



# The Brier School

*Preparing for life - Building on our strengths*



**The Brier School**

*Preparing for Life -  
Building on our Strengths*



# Welcome to The Brier School



## Foreword: Headteacher, Russell Hinton, says...

I am very proud to lead such a successful school, which I have done since Jan 2005. The children are so warm and welcoming, it makes coming to work extremely rewarding and worthwhile. We are especially proud of the progress pupils make from their starting points and that the children are happy coming to school.

### OFSTED outstanding

Our school has been rated Outstanding in our last three OFSTED inspections.

### Inclusion Quality Mark

We are an inclusive school and have held the Inclusion Quality Mark since 2009, and were the first in the borough to do so. We are a large special school, and make sure each child is supported to learn, fulfil their potential and develop as young people... prepared to enter society as happy, responsible members of their community!

### Flagship special school

We are a 'flagship special school' for the borough of Dudley, with a strong reputation in the local community and beyond. We are an all age L.A. Maintained special school for pupils between the ages of four and sixteen and currently we have a maximum of 150 planned places. Our school is housed on 'Campus 21' in a state of the art modern building in between two mainstream schools.

### Dedicated staff

Our School is highly staffed with a well-established, experienced, relevantly trained and qualified team which listens, consults with you and actively encourages your involvement.

### Personalised learning

We take a personalised approach and offer individualised learning programmes, incorporating a variety of strategies, therapies and support that enable learners to access the most appropriate curriculum for them. The majority of learners have an individual timetable which is designed to support them to make progress.

### Parent partnership

We pride ourselves on working closely with parents. You will see, by reading the many parent and pupil stories in this prospectus, that you and your child are very important to us. We champion the link between school and family and work very hard to involve you in your child's education here at The Brier School. We have a thriving Home School Association called The Friends of The Brier School and all parents/carers are warmly invited to get involved. We have regular Makaton work shops to which you are invited.

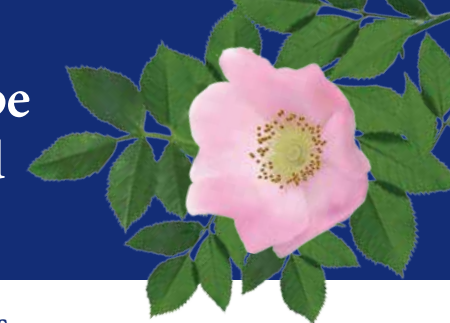
### Get in touch

Please come and visit our school to meet our staff, see our facilities and experience the welcoming and supportive atmosphere that makes The Brier such a special place to learn. I know you will be impressed by the quality of education and care we can offer your child. To make an appointment to visit, or to simply ask me a question, please call the school office on 01384 816000 and 01384 812490 or email us at: [contact@brier.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:contact@brier.dudley.sch.uk).



Carly Powell lives in Amblecote, Stourbridge with son Elliot.

## The Brier School is helping Elliot to cope with a world that he doesn't understand



### Love at first sight

As soon as Carly visited The Brier she knew it was the right school for Elliot.

"Elliot was diagnosed with autism when he was three and The Brier was recommended to me by a teacher at his enhanced nursery who said it was the best school in the area," says Carly. "We went and looked around and fell in love with it immediately. The head teacher knows every single child by name and understands and encourages each child as they go past. I realised that if there is something the staff can bring out in a child they really will, they are so lovely."

### One to one

Understanding the importance of play is an important goal for Elliot.

"Elliot doesn't understand the world around him or how to interact with people," says Carly, "Educationally he is doing well, but he doesn't know how to share, or understand that other people might have feelings. He also doesn't see the point of playing. The staff work very closely with him and try to encourage him to take turns and to understand play. He is currently working with a little boy that has more severe autism than he does and his job is to wait for this little boy at the end of the day and help him to carry his bag, which helps Elliot to realise that he doesn't always have to come first."

### Staff-pupil ratio

Small class sizes and a high ratio of teachers benefit children like Elliot.

"There are only 12 children in his class and three teachers," says Carly. "The staff put a lot of effort into every child. Each class has a main teacher, a teaching assistant and at least one child is likely to have a personal teaching assistant as well."

### Life experiences

Social experiences and chances to interact are beneficial to all children.

"The school takes the children on lots of trips," says Carly. "They are going to the theatre next week and recently studied the Tudors and paid a visit to the Tudor House where they dressed up in Tudor clothes and experienced what life was like. They've also been to the Glass Cone in Stourbridge and painted little Christmas decorations. The school tries to follow the national curriculum but adapts it to suit the needs of each individual child."

