



Marie Strohman has a baby daughter Betheny, son Cadell aged nine, and son Callum, who is nearly 12 years old.

Marie's son may have struggled to cope in his other school but Hawkswood Primary turned him into the popular and happy achiever he has become

Never give up

As Marie is well aware, no child is absolutely perfect but as she also knows from personal experience, some are more challenging than others. She would be the first to acknowledge that Callum's behaviour was difficult to manage and that he needed more help than she could provide alone.

"With your first child you don't really know what to expect, but it was fairly obvious that Callum had anger management issues which went beyond acceptable behaviour," she says. "In a lot of ways I was pleased when he was referred to Hawkswood Primary as I believed it could give him the support he needed and in the end it helped to turn his life around. It took quite a while, but his teachers there never gave up on him and for that I will always be grateful."



Hawkswood Group

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Sensitive and effective

Callum's temper and lack of self-control were so severe that on occasions he needed to be physically restrained for his own safety, which was distressing not only for him but for his teachers, too. However, Marie is the first to admit that the strategies applied at Hawkswood were both sensitive and effective. "Callum never complained about how he was treated at Hawkswood and he fully accepted some responsibility for his behaviour," she says. "He got on very well with all the staff and had a very good relationship with those he was mainly involved with; he still wants to go back to visit! His progression through the school, although it was not very quick, was very successful indeed and in the end he became something of a role model for the other children."

Self-respect

In Marie's experience, the policy at Hawkswood is to encourage, praise and apply rules of discipline, all of which enable students to build the self-esteem many of them lack. "Callum didn't think much of himself, for whatever reason, and that was a large part of his problem," she believes. "At Hawkswood, he was given back some self-respect and shown how to change his negative attitude. He turned a corner while he was there, and is now much happier, more confident and lovely to have around."

Transformation

It was only when he arrived at Hawkswood that Callum was identified as having learning difficulties and given a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This, says one of his teachers, enabled the school to put in place a number of measures to address his needs. "Callum is actually an intelligent boy and much more able than he believed himself to be," she explains. "Once we were able to demonstrate to him that he was capable of doing the work expected of him he began to achieve very good results and his behaviour started to improve greatly. We were able to identify his strengths and weaknesses and to apply appropriate teaching methods, and it is no exaggeration to say that he has undergone a huge transformation."

Beyond expectations

The expectation had been that Callum would not be able to attend a mainstream secondary school because of his behaviour and poor academic results, but his progress was so good that it was suggested he might try a gradual transition to a mainstream primary for Year 6. "He started going for one day a week, later increased to three, and it has worked wonderfully well," says his teacher. "He has now been able to transfer to secondary with no problems at all; no-one ever thought he would be able to take his SATs but he did, and passed with flying colours. Callum is a real success story."

Persistence pays off

Callum is only one of many children who, if not for the intervention of Hawkswood Primary School, could have ended up being permanently excluded and denied any chance of success. "Callum is one of those who really make my job worthwhile," says his teacher. "He was a troubled boy who, I am sure, will now go on to very good things in life."



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and resilience**