



Ros and Paul Wood live in Northwood, Hillingdon with Aimee who is thirteen and in Year 8. Aimee is on the autistic spectrum, with speech and language issues and complex learning difficulties.

**Ros believes St Luke's School provides a **safe** and **nurturing** environment, which is **perfect** for her daughter to **thrive** in.**

#### **Fantastic facilities to compliment special needs**

Aimee was attending mainstream primary school and was having difficulties socialising with her peers, preferring to seek out adult company. Ros and Paul felt her needs weren't being adequately met and secured a place for Aimee at St Luke's School after being impressed with the facilities on offer. They also knew the atmosphere would really compliment Aimee's needs.



Learning and growing towards independence

## Great support for vulnerable young people

Ros explains: "Aimee has no interest in learning. She finds it difficult to socialise and form friendships and is a very vulnerable young person, but the nurturing environment at St Luke's really helps her."

Ros believes Aimee's progression is largely due to the smaller class sizes and family groups. "The children are divided into smaller groups depending on needs, not age," explains Ros. "It's a much more nurturing environment and I think this has really benefited Aimee. She mixes well with children of different ages to her and the set-up at St Luke's compliments this."

## Happy and content

Knowing that Aimee is happy and content at school is important to Ros and Paul and extremely reassuring. "St Luke's are keen to provide opportunities for children to show and tell about their experiences outside of school," says Ros. "They sit and have brunch together and the children can talk in a much more relaxed environment. This seems to have really allowed Aimee's social skills to progress. She really feels like she has friends at St Luke's!" says Ros.

## Each child as an individual

What has particularly stood out for Ros and Paul is the ability of the staff to get to know each child individually. "It's obvious the teachers have a real understanding of children with special needs and autism. They handle the children in a way that is appropriate to their needs," explains Ros. "They don't take a blanket approach to behavioural issues but work with the child based on their individual needs. And a learning mentor will spend time talking through any issues in a way appropriate to the child's development," says Ros.

## Open door policy

Aimee travels to school via taxi meaning Ros doesn't routinely get the opportunity to speak with teachers on a daily basis. Ros found the school very open to her suggestion of a daily diary to help ensure consistency for Aimee both at school and at home. "We asked the teachers to put a sad face or a happy face in the diary to allow us the opportunity of rewarding Aimee for any good behaviour at school."

## Rewards and recognition for achievements

The staff at St Luke's School acknowledge the children's achievements by rewarding them stamps in their school diaries. "They get to go up in assembly to receive their bronze, silver or gold certificate. In return they can choose a reward; Aimee chose a non-uniform day, which she really enjoyed! I think recognising their achievements, both big and small, in this way really helps to build their confidence," says Ros.

## Opportunities for parent involvement

Ros was keen to get involved in St Luke's School and enjoys her roles as Parent Governor and member of the Parent and Teacher's Association. "These roles allow me to have much more involvement in the school and with Aimee's education. And it's great to see the school develop and to have some input in that," says Ros. "We've been able to contribute towards, amongst other things, play equipment, a duck house and a sensory room, things that have really benefited the children."

## Safe and supportive

Ros adds: "St Luke's School offers the children some wonderful opportunities and always has their best interests at heart. It's given Aimee a safe and supportive environment in which to thrive. I have no regrets in having chosen this school for my daughter!"

## Children say

Aimee says: "I like St Luke's School because of the animals there and the swing outside!"



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