### Fun and games

Children can enjoy a variety of afterschool and lunchtime clubs and sports.

"Elliot loves trampolining, playing football and the outdoor gym," says Carly. "Educationally his favourite subject is IT because he absolutely loves computers, but there is an IT club at lunch time twice a week and he goes to that as well."

### Great progress

Carly is delighted with how far Elliot has come and thinks that his future is bright.

"I'm really pleased with Elliot's progress, and he has done things that I never thought he would be able to do.

"He was completely mute when he started and didn't talk until he was five years old, but now he can interact and chat away with the teachers. He also wouldn't sit down and try normal food but now we can go out for a meal and sit down and eat like a normal family. He has come such a long way and I would recommend The Brier to anybody. Elliott would not be the child he is today without that school."

## Ofsted Says...

*"Their [the pupils] enjoyment in learning is outstanding and is a major strength of the school."*





# School day: settling in



## School day

The school day starts at 8.55am. There is a lunch break at 12.00pm-12.55pm. Our school day ends at 3.00pm.

## Pupil well being

For 50p each week, pupils can have milk/water with either cereal or toast before the start of lessons each morning. Details are available from the class teacher. Pupil premium pupils will not be charged. Pupils have access to milk or water during the day. Fruit is available in Key Stage 1.

## Uniform

Although the school uniform is not compulsory, it is encouraged and it is preferred that pupils wear sweatshirts and polo shirts in the standardised colours of navy blue and red. Arrangements to purchase uniform items are made through the school secretary.

## School meals

The school promotes healthy eating through managing its own kitchen and initiatives such as 'Food Dudes', a project linked with the University of Bangor to promote healthier eating. Fruit, milk

and water are available throughout the school day. Children have the choice of either a hot nutritious meal from our school meals service, or bringing a healthy packed lunch into school. Current menus are available on the school website: <http://www.brier.dudley.sch.uk>.

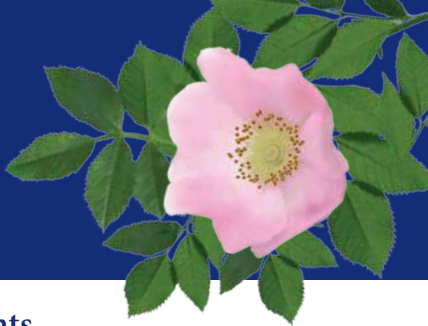
## Free school meals

For children in Years 1 and 2, the government provides free school meals. For older children, you need to be in receipt of certain benefits.



Tania and Derron Robinson live in Dudley with their son Kiaya.

# Tania and Derron can see their son improving at The Brier School every single day



## First impressions

Kiaya has been at The Brier since 2006, following assessments and a recommendation for a special needs school from his nursery.

“Kiaya has mild to moderate autism although it was very severe when he was younger and he also had behaviour problems, but thanks to The Brier and the introduction of routines, all of that is under control now,” says Tania.

“I looked at a few schools but his nursery school teacher said The Brier was a beautiful one and as soon as I walked through the door I fell in love with it!”

## Warm welcome

A warm greeting from staff and students confirmed Tania’s opinion.

“When we went to visit the school all the children shouted out Kiaya’s name and made him feel very welcome,” recalls Tania. “They asked if they could show him around and I didn’t think he would go with them but before I knew it he had gone quite happily and I was surprised as he was always very clingy. I knew this was the school for us!”

## Safe and secure

Tania feels that The Brier offers Kiaya and other children a very safe and happy environment.

“It is absolutely marvelous,” she says. “I have never known any bullying or problems but I know if I had a problem the staff would be on top of it really quickly because they are very organised and attentive. They are also very easy to talk to and listen to the students and take their point of view into account, which is great.”

## Supporting parents

The staff also helps parents to cope with challenging behaviour at home.

“The school have helped me a lot over the years, and many of Kiaya’s behaviour problems were to do with a lack of routine,” says Tania. “I knew he had problems, and he was only diagnosed two years ago, but the school was giving him everything he needed, including speech and language therapy. Gradually everything has improved.

## Mainstream maths

Children who are capable of attending lessons at the neighbouring mainstream schools are encouraged to do so.

“Educationally Kiaya is improving with his reading and writing, but he is exceptional at maths,” says Tania. “For three days a week he goes to Crestwood, the mainstream school next door and does maths.

“At first when he went to Crestwood he was a bit quiet but now he comes home and doesn’t shut up about it!

