



Samantha Lawns lives in Slough with her son, Stanley, aged 13 and his two younger brothers.

Stanley benefited from a range of **different therapies** while he was a pupil at Littledown School

Stanley was diagnosed with FASD and ADHD and started at Littledown when he was eight years old after his family moved into the area. He has now been diagnosed with ASD and attends a secondary school that specialises in ASD.

Dog therapy

One of Stanley's favourite memories of Littledown Special

School was petting the therapy dog, a white German Shepherd called Lily. His mum, Samantha, says: 'It was towards the end of his time there that the school first acquired Lily as a puppy. Stanley definitely benefited from playing with her and his teachers said he became a different person when Lily was around. She grew into a big dog quickly but always had a lovely nature.'

Enjoying art

Stanley also benefited from doing art therapy at the school and built up a good relationship with his art teacher. 'He had good relationships with most of the teachers at Littledown but the art teacher and the head teacher were particularly good with him,' Samantha says.

Settling in

Stanley didn't find things easy at Littledown when he first started. 'He found any change difficult at the time and it took him a while to get used to the school,' Samantha says. 'Littledown catered for his particular needs and tried to accommodate him as best they could, but he was easily distracted and could not concentrate on things for long at the beginning.'

Learning to reason

Samantha remembers an activity at Littledown called Social Stories, which she thought was particularly beneficial for Stanley. 'They would show them a film and talk about what happened in it and what could have been done differently. They would get the children to discuss what could have happened, rather than what actually happened, to help them understand issues and learn to think about things and use their powers of reasoning.'

Playing music

While at Littledown, Stanley made progress with Maths and English and enjoyed Music. Samantha says: 'Previously he would never have stood up and performed in front of anyone but he played the guitar as part of a group of children, which I felt was a positive step forward.'

Charting emotions

The teachers helped Stanley keep emotionally balanced by having a visual emotions chart so Stanley or the teachers could show what emotions he was feeling and whether he was in danger zone or low arousal zone, Samantha says. 'This would indicate whether Stanley was able to work and, if not, they would use strategies to get him to a safe zone.'

School trips

Stanley enjoyed the trips the staff took the children on. 'He really liked going bowling and going to Pizza Hut at the end of the week if he reached his weekly target. He also enjoyed a treat they organised for the leavers when he was in his last year. They took the children away for a couple of days to a big camp and did all sorts of activities, such as climbing ropes. It definitely helped him become more confident,' Samantha says.

Making progress

'I had to push to get him correctly diagnosed with autism so he could go to a secondary school that specialised in ASD but I am glad I did because he is doing really well there. They have a drum kit in a corner of a room and he really enjoys playing the drums now. He has built up good relationships with his teachers who are all skilled at dealing with him. They are trusting him to do certain things for himself, which I think is good for him. He is continuing to make academic progress and is learning things through practical application.'

Children say

Stanley says: 'I liked going out on trips when I was at Littledown and making a fuss of Lily, the school dog.'

