

Gaynor Murphy lives in Bracknell with daughter Megan (18).

Gaynor works at Kennel Lane and enjoys seeing daughter Megan thrive at school

Final year student

Children can remain at Kennel Lane until they are 19 and Megan is currently in her final year.

“Megan, who has Down’s syndrome, has been at Kennel Lane School since she was two and a half,” says Gaynor. “The staff are very friendly and it is such a welcoming and inviting place to be. The classrooms are nice and bright with colourful displays and Megan loves swimming, so the pool is a real hit with her!”

Enrichment activities

After school clubs and other fun activities all add to the enjoyment at Kennel Lane.

“Megan enjoys being active and likes the after school clubs,” explains Gaynor. “She particularly liked gym club and football club. There are so many opportunities for the children to do different things. For example in primary school the students used to regularly attend the Thames Valley Adventure Playground and a couple of years ago Megan went on a three-day residential visit to Douai Abbey, in Reading, which she really enjoyed.”

Staff perspective

Being a staff member as well as a parent provides Gaynor with a unique insight into the school.

“I am a qualified teaching assistant and have worked at Kennel Lane for ten years,” she says. “I have both the perspective of being a parent and a staff member. The staff are very approachable, and young people are at the centre of everything the school does. The staff work well with the available resources and are incredibly knowledgeable, constantly striving to make things better for students.”

Helping with speech

Staff work hard to help improve Megan’s speech.

“Megan has very limited speech, but the speech and language therapy she receives at Kennel Lane has really benefited her,” says Gaynor. “I bought her an I-Pad and the school funded a Grid Player and Grid 2, which is a communication aid that fits on her I-Pad and helps her to communicate.

“Last year Megan won the communication award at a special achievers’ assembly for progress with communication, which was a real highlight of her time at Kennel Lane. She has come on so much both socially and in her independence.”

Forever friends

Children at Kennel Lane can develop enduring relationships with other students.

“Some of Megan’s friends are the same ones she made when she was two,” says Gaynor. “The school encourages the children to be sociable and obviously there are opportunities at lunch and break times, but they also have free time afternoons every Friday. The children can choose fun activities they want to do. In the sixth form they have the use of a pool table and the school is setting up a common room, which will be really good.”

Preparing for the future

Megan is now preparing for life beyond Kennel Lane.

“The school is helping Megan to prepare for her future,” says Gaynor. “She has a Person Centred Plan (PCP), which details all her likes and dislikes etc. so that wherever she moves on to will have that useful information. For the past couple of years Megan has attended Reading College for one day a week, but when she leaves school she would like to go to Berkshire College of Agriculture to do a foundation course in animal care and horticulture.”

Looking forward

Gaynor is happy to recommend the school to other parents.

“I am very pleased with Megan’s progress at Kennel Lane and have recommended it many times,” she says. “This is a place where children are treated as individuals and everything is catered towards them reaching their full potential and learning life skills. The school has also been very supportive to me.”

What Megan says:

“I like school because I see my friends there, and I like dance lessons.”



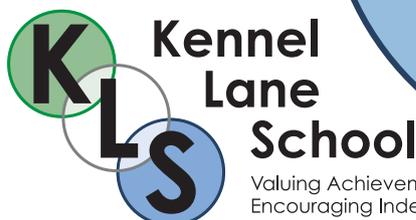
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Valuing Achievement
Encouraging Independence