



Jenny and Steve Watson live near Tring, Hertfordshire with their son Jonathan, fifteen, in Year 10. Jonathan has autism, obsessive compulsive disorder and some mild learning difficulties.

Jenny feels the kind, caring and patient staff at St Luke's School are helping her son develop into a confident and independent young man.

"I want to go there!"

Jenny and Steve felt life at a mainstream secondary school was not the environment best suited to Jonathan's needs. 'When I viewed St Luke's School, it felt like the most supportive school for Jonathan. It was very friendly and welcoming,' says Jenny. 'Jonathan suffers with high anxiety so it was important to gauge his reaction. When I took him along for a visit, he simply said: 'I want to go there!'. I knew I'd made the right decision!'"



Learning and growing towards independence

Calm and positive staff

According to his parent, Jonathan is very content once at school. Jenny has seen a huge change in his self-esteem since he joined St Luke's School in Year 7. She feels this is down to the calm nature and positive attitude of the staff.

Jenny considers the patience of the staff at St Luke's School and their wonderful ability to get to know each child a real strength. "When children have special needs, knowing what works for each of them individually is so important. St Luke's takes the time to do that. We've seen some positive changes in Jonathan's development which wouldn't have happened in mainstream school."

Supporting children to reach their potential

Jonathan has mild learning difficulties finding English particularly challenging. "The school spends each morning focusing on English and Maths, which is brilliant! Jonathan's trying very hard," explains Jenny. "The staff are all trained and know exactly what they are doing, which makes all the difference when it comes to engaging the children in their lessons."

Jenny adds: "Whilst learning doesn't come easy to Jonathan, he's coping very well and it's great to see his enthusiasm."

Music is a strong focus at St Luke's School. "The staff were quick to pick up on Jonathan's talents in piano and drums and to help him develop his skills in this area," says Jenny. "Music is a big part of life at St Luke's and something Jonathan loves. At the end of term shows, you can really see the delight and pleasure the children get from singing, dancing or playing a musical instrument!"

Acknowledging and rewarding achievement

Rewarding hard work and achievement is important in motivating all children to learn. Jenny is enthusiastic about the stars the children are awarded at St Luke's School. "Once they reach a certain number of stars, they can choose a reward from things like book tokens, non-uniform days or trips to Thorpe Park!" explains Jenny.

A nurturing environment

According to Jenny, the opportunity to work in small groups has really helped Jonathan to feel safe and secure. "Jonathan has friends now and has a giggle at school. It's lovely to see! He's really grown during his time at St Luke's School!" says Jenny.

"They seem to know how to deal with Jonathan's individual traits. They know his interests - there are always extra-curricular groups available to encourage these interests and to engage children in their learning. The radio group, for example, has helped Jonathan's social skills enormously."

The best for your child

For any parent, knowing your child is happy at school is so important. "The staff at St Luke's are very approachable and are always available to speak to. It's a huge sense of relief that Jonathan is progressing, but also, and more importantly, that he's so happy and content there."

Jenny adds: "St Luke's School is a friendly, welcoming school. The teachers and helpers care about each individual child and do their best in helping and supporting them to reach their full potential."

Children say

Jonathan says: "My favourite thing about St Luke's is the chance to go out on trips with the radio and tv station club! And being able to play my music!"



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