

Karen fought hard to get the right education for her daughter – and she found that at Saxon Mount Community School



Karen Langan lives in Bexhill with her three children, the youngest of whom, Myfanwy (but Miffy to her friends and family), is twelve years old.



Hurdles to overcome and the right support

Miffy is in her second year at Saxon Mount Community School, where she takes her lessons alongside five other children in the school's Additional Support Facility. Although she was able to cope with mainstream education until she was six, her learning and mobility difficulties meant that a move to a school which could cater for her more effectively became necessary. For the remainder of her primary education she attended a school with extra support resources, but when the time came to apply for secondary school, Karen encountered some major hurdles.

"I had investigated several options for Miffy but it was Saxon Mount which seemed to be the only appropriate school for her specific requirements," she says. "At first, funding was refused but Saxon Mount was prepared to back our application and took the trouble to observe Miffy in class. When they did so, they immediately agreed that Saxon Mount could meet her needs and this was agreed on appeal. This was one of the first indications I had that the caring ethos of Saxon Mount was absolutely right for Miffy."

Varied and complex needs

Miffy's needs are many, varied and complex, not all of which are immediately apparent but include learning difficulties, OCD, autism and myoclonic dystonia which affects her mobility and fine motor skills. Karen credits Saxon Mount School not only with helping to identify those needs but in doing everything they can to address them. "We have spent some incredibly difficult and frustrating years trying to obtain a diagnosis so that we could get a statement of Special Educational Needs for her," Karen explains. "Even now, Miffy's problems are not fully understood but that has not prevented the staff at Saxon Mount doing everything they can to fully support her."

A commitment to caring

The wide range of problems which Miffy experiences make hers a very unusual case, so Karen admires how Saxon Mount is willing to accommodate her daughter. "In some ways the school is learning from Miffy as her condition has been described as unique by consultants," she says. "I would not expect the teachers to fully understand everything about Miffy straightaway but they have shown themselves to be committed to her in every way."

Consistency of communication

In terms of academic education, Miffy has access to a range of computer software which helps to overcome the difficulty she has in writing and using a keyboard. The small class size means that she feels more secure and can benefit from a curriculum which takes account of her individual abilities. However, it is the way that Miffy is supported on a pastoral basis that Karen particularly appreciates.

"The school keeps in constant touch with me, either through the Home/School Communication Book or by 'phone, so that there is always consistency in how we address any issues. I can let the school know if I am worried about anything, and equally the school will tell me if there is anything I should be aware of. I cannot praise the staff enough for how they look after Miffy – in helping her with personal care, encouraging friendships and in taking the time to get to know her as an individual. She has been given so much, in so many ways, and I know from the research I had to do there is no other school which could have addressed her needs so well."

Opportunities for a brighter future

Whilst Miffy may not be able to look forward to complete independence, Karen believes that the practical support she has had at Saxon Mount will offer her better opportunities for the future. "Saxon Mount is capitalising on Miffy's strengths, supporting her in her weaknesses and helping her to achieve the life skills she will need. As a parent, knowing that my child's school is on my side means everything and I have complete trust in the school to look after her as I do myself."

Children say

Miffy: "I like Achievement Options, Science and my teachers!"



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