They give him homework to do on the computer and he can’t wait to do it because he’s so enthusiastic. I wondered how Kiaya would cope but he has an assistant with him who sits at the back of the class and he is getting on really well.”

## Simply brilliant

Tania is delighted with the facilities that the children can enjoy at The Brier.

“I could not put into words how great the facilities are there because they are absolutely brilliant. The school is always taking them out to farms, museums, pantomimes and all kinds of places. Kiaya was also picked to play football for the school, which he loves! I cannot fault anything at The Brier, it is absolutely the best place for my son.”

# Ofsted Says...

*“The staff and pupils work together as a team to create a very positive environment in which to learn and develop.”*





# Curriculum: fulfilling potential

## Matching the curriculum to your child’s needs

All pupils will follow a modified National Curriculum that is relevant to their needs. Individual programmes are led by a class teacher or teaching assistant. Different class groups have very different curriculum foci and children are allocated to the most appropriate class group. Within the class, differentiated programmes are followed to take on the needs, interests and abilities of the child. Within the staffing structure, there is the flexibility for some highly personalised programmes of study as we have a high adult to pupil staffing ratios:

### Bespoke learning

Many young people in The Brier have timetables designed carefully to meet their specific needs. The groups and teaching styles are flexible in response to pupils’ learning styles. Pupils benefit from a greater focus on outdoor education which we can accommodate both on site and via our extensive network of off-site provision.

Communication needs and speech and language are key elements of our work. Staff throughout the school work with pupils to improve communication skills through Makaton, PECs (picture exchange communication), widge symbols and visual stimuli.

Signs are used throughout the school as necessary as a stimulus for the development of communication and spoken language.

The children devised three Golden Rules for the school:-

- Be kind, no hurting.
- Share, no snatching.
- Join in, take terms.

Based on these we have devised a “Brier Code” with older pupils, all to improve social interaction.

## EYFS/KS1: Rainbow Pod

We have four classes in our KS1: Rainbow Pod. Red and Yellow Classes are the first steps in your child’s journey through school. We provide a secure environment to develop your child’s confidence and enjoyment of learning through both play and focused sessions. The EYFS curriculum is covered through a range of topics where the children have opportunities to explore and engage in active learning, increasing their motivation, creative and critical thinking skills.

Our Blue and Green Classes are a mixed year one and two class. The Blue Class has a sensory curriculum and does lots of outdoor learning. We also enjoy regular visits to Sycamore Green Adventure Centre. Our Green Class builds upon the skills developed in Red and Yellow Classes, but the emphasis moves towards more structured topic based learning, related to the National Curriculum. This is balanced with opportunities to learn through exploration and play.

### Topics

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), RE, Communications, Language and Literacy (CLL), English, Maths, Understanding the World (Science, History, Geography, Computing) Physical Development (PD), PE, Fine Motor Skills, Expressive Arts and Design (EAD), Music, Art, Design.

## KS2: Sparkle Pod

We have four classes in our KS2: Sparkle Pod. Our Silver and Orange Classes have pupils from Years 3 and 4. Silver Class pupils are all really focused when learning and have lots of fun. In Orange Class we are all different and that’s what makes our lessons exciting and fun, as we explore different ways of learning through a variety of experiences.

Our Gold and Purple Classes have children from Years 5 and 6. Our Purple Class follows a modified curriculum which will develop us individually. Much of what we do is highly personalised. Our Gold Class pupils are all different and explore different ways of learning through a variety of experiences.

### Topics

Maths, English, History, Geography, PE, Science, Computing, Technology, RE, Art and Music. PSHE and life skills are also taught and the children will have the opportunity to develop cooking and gardening skills. French is introduced in Years 5 and 6. Pupils go swimming in year 6

## KS3: Gemstones Pod

We have three classes in our KS3 Gemstones Pod which is the start of secondary education. Diamond Class consists of Year 7 and 8 pupils. We love learning in lots of different ways and we have a lot of fun - especially learning outdoors! Emerald Class is a mix of Year 7 and 8 pupils. The majority of the lessons are carried out as a class with the class teacher or in groups. Pupils do, however, carry out some lessons with specialist teachers. We have extra support staff who work individually and with small groups to provide more focused work. Sapphire Class pupils are all in Year 9 and we are working towards a class reward system to ensure we work as a team and achieve our own individual potential

In Year 9 the pupils link into a carousel with Key Stage 4. They cover English, Maths and ICT at a level relevant to them. This enables them to develop appropriate skills for accreditation in key stages 3 & 4. Key Stage 3 continues to give the pupils a broad and balanced curriculum, following all areas of the National Curriculum. Pupils will have regular literacy and numeracy lessons. We plan that your child will be based in their peer ability group for most lessons. In Key Stage 3 the curriculum continues to be personalised and adapted and resources used to meet the pupils’ needs. History and Geography and R.E are taught as humanities providing a foundation for externally assessed and vocationally based courses in Key Stage 4.

