

Stacey is grateful to Whitton Primary School for their **nurturing** approach to **supporting** additional needs



Stacey Sadler lives in Ipswich with her children Martell, 18, and Connor, 9 in Year 4.

## Family connections

Stacey chose Whitton Primary School for Connor after remembering her own experiences fondly. "Both my brother and I went to Whitton Primary School as children. As we live local to Whitton, I thought it would be nice to continue with the family connection for Connor."

## So much to offer

Aside from family tradition, Stacey believes Whitton Primary School offers lots of strengths. "It's obviously close to home so is very convenient, but I like lots of what it offers. The security is very good; I know Connor is safe whilst he is there which is reassuring. The teachers are nice, the leadership team is great and the school offers really good support to those children who are less advantaged than others."

## Support for additional needs

When Connor first started nursery, Stacey and the staff noticed he was experiencing some difficulties interacting with other children. "The staff got him involved in 'Nurture Group'. Essentially, it's a group which teaches children how to mix with others and how to see things from other people's perspectives. It teaches them about emotions and generally nurtures them," explains Stacey.

## Dedicated staff

Connor suffers from epilepsy and was experiencing a number of absence seizures per day, which could often make him forget things. "When people remind him of things he can get embarrassed and frustrated. He was given a card and a password which provided him with access to the Nurture Group whenever he felt necessary; it's a dedicated area of the school where there is always someone who can support some time out. It would help Connor feel less frustrated and calmer, until he felt able to return to the classroom," explains Stacey. "He's now able to manage his emotions independently - I feel certain the Nurture Group has helped him to do this."

## Recognising when intervention is needed

As well as his epilepsy, Connor has Irlen Syndrome, a perceptual processing disorder which means he finds it difficult to undertake fine vision tasks such as reading; the syndrome produces print distortion and rapid fatigue when reading. "The school was instrumental in recognising the difficulties Connor was experiencing and in getting him diagnosed. He wears glasses and has a special card, which the school has provided, which he puts over print to stop the words moving around. It's a new intervention but I think it's helping."

## A helpful, caring team

Stacey has always found the teaching staff to be very helpful. "They're really very good. They always write down any seizures he's had and the details that I need to know about them. They're fantastic and incredibly supportive. I think Whitton's very lucky to have dedicated staff who are trained in additional and special needs; it's meant Connor has received the level of support he has."

"And I know that Connor loves his teacher and finds him a very calming influence."

## A proactive approach

Stacey adds: "They approach any sort of problem with a can-do attitude, which I really like, and they're always quick to respond. Connor will happily approach staff himself now with any issues, which I think really shows how comfortable he feels around everyone."

## Positive changes

According to Stacey, she has seen a lot of changes in Connor during his time at Whitton Primary School. "He's definitely learned to manage his ups and his downs and he is learning to work with others, which never would have happened before the Whitton team stepped in."

Stacey adds: "I have no hesitation in recommending Whitton Primary School. The teachers are nice, friendly and really helpful. They offer lots of support and feedback and are very eager to work together, which I think is really important. I think it's a great school!"

## Children say:

**Connor says:** "My favourite lessons at school are maths and english because I can see that I am getting better at them now!"



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