

# Julie believes St. Helen's Primary School offers excellent support for children with additional needs

Julie Stammers lives in Ipswich with her son, Jake, 11 in Year 6. Jake started at St. Helen's in Nursery.



## Positive support with additional needs

When choosing a school for Jake, Julie's family already had a connection with St. Helen's. "It's our catchment school but my mum had been to school on the same site, so it felt right to send Jake there. Plus, I'd heard very positive recommendations from others about St. Helen's. Jake was diagnosed with high functioning autism when he was three and many people told me what a great school it is for those children who have additional needs."

## Like a family

Jake was in the process of being assessed for autism during his time in Nursery. "The staff were very good at helping us to clarify anything we didn't understand and supporting both of us. What I really appreciated during Jake's time in Nursery was how caring everyone was. They were like a family to Jake and I and that has continued throughout Jake's progression through school."

## Building stronger relationships

According to Julie, Jake is a happy and caring child who can find it difficult to socialise with others. "He prefers to work alongside others rather than actually with them. He likes to keep school and home separate, but has made lots of friends within his class. He does have additional needs and was very quickly provided with one to one support, which has helped him enormously. Jake built a strong relationship with his teaching assistant."

## Preparing for change

Jake can find changes in routine and environment difficult. "If there's anything that Jake has to participate in outside of his usual routine, they are excellent at preparing him and helping him to cope with the changes. They use tools like social stories so that he is aware of what to expect; it's really helped him."

## Increasing confidence and team working skills

Julie feels certain that without the one to one support he has been provided with, he would not be the child he is today. "He's more confident than I could have imagined he would be at this age. They've taught him how to work alongside with others, using things like the Lego Therapy group, which Jake has got a lot from. He's much more able to work as part of a team now, which has been of great benefit to him in terms of socialising with others."

## Inclusive of everyone

To support Jake academically, the school has introduced a special writing programme. "Jake hates to feel singled out, so the teachers have incorporated this writing programme in a way that doesn't make him feel like it's special to him. He feels included and they ensure he doesn't feel different to the other children, which I think is really important and I know he feels very much part of the class."

## A totally different child thanks to St. Helen's

"He's a totally different child to what he was; he's really come out of his shell which has been wonderful to watch. He has a willingness to participate and I feel they are very good at praising his achievements, which Jake thrives from."

## Best interests at heart

Julie feels certain that Jake will miss St. Helen's when he moves on to High School. "There has been a lot of interaction with the outreach team in preparation and there are going to be visits including Jake so that he feels prepared for the changes in the environment and the structure of his day. I feel they have Jake's best interests at heart and it's always felt that way."

## A family orientated approach

Julie adds: "I've always felt happy knowing Jake was at St. Helen's. If I could keep him there, I would; it's a wonderful school, with a very family orientated approach to caring for all children."

## Children say:

**Jake says: "I like my teachers at St. Helen's and I like my friends."**



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