," says Katrina. "After attending specialist nursery school the education board decided that New Fosseway was the best school to cater for her needs, but I was really apprehensive. I needn't have worried though as she loves going and I think it's because the school is so structured and has good routines, which Georgia thrives on."

Happy days

Expert staff assess the needs of children and develop strategies to help them settle in.

"It's such a relief to see Georgia so happy," says Katrina. "When we looked around the school the staff took Georgia into a classroom for 30 minutes and in that short time they worked out what she liked. I thought this was amazing, as she has no words to tell them. They just have so much experience and are so professional."

Assessing needs

On-site professionals offer a range of therapies.

"Before starting at New Fosseway Georgia's speech therapy had been cancelled, but there is a speech therapist here and they have decided to resume speech therapy. Everyone at New Fosseway is really tuned into the needs of the child."

Fun and games

The school develops innovative ways to help children enjoy life.

"At home I did messy play with Georgia to try to get her to put food in her mouth and at New Fosseway they do sensory PE and encourage the children to use all kinds of materials such as glitter and water," says Katrina. "Georgia comes out covered in glitter and paint and she loves it! It's great to see her like that, because you never see Georgia dirty and it's an amazing experience for her."

Adapted curriculum

Katrina is delighted that children learn about the world in a fun way.

"The children have structured lessons and trips that help them learn. For example, they were recently learning about Egypt and went on a trip to the museum. Next week they are going on a trip to a sensory garden. The school adapts the national curriculum so the kids can understand it, which is brilliant."

Personal touch

Staff work hard to develop good relationships with children and carers.

"The staff are lovely," says Katrina. "Every morning they greet Georgia and take her into class, and in the afternoons they tell me what sort of day she's had. Even staff that don't work with Georgia know her name and because she's visually impaired they take the time to touch her hand and say hello, which is great."

Long-term view

Children can remain at New Fosseway until they are 19, providing stability and structure throughout their early lives.

"I'm really looking forward to the next few years to see what the school can do with Georgia," says Katrina. "She's already doing things like cooking and they've given me photos of her helping to stir a bowl with chocolate sauce in it, whereas before she came here she couldn't go past a bakery without feeling sick. It's like she's been at the school all her life and she loves it."

No worries

Katrina recommends New Fosseway to other parents and says: "Anyone who has children that do not communicate can relax because their children's needs will all be catered for and you won't have to worry about a thing. Every city should have a school like New Fosseway!"

