

Carlie and Michael are thrilled with the way the needs of their daughter Olivia have been met by Midfield Primary School



Carlie Hayes and Michael Falconer live in Orpington, Kent with their four children, Harry, aged six, twins Grace and Olivia, aged four, and George, aged two.



Starting nursery

Olivia has cerebral palsy and could not start in the nursery at Midfield until the school had put everything in place she needed. Her twin sister, Grace, began in the nursery in April and then Olivia joined in September when everything was ready for her. Her mum Carlie says: "I was worried about her going to the school at first as I had thought she would go to a specialist school that would cater for her disability. But the head teacher at Midfield said she would never turn a child away and would adapt things so that Olivia could attend the school with her sister. The school and the local council have made a pupil resources agreement and the head teacher has been as good as her word and done everything she could to accommodate Olivia."

Adapting facilities

The school had to put in a disabled toilet in the nursery that was wide enough for Olivia's wheelchair with a door that opens outward. "Olivia is very proud of it and says: 'I've got my own toilet!' They have also put ramps in the doorways for her wheelchair," Carlie says. "We push her to school in her wheelchair in the mornings and then they put it in a cupboard. She moves about the classroom on her Kaye walker with an assistant that the school have employed walking with her to support her."

Incorporating stretches

"When she goes to assembly or to do PE in the hall they put her in her wheelchair and take her round the outside of the school as the rest of the building hasn't been adapted yet. They made the PE lesson suitable for her after asking her occupational therapist to go into the school to show the teachers the stretches she has to do," explains Carlie"

Mixing well

"Olivia wasn't very confident at the start because she was used to attending a nursery where most of the children were in wheelchairs. But within a couple of weeks she was mixing well with the others," Carlie says. "There can be as many as 60 children in the playground at any one time, but they have all learnt to be aware of her and she has never had an accident."

Outdoor activities

"Grace also started well in the nursery and took to school life straight away. She enjoys outdoor activities and tidying up for the teacher," Carlie says. "I like the way they integrate the nursery and reception classes because it means nursery children get to know the reception class teachers. Grace and Olivia are going to be in separate classes when they go into reception so it is a good thing they know the teachers already."

Enjoying routine

Harry has also progressed quickly academically and likes bringing books and work home with him. Carlie says: "Once he was in the reception class he learnt the alphabet and seemed to come on in leaps and bounds. He liked the routine of the school and got into the swing of studying different things at set times during the day. Now Harry is in Year One he has started after school activities and is learning to swim at the school."

Calm atmosphere

"I am pleased that George will be able to start in the nursery in September and I would certainly recommend Midfield to other parents because of the way the staff help the children get used to a routine. The school has a nice, calm atmosphere and you have the feeling everything is under control," says Carlie.



Children say:

Olivia says: "I love going to school and enjoy singing and dancing, working on the computer and drawing and painting."



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