KS3 pupils also study Design and Technology, Food Technology and P.H.S.E.E./Citizenship.

## KS4: Gems Pod

We have two classes in our KS4: Gems Pod. Our Year 10 Class will be preparing for examinations whilst also taking part in various Brier charities. We cover a wide range of outdoor activities such as Road Safety, Bus Training and Cycling. We attend college once a week and have links with the local community for work experience. Our pupils in the Year 11 Class are working hard to make their final year at The Brier School a very special one. Some pupils are working towards Functional Skills Level 1 qualifications, some will be doing some GCSE’s and others will be completing their Life and Living Skills Awards. All pupils will be actively considering their next steps on to Further Education.

Key Stage 4 pupils will also have extended activities to prepare them for leaving The Brier School such as:

- Attending a local College.
- Taking their Cycling Proficiency tests.
- Have training by qualified instructors to safely travel on public transport - Bus training.
- Key Stage 4 pupils will also undertake their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards with qualified Instructors. This will entail walking expeditions, camping and Life Skills in the outdoors.
- To have outdoor experiences at Top Barn, Outdoor Adventure Centre.
- Pupils have a Work Experience with an outside agency or in house within our school environment according to their needs.



## Integration

We support pupils in accessing parts of the curriculum in other schools and colleges. Brier pupils can access lessons at Bromley Hills Primary School, Crestwood Secondary School and a local College. This can lead to pupils accessing their local mainstream school where appropriate and this has been successfully achieved with many pupils. Within The Brier School, we reinforce lessons taught on integration, teach intervention groups and conduct external examinations, including SATs, Functional Skills and GCSEs.

## Destination of school leavers

We maintain close links with the Careers Officer, who regularly visits the school to work with Years 9, 10 and 11. Using college link courses at local colleges, a Lifeskills programme and opportunities for work experience, our young people are prepared for the transition from school to work and the responsibilities of adult life.

## Ofsted Says...

*“There is a sense of unity which points strongly towards a school that nurtures its pupils and provides ample opportunity for them to develop as individuals within a community.”*





# Our Fantastic Facilities



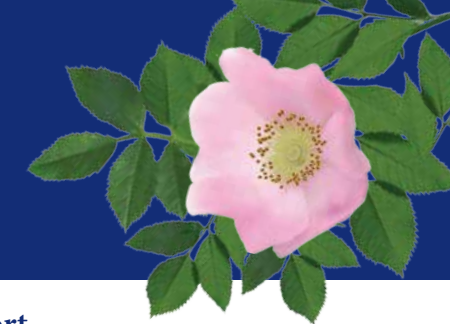
The Brier School was purpose built in 2004 and has a wide range of facilities- which we are constantly renewing and updating. They include:

- A Quiet Room.
- A Soft Play Room.
- An Interactive board and at least one computer in each classroom and workroom.
- A designated ICT suite with sufficient computers for everyone in the class.
- A bank of tablets and laptops available to children for use in classrooms and workrooms.
- Indoor and outdoor play facilities.
- Gardens for the children to access and enjoy.
- An artificial turf (5-a-side) football pitch.
- Outdoor adventure playground.
- Outdoor gym.
- Hygiene room.
- Disabled toilets and showers.
- A Sensory Room.



Hayley Jones and Warren Turner live with daughters Keeley and Lea, in Kingswinford.

## Keeley is keen to gain independence and The Brier School helps her to achieve this



### Simply the best

Since Keeley moved from mainstream school to The Brier she has made fantastic progress and mum is delighted.

"Keeley has Down's syndrome and moderate learning difficulties," says Hayley. "She used to attend mainstream school but at the end of year two it was obvious that she had started to regress. I managed to secure her a place at The Brier and it's the very best thing I ever did. I wish I'd put her into a special needs school from the beginning."

### Home from home

Hayley is particularly impressed by The Brier's warm, happy atmosphere.

"I like the small class sizes and the fact that the teachers are so welcoming," she says. "The Brier is like one big, happy home where everybody knows everyone and treats everyone the same. It's a lovely environment for children."

