



Natalie couldn't be happier or more proud of her son's progress at Hope School

Natalie Melling lives in Anfield with her partner Anthony Ungi and their children Callum, eight in Year 4, Leyland, six and Tyler, two.

Callum has a number of conditions; he was first diagnosed with ADHD at five, Asperger syndrome at six and most recently with Tic disorder. These conditions have resulted in Callum showing a lot of aggression which has impacted on his mainstream education. Callum has been at Hope School since Year 2.

Praise all round

Natalie was anxious about the impact changing schools would have on Callum. She was concerned that Callum would have difficulties settling into a new routine in a new environment and how he would react to wearing a new uniform. "We used to have such difficulties getting him to wear his uniform that I was really anxious about how he would handle the changes, but I needn't have worried," says Natalie. "It only took a day for him to feel settled at Hope School. I was amazed and so pleased!"

Natalie believes this has much to do with Hope School's ability to relate to the children and the way in which they reinforce behaviour. "He uses what he's learned at school when he comes home. He'll often say to me: 'Well done, Mum!'" explains Natalie. "He gets so much praise. Hope School is a brilliant school."

Specialist skills to support the whole family

Whilst it's clear that Callum has benefited from his time at Hope School, Natalie feels she too has been helped by the expertise of the teaching staff.

The level of support, understanding and empathy offered by Hope School has been something that has really stood out for her. "They've helped me to understand the importance of a routine for Callum," explains Natalie. "When we were going away on holiday they taught me how to prepare Callum for that change - by talking to him and by telling him what he could expect to see and the smells he would encounter - and the teachers would remind him frequently that he was going on holiday soon, which worked really well for Callum."

Amazing progress

Not only has Natalie been impressed by the changes in Callum's behaviour and his ability to cope with disruption in his routine, she has seen a tremendous change in his academic progress. "Whilst at mainstream school, Callum was assessed as being two years below where he should have been for his age with reading and one year below for his handwriting," explains Natalie. "I am so proud to say Callum is now three years above average with his reading. His reading is amazing! And his handwriting has come on so much. I couldn't be happier!"

Expectations without pressure

Natalie believes these positive changes are thanks to Hope School's ethos of treating

each child based on their ability rather than their age. "At mainstream school, Callum was expected to write his letters in a certain format, for example. At Hope School, the lessons go by ability, not by age. I think this is an amazing thing because it means that none of the children feel pressurised."

Recognising good behaviour and individual talents

Natalie is also grateful to the school's reward system and believes this has also helped Callum's sense of achievement outside of school. "Hope School recognised Callum's good behaviour and took him on an ice-skating trip as a reward," explains Natalie. "Whilst on the trip he was spotted by a coach for having potential and the school contacted me to let me know. I am so grateful for that. Had he not had the opportunity to go on that trip, he wouldn't be doing something he absolutely loves. It's a therapeutic release for Callum and he is showing real talent."

Natalie adds: "Since going to Hope School, Callum has more of a smile on his face than a frown! I can't thank the teachers enough for every opportunity they have given Callum and our family."



Children say:

Callum says: "My favourite thing about Hope School are the sports lesson. There are so many different things to choose from!"

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