

Chelsea can't thank The Oaks Primary School enough for the amazing support they have given her sons with their additional needs

Chelsea Brookes lives in Ipswich with her three boys, Derren, 8 in Year 4, Arlan, 6 in Year 2 and Harvey, 3 in Nursery.



The Oaks was Chelsea's catchment school and having heard positive comments from others, it seemed the obvious choice. She has no regrets and has been thrilled with the support her sons have received

Individual support from people who understand

"Harvey, has been assessed as autistic. One to one support was put in place ready for him starting in Nursery and it's been amazing!"

According to Chelsea, Harvey favours routine; socially, he has minimal language, which can impact on his understanding of things. "When he first started Nursery he had very little language, but his one to one support worker greets him every morning and obviously works very closely with him; the progress has been incredible. His language is developing, he's now potty trained and he is a lot more tolerant of other people. She really understands him and it's making such a difference!"



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Targeted support

Harvey has a PECS board and a routine chart within his classroom and staff ensure his routine is kept similar each day. "I was concerned he might be too young for the visual boards to have any impact on him but they really help him to communicate. He can go to the board and choose an activity. He then puts the card in the box and goes to the activity. They use them every day, so it's a predictable routine for Harvey and it's working really well. The support they're giving him is wonderful and I can really see the impact it is having on Harvey."

Reassurance and gentle encouragement

Arlan is currently being assessed for autism, but even without a formal diagnosis, Chelsea feels the support he is given is amazing. "Arlan's language is good and his interaction with others is positive but he can display obsessive traits and he doesn't like disruption to his routine.

His teacher will warn him in advance if things are going to be different during the day, which helps to reduce his anxiety levels for things like swimming and school trips away from the usual school environment. Arlan also finds it very hard to speak publicly, for example, so if he needs to do this, the teacher will spend time talking to him about it and will reassure him; there's never any pressure placed on him, which I really like."

Staff who really understand additional needs

Chelsea has observed some really positive changes in Arlan. "He's more relaxed and his work is progressing really well. I'm certain it's thanks to the support he is receiving. His teacher is the school SENCO and she is incredibly understanding of his needs within the classroom, but also excellent in supporting me with getting a diagnosis for him."

Nurturing support

Not only is Chelsea thrilled with the support her two youngest sons are receiving with their additional needs, she's also grateful for the emotional support offered to Derren. "The staff are great and are always there to talk to if you have any concerns. There were some changes in our circumstances at home which had an impact on Derren. His teacher invited him into the Sunshine Group, which is an after school nurture group; it's really helped him to talk about and understand his emotions."

A brilliant school

Chelsea adds: "I don't believe my children would be where they are today if it wasn't for the fantastic support and understanding The Oaks Primary School are providing. They're an amazing team who have been very receptive to the additional needs my boys have. It's an absolutely brilliant school!"

Children say:

Derren says: "I like The Oaks because you I can learn lots of fun things and make nice friends. And I can play football and games!"

Arlan says: "I love my school. The teachers are really friendly and I learn lots of new and interesting stuff!"



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