### Increasing independence

Young Keeley longs to be independent and the school helps her to develop this.

"The children can go to breakfast club each morning and they can do little jobs helping with the preparation of the food, which helps to increase their independence and Keeley loves that," says Hayley.

"She's also keen to travel to school independently on the bus and to help prepare her for this I drop her off at school and the staff watch whilst she crosses the pedestrian crossing on her own."

### Care and support

Parents who struggle to resolve behaviour problems can seek support from staff.

"There are lots of clubs and workshops for parents," says Hayley. "They are particularly helpful for anyone who is struggling to understand a diagnosis or deal with a problem. The school really supported me."

"For example, Keeley sucked her thumb a lot and the school worked with me and supported me so that we could break this habit."

### Rewarding effort

Keeley has made good educational progress and the school rewards her efforts to help maintain motivation.

"Keeley is doing fabulously well," Hayley explains. "She's really come on in her reading and the staff encourage her and say how proud they are of her. They also put happy faces on her reward charts and there are other rewards such as going donkey riding at a local donkey sanctuary. They are always taking the children out and about."

### Young adults

Children can stay at The Brier until they are 16, and are treated as young adults as they grow older.

"When the children go into Year 7 they begin to be treated like young adults, and they are encouraged to become as independent as possible," says Hayley. "I also like the fact that the children can integrate with children at the neighbouring mainstream schools. Keeley can integrate with my younger daughter, Lea at the primary school to the left and also with children at the secondary school. Lea gets to go into The Brier and watch their Christmas performances and Keeley goes into Lea's school so all the children feel included, which is brilliant."

## Ofsted Says...

*"Very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the school."*





# Enriched curriculum: trips, visits, clubs and community links



## Trips

We maintain a curriculum which enables our pupils to benefit from the different environments outside the school, both in the local community and further afield. Examples of our school trips include:

- Local Theatres.
- Tudor House.
- Glass Cone in Stourbridge.
- Local cultural events, eg art exhibitions.
- Local donkey sanctuary.
- Adventure Centres.

## Residential trips

We offer our young people in KS3 the opportunity of a residential trip to Astley Burf. This provides a range of experiences including horse riding, enjoying a camp fire experience and visiting a safari park.

## Clubs

Pupils are given opportunities to take part in a wide range of clubs throughout the week, some run as after school activities and others run during lunch times. Examples include:

- ICT Club.
- Makaton Club.
- Scrapbook Club.
- IPAD Club.
- School Choir.
- Singing Playgrounds.
- Ocarina Club.
- After School Club offering a range of activities on Mondays.

## Sport

Our school views the role of sport as being of fundamental importance. Many games (football, golf, cricket, tennis, rounders, hockey etc.) are played and the school endeavours to play competitive fixtures on a regular basis. Throughout the year there are also many opportunities for pupils to participate in both Intra School (House competitions) and Inter School sports events such as football fixtures and the Black Country Games. At the end of the school year every pupil represents their house team at Sports Day.

## Community Links

We also enhance the provision already in place by extending the children's engagement with the school, local and wider communities. Here are some examples:

- Our location on Campus 21 facilitates regular integration for a significant number of pupils from all three schools.
- We are part of the Dudley West Consortium and we offer all year round use of the premises by different community groups.
- Involvement in Borough projects. E.g. EYFS Every Child a Talker Fund raising.
- We hold National Support School Status and are supporting other schools to improve.
- Taking part in sporting events and festivals.
- Community events – Christmas fayre etc.
- Visiting groups within the community, i.e. Care Homes.
- Remembrance Assembly.
- Personal Development Programme with HMRC in HSE.



Paul and Denise Emery live in Kingswinford with Jack.

# The Brier School has helped Jack achieve things that Paul and Denise never thought possible



## Highly recommended

Jack suffers from Coffin Lowry syndrome, a rare disorder that causes learning difficulties and developmental delay. “Jack went to an enhanced nursery where it was recommended that he go to a special school,” says Denise.

“We looked at a few schools locally, but The Brier was definitely the nicest. I liked the fact that the head teacher Mr. Hinton walked around with us and knew all the children by name and how they were doing, it was so nice to see.”

## On the move

The Brier has been designed to ensure that children can move around the school easily.

“The Brier has fantastic facilities and is basically all flat, which was particularly good for Jack, as his walking was not very good,” says Denise.

“I also like the way the classrooms and toilets are all in the same place throughout the school, making it very easy for the children to know where to go.”

