

# Shannon and Troy have very different needs, and New Fosseway has helped their family to cope

Dawn Jones and John Chant live in Whitchurch, Bristol with Jake 19, Troy 15 and Shannon 14.



## Listening to concerns

Dawn was anxious about finding the best school for Shannon, but is absolutely delighted with New Fosseway.

"Troy has been at New Fosseway for eight years and Shannon for seven," says Dawn. "It was scary for all of us when they made the move from nursery. One of our biggest concerns was that although they both have autism Shannon is very different to Troy and has quite complex needs. We didn't want her to just be put into a class with other autistic children, as we felt her needs were more complex and sensory. The school really listened to our concerns and put her in a class with children with more complex needs, which was exactly what she needed."

## Seamless transition

Moving to a new school can be traumatic for children with special needs, and the school tries to make the process as smooth as possible.

"The school did lots of transition visits prior to Shannon starting, so she went over to New Fosseway to visit and the staff visited her nursery," explains Dawn. "The transition was managed well and Shannon settled in very quickly."

## Continued assessment

Ongoing observation helps the staff to identify and resolve problems early.

"Both children are doing really well, although Troy had a few ups and down when he reached his teenage years, but we are all working together to help him," says Dawn. "Last year Shannon didn't cope very well with a change of class, but the school quickly picked up on that and handled it very well. She suffers with high anxiety and they arranged for her to move to a quieter, calmer class, which suits her much better."

## One-to-one

Many children at New Fosseway enjoy one-to-one teaching and develop a good rapport with staff.

"Shannon can't speak and although Troy can speak he doesn't see the point in doing so," says Dawn. "To help with communication the school uses PEC symbols and Makatron. They are also now looking at iPad apps that may help Troy. Both children have one-to-one teaching and the staff know them very well and understand what they want, which is fantastic."

## Extended family

Dawn is full of praise for the care shown to students and families.

"The staff really are lovely, and it's like being part of an extended family," she says. "Every morning the staff are waiting outside to greet the children. After

all these years we don't know the names of half of the parents and children, but the staff do and are incredibly caring about everyone."

## Family support

New Fosseway has helped Dawn to cope with some very difficult times.

"The staff care about the whole family and not just the child at the school," she says. "We feel very supported and the school has done a lot for us."

"For example, when Shannon was little she only slept for about 20 minutes and would then be awake for 48 hours. Every night I repeatedly put her back into bed and she immediately sprang back out. I tried to ignore her until she calmed down and went back to bed, but it was absolutely exhausting, particularly as I have back problems. Her teacher was incredibly supportive and when she saw me in tears she gave me a cuddle and encouraged me, and organised some respite care. She gave me the strength to carry on and got me through one of the most difficult times in Shannon's life. I don't think I could have done it without her."

