



Helen has appreciated the way Hope School has worked with her to effectively and sensitively address her son's needs

Helen Valentine lives in Walton Vale with her children Alexandra, 13 and James, 11. James has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and has been attending Hope School for three years.

Support in ensuring individual needs are met

Helen felt James was ostracised in his mainstream school and found that he spent much of his time isolated as they struggled to manage his behaviour. She fought for a better understanding of his needs and a formal diagnosis for his behavioural issues; James received a place at Hope School as part of the statementing process.

Helen feels the support offered by Hope School has played a major role in James being diagnosed with ADHD and ASD. "I'm really grateful to the staff at Hope School. Their knowledge of behavioural disorders has really helped to ensure that James is receiving the medical support he needs."

Specialist skills that offer peace of mind

"The support we've received from Hope School is a far cry from my experiences with mainstream education," explains Helen. "As soon as James attended Hope School they knew immediately from his behaviour that he had ASD and ADHD. That's the wonderful thing about Hope School - the staff are all specially trained and know exactly how to deal with children who have these disorders. It's a huge relief as a parent and offers peace of mind."

Calming strategies for managing challenging behaviour

Helen has found the strategies used by the school have really helped to bring positive changes in James' behaviour. "He's a much a calmer person since joining Hope School. I believe this is thanks to the highly trained staff," says Helen.

Using a time out area is something Helen has found has really helped James. "The school's time out space seems to be great for offering James some breathing space and some time to calm down and reflect on his behaviour. The great thing about Hope School is that the staff really care and they will listen to how James feels. I know he appreciates this," explains Helen. "And of course, they've helped him to get a formal diagnosis meaning he now has the right medication for his disorders, which has been important in helping him to feel calmer too."

Working together through Family Works

Helen has found that the staff at Hope School also care about how she is feeling. "Their 'Family Works' sessions have been great for offering an opportunity to share my experiences and to get some support and advice," says Helen. "We discuss how we manage behaviour at home and at school. The staff don't judge you as a

parent; they offer helpful techniques and ways of improving behaviour at home so that you're working together."

Helen adds: "It's been really nice to have the opportunity to talk and to receive some support from staff and other parents experiencing the same kinds of behaviours."

Helen has enjoyed the opportunity the course has also offered to spend some quality time with James. "After we've had a chat they bring the children in to join us and we do an activity together, which is a lovely way of spending some time with your child in a stress-free environment."



An open door policy and approachable staff

Feeling able to pick up the telephone and speak to a member of staff about any concerns is something which Helen feels Hope School offers. "They definitely have an open door policy. You can call them with any concerns and they will always listen and try to help," says Helen. "You feel respected and I've never found staff to be anything other than welcoming and approachable."

Helen adds: "James' behaviour has changed impeccably during his time at Hope School. I am so grateful for the way they have supported us in every aspect!"

Children say:

James says: "I really enjoy the sport offered at Hope School. There's lots of outdoors sports on offer and the climbing wall is great!"

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