## Problem solving

Staff work closely with pupils and parents to resolve problems and implement health recommendations.

“Nothing is too much trouble,” says Denise. “If you have a problem you can talk to the staff about absolutely anything. They always listen to what you have to say and act upon it.”

“At one time the hospital recommended that Jack had a box under his desk to put his feet on to help him to sit straight and the school was great about sorting this out. Another time he lost his glasses and the school bought him a new pair, although his old ones turned up in some bushes later! The school didn't have to do that but they insisted.”

## Great progress

Jack has made fantastic progress, much to mum's delight.

“Jack was not toilet trained when he started but is now,” she says. “The school was a great help with that. In the last few months he has learned to write his name and I never thought he would be able to do that. He can also read some words. The staff spend a lot of time with Jack and it's really paying off.”

## Picture perfect

Knowing what your child does at school can be very reassuring.

“The school often send me photographs of what Jack does at school, which is lovely,” says Denise. “For example, when I sent in a birthday cake for his birthday they did a little party and sent me lots of pictures, and I really wasn't expecting that.”

“Communication is very good. The children all have home diaries and the staff often send letters home so we know what is going on.”

## Parental involvement

For the past two years Denise has been a parent governor, and there are many opportunities for parents to get involved with school life.

“Parents are invited to special assemblies and all kinds of events like sports days and Christmas fairs etc. It's a great school,” says Denise.

# Ofsted Says...

*“Pupils live and learn in an environment which is safe and secure and which is free from oppressive behaviour.”*







# How we work with parents and children: celebrating your child's achievements

## Ongoing assessments

We involve all pupils, wherever it is appropriate and possible, in their assessment process. Pupils should provide their views for Annual Reviews as far as possible, ranging from use of a symbol choice sheet to attendance and verbal contributions at meetings.

### Achievement Folder

Each pupil has a document wallet which is known as an achievement folder. It serves as a collection point for evidence of achievement, which may be work, certificates, badges, photographs and profiles. The folders will be kept in safe, accessible places in the classroom.

CAMHS: Staff will work closely with other professionals as and when is necessary.

## Reporting to parents

Each pupil at The Brier is protected by an EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Need, and as such is subject to an Annual Review and Transitional Review in the year of their 14th Birthday. Parents and appropriate professionals are involved in the review. The content of the annual review is comprehensive and will provide written reports to parents.

### Parent consultations

We consult regularly with parents during the year, and also involve parents in the following ways:

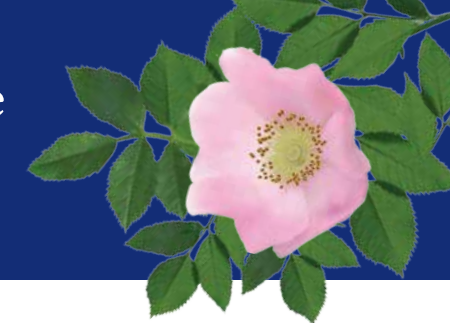
- Prompt appointments to see Headteacher or any member of the teaching staff.
- Regular newsletters.

- Class coffee mornings.
- Exchange of Home-School book.
- Termly opportunities to speak to Subject Leaders, Pastoral Tutors or other professionals.
- Invitations to attend assemblies, drama/music productions, drop into class days.
- School magazine at the end of each term.
- Annual Report on progress in addition to Annual Review of the Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- Home School Association events each term.
- Parent workshops, covering topics such as e-safety, and Makaton signing.



Andrew and Lisa Woodfield live in Pensnett with Joe.

# Andrew and Lisa are delighted that The Brier School is helping Joe to become a confident and happy young boy



## The right choice

Choosing between a mainstream and special school is a major decision, but Lisa and Andrew know they made the right choice.

“Joe has been at The Brier since he was four,” explains Lisa, who is a parent governor. “He was born with the corpus callosum missing from his brain, which causes mild learning difficulties. He was assessed for mainstream primary or a special school and at the time was borderline, but when we visited The Brier we decided it was perfect for him. He did go for a lesson once a week at a nearby mainstream primary but it was obvious he couldn’t cope and we knew we’d made the right decision.”

## Care and support

The Brier is a happy school, supporting children with a range of mild learning difficulties.

“The facilities are excellent and with only 12-14 children in each class everyone get lots of individual attention,” says Lisa. “The younger children can enjoy a soft play area and there is also an outdoor gym, which Joe loves.”

## After school fun

As well as a packed curriculum, the school provides a range of after school clubs.

