



Dianne John and her son, Jayden, who is seven, live in Chingford.

Dianne was in despair over her son's behavioural problems until Hawkswood Primary provided the help she didn't know was out there

Wrong preconceptions

Following Jayden's last exclusion from school, Dianne was so unhappy with the lack of support she felt she and her son had received that she decided the only solution was home-schooling. When it was suggested that Jayden be transferred to the Pupil Referral Unit at Hawkswood Primary she put her foot down very firmly and refused to consider it.

Glad

"I was one hundred per cent adamant that Jayden would not go to a school where he might be exposed to the adverse behaviour of other children," she says. "I had it fixed in my mind that he would suffer through no fault of his own and that he would not get the help I knew he needed. Now I know how completely wrong my preconceptions were and I cannot say how glad I am that I was persuaded to change my mind."



Hawkswood Group

**Hawkswood Primary PRU
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Escalation

Jayden's social and emotional behavioural difficulties had been evident from a young age, starting when he joined primary school. Excluded on many occasions for fighting, running away and disruption, he was nevertheless identified as being academically very bright. "I fully appreciate that Jayden was difficult to cope with in class but at the same time no-one was able to address what his problems might be so that he could get help," Dianne explains. "Sometimes he would be rewarded for good behaviour but that approach does not work for him. He was often bored and because he didn't know how to channel his energy appropriately he caused trouble and I had to leave my job because I had to go into school to pick him up so often."

Revelation

After many meetings and consultations with his teachers, Dianne eventually obtained an assessment from an Educational Psychologist but this did not mean the school was able to provide the resources to deal with Jayden. "When in the end I accepted the place at Hawkswood it was a revelation. The Headteacher convinced me that they could help and they have, hugely. All the staff have an understanding of, and empathy for the children in their care and they are not treated as if they are 'bad' in some way. Jayden was beginning to think of himself as a bad person but he's not: the children who go to Hawkswood are challenged or troubled in some way, and are given the tools they need to alter their behaviour."

Focus on the child

Much smaller classes allow the teachers to focus closely on the triggers which can cause a child to misbehave and pupils are given strict boundaries which they are expected to respect. "The level of consistency is very high, and the school also works closely with parents to ensure that the children know that teachers and parents are completely on the same side. The staff were able to give me some useful advice but not in the patronising way I had previously experienced."

Light at the end of the tunnel

A placement at Hawkswood is usually for a minimum of two terms but Jayden's progress has been so good that he is currently undergoing transition to a new mainstream primary school after only one. "In some ways, Jayden would like to stay at Hawkswood as he now actually enjoys school, but his self-esteem and confidence has improved so much that he is prepared to move on. It helps a great deal that Hawkswood has a good relationship with other primaries and makes a big effort with the transition; Jayden spends a couple of days each week at his new school, accompanied by a teacher from Hawkswood to help him settle. I couldn't ask for anything more."

New beginnings

Jayden is now a much happier child; more likely to achieve his academic and social potential, and with a whole new outlook on life. "What I have been through over the years has been very, very hard in many ways," reflects Dianne. "If it hadn't been for Hawkswood Primary I don't know what would have happened, but now I have my lovely boy back and can see much better times ahead."

Children say:

Jayden: "I am very grateful for all the help the teachers have given me and proud that my behaviour has improved. I'm excited about having a new start at my new school."



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**Growth, endurance
and resilience**