



**Emma and Paul live in Bracknell with their sons, Thomas, aged 13, and Matthew, aged 9. Matthew has Prader-Willi syndrome and has attended Kennel Lane School since he was 7.**

## **Matthew is finally being helped to fulfil his potential in the supportive environment of Kennel Lane School**

### **Improved speech**

Emma and Paul are delighted with the progress Matthew has made since joining Kennel Lane. "Matthew's speech and communication have really improved. Although he could speak before he started, he can pronounce words a lot more clearly now and even people who don't know him well can understand him," Emma says.

## Excellent facilities

Emma and Paul are full of praise for the facilities at Kennel Lane. Emma says: "The school have their own pool and have taught Matthew to swim in safe surroundings, whereas it would have been difficult for us to take him to swimming lessons at a public pool. There is a wonderful sensory room and soft play area, which are brilliant for Matthew's physical needs, and they have Forest School once a week."

## Difficulties in mainstream

Matthew started in the reception class of a mainstream primary school despite having learning difficulties. Emma explains: "Children with Prader-Willi syndrome can sometimes cope in mainstream, and we were encouraged to send him to a mainstream primary by his key worker. To begin with Matthew seemed okay but he got further and further behind."

## Wanting the best

"When Matthew was assessed in Year 2, he was found to have a low IQ, learning difficulties and underdeveloped language skills. The staff all thought Matthew should go to a special school. We went to look round Kennel Lane and were impressed when we saw children like Matthew being helped to achieve. We had to battle to get Matthew into Kennel Lane but we knew it was the best place for him."

## Lots of progress

"We can see many ways in which Matthew has advanced since joining Kennel Lane. His handwriting has improved, and his pencil control is much better so he can write his name legibly now. He is willing to sit and do colouring now whereas before he couldn't concentrate. He can now draw independently, although all he could do was scribble before, and his reading is progressing"

## Bespoke education

"It feels like Matthew is receiving a private education because of the small class sizes and the way the curriculum is tailored to his needs. He is learning things that are important for his development and to help him become independent, rather than studying a curriculum that isn't going to be of any use to him. He is now able

to have all his physiotherapy at school following a plan written specially for him and he is getting help with his speech and language every day without even realising."

## Encouraging achievement

"We are full of admiration for the staff and don't know how they manage to retain their positivity and energy when they are dealing with children with so many needs. They celebrate all the children's achievements, however small. Matthew loves earning points so that he can choose something from the treasure box to bring home with him," Emma says.

## Good recommendation

"We want other parents to understand what a difference it has made to our family to be able to send Matthew to Kennel Lane. I would urge all families considering a special school to look round Kennel Lane with an open mind. Matthew would say that he loves going to Kennel Lane because he likes being with his friends and dancing."



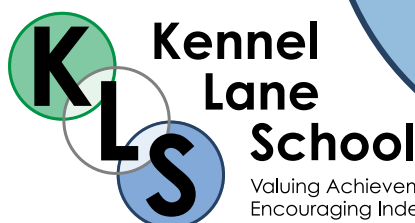
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