“Joe loves reading and number work but also goes to an after school club twice a week, and loves this,” says Lisa. “Joe is very creative and enjoys arts and crafts and he loved the jewellery making they did.”

## Out and about

A packed programme of educational and social activities is also provided.

“I think Joe has a better social life than me!” laughs Lisa. “They often take the children to places such as the theatre, as well as local trips to the shops or library.”

## On target

Lisa says any problems are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

“Joe experienced a few problems when he moved to his new class,” she recalls. “He didn’t want to play with the other children but I spoke to his teacher who observed him and it is now one of Joe’s targets to join in games with other children. This has really helped, and I am delighted.”

## Giving confidence

Staff work hard to help parents overcome challenges.

“When Joe started at The Brier he was not toilet trained, but the staff were very helpful and gave advice on this,” recalls Lisa. “He also needs daily medication, which the staff give to him. They are always so helpful and relaxed that it helps me to feel relaxed and confident too.”

## Good communication

Lisa is impressed by the standard of communication between staff and parents.

“Communication is excellent,” she says. “Joe has a home diary and we check it every night to see if there have been any problems. One week I noted that he had he got a bit upset in class but I wrote in the diary that this was probably because his sleep routine had been disrupted due to decorating work at home and things quickly went back to normal. I am so pleased they take such good care of him.”

## Ofsted Says...

*“Opportunities for pupils to share their education with their peers from mainstream schools are outstanding, resulting in a very high proportion of pupils working in a range of settings.”*





# Admissions



## Moving to The Brier from another school

The Brier School caters for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties, complex communication difficulties, complex needs and speech and language difficulties. Places are recommended by the Local Authority to the school during or following the pupil's statement or EHCP process.

### Referrals

If a place is suggested, parents can telephone to arrange an appointment to view the school. Referrals can be from a number of sources such as The Local Authority, the early years' team, other schools, other local authorities, enhanced nurseries, and assessment units.

### Looking around

Parents are warmly invited to look around the school, talk to the Headteacher and can bring their child with them on a pre-visit prior to the school being named on a statement or EHCP.

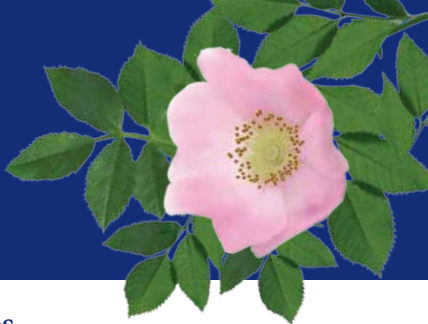
### Admission and induction process

Admissions dates are throughout the year. Reception aged children start in September. In some circumstances, phased induction may be necessary. All pupils usually attend school on a full time basis. Parents may telephone or contact the school regularly during their child's initial settling in period and we can also speak by telephone and contact each other in the Home/ School book.

### Transition during the school year

Where a child in the primary phase moves to us during the school year we make every effort to ensure a smooth transition. Usually this would involve a visit by the new class teacher to the current school to observe your child in class, followed by your child having a few afternoon sessions here with their new class and then finally starting full time. However, if admission happens quickly, these induction arrangements are not always necessary. If a pupil finds the transition stressful, arrangements can be adjusted.

## Andrew and Lisa are delighted that The Brier School is helping Joe to become a confident and happy young boy



### Making a difference

Louise and Mark were so pleased with the progress of Luke at The Brier that they didn't hesitate to enrol their youngest son.

"Luke has autism and dyspraxia, as well as epilepsy, developmental delay and learning disabilities," explains Louise. "The Brier was recommended to us, and he has been here since he was three.

"His younger brother Cameron has Asperger's syndrome and ADHD. Luke has done so well and is a different child from when he started."

### Unlocking potential

The Brier aims to create a positive and nurturing environment for all children.

"When he first started school Luke had no speech and would bite, throw things and kick from frustration," recalls Louise. "The school worked really hard and now Luke has limited speech and can tell us what he needs, which has made a huge difference. They have fantastic teaching methods and can unlock your child's potential."

### Improving life

Staff work closely with children and parents to bring about major improvements.

"Initially Luke was in nappies and couldn't sit unaided, but now he can speak and walk," says Louise. "He's also completely toilet trained and life is much better.

"Cameron is also doing really well. Although he has speech he lives most of life as a super hero in a super hero's world. He can tell you in great detail about Batman, but finds it more difficult to answer other questions Nowadays he can do this if you get eye contact and bring it down his level, which the school are great at doing. He is also completely toilet trained."

### Fantastic facilities

Louise and Mark are impressed by continuous improvements at the school.

"The facilities are fantastic," says Louise. "It is continually changing and improving. For example they recently built gardens so the children could learn more about plants, and there is an astro turf football pitch and outdoor adventure playground."

### Trust and confidence

It is vital that parents trust that their children are well looked after.

"When your child is diagnosed with a life long disability you need a lot of support," says Louise. "You need to trust the staff, particularly when children have limited speech. I feel that trust and confidence at The Brier."

### Leadership skills

Louise is delighted with the hands on approach of the head teacher.

"Mr. Hinton eats his lunch with the children every day," she says. "The children all know him. When Luke has an epileptic fit and I fetch him home it is often Mr. Hinton that sits with him until I arrive. In some schools the head is always in their office, but not Mr. Hinton."



Louise and Mark Turley live in Dudley with sons Luke and Cameron.

## Ofsted Says...

*"Their [the pupils] enjoyment in learning is outstanding and is a major strength of the school."*



# We aim ...

At The Brier School we consistently aim to promote the following:

- Democracy.
- Free speech and expression
- Fair play.
- Respect for others.
- The right to one's personal beliefs.
- Protection of the vulnerable.



## Children's rights

The School Council meets regularly where pupils, elected by their peers, have an opportunity to discuss issues important to them and to offer suggestions to improve the school. Our pupils were allowed to celebrate the UN Charter for children's rights. The children devised their own Brier Charter from the examples at the UN and these are displayed in the school alongside each other. There are visits from MPs and councillors and there have been visits to Parliament in London. These visits are arranged as part of the pupils' PSHE and life in living studies. Assemblies, Circle time and Anti-bullying week are opportunities for children to speak about what is important to them or what is on their mind. Fair play is integral to games, not only in sport, where rules are taught and reinforced, but in the playground.

## The right to one's personal beliefs

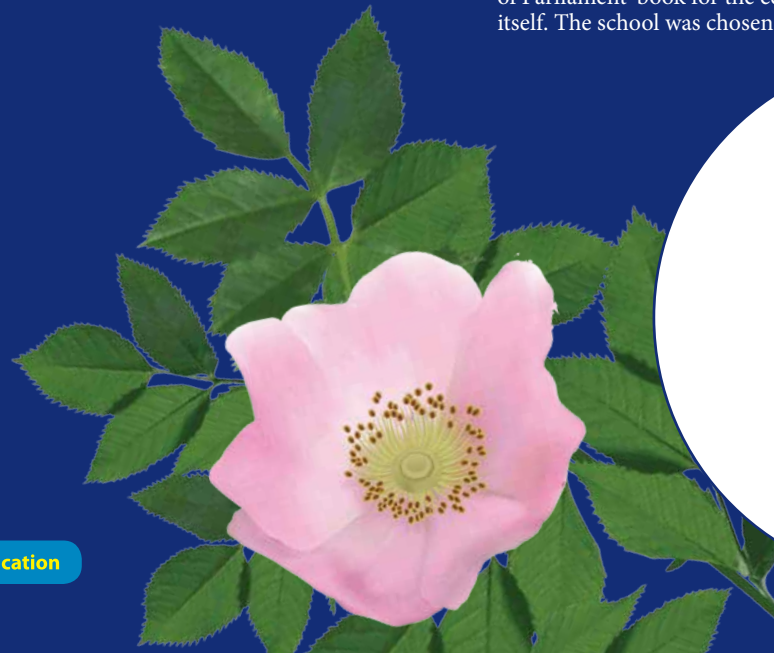
The rights of children to believe and to celebrate their beliefs are an integral part of the school. Major festivals are recognised and celebrated. In addition to Christian celebrations, festivals such as Eid are recognised by sending cards and offering good wishes showing mutual respect for each other. Diwali is also celebrated each year. Black history month always has a focal point, i.e. Nelson Mandela, Benjamin Zephaniah.

## Protection of the vulnerable

A special school such as ours should champion the rights of the vulnerable. We do this by ensuring that all children at the school are valued for their personal strengths and abilities. Indeed, our school motto 'preparing for life – building on our strengths' is highly visible on our literature and in the school hall so as to remind us all of our core values and aims. The school was featured in the official 'History of Parliament' book for the celebration of Magna Carta and Parliament itself. The school was chosen for its work on integration.

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**The Brier School**  
*Preparing for Life -  
Building on our Strengths*