

Charlie has grown in confidence and her communication skills have improved in the happy surroundings of Saxon Mount



Carol Hunt and Paul Evans live in Hastings with their granddaughters, Sarah, aged 17, and Charlie, aged 13.



Charlie has speech, language and communications needs. She started at Saxon Mount in 2017 after moving to the area from Devon.

Warm welcome

Carol and Paul are delighted with how well Charlie has settled in at Saxon Mount. Carol, her grandmother, says: "By the second day she felt at home, thanks to the kind staff making her feel welcome. She has become a lot more confident and can express herself much better, especially when talking to people she knows."

Seeking out the best

Carol says Charlie has always had difficulties with speech and language. "She didn't start talking at all until she was four years old and she went to a special needs school near where she was living in Devon. When she came to live with us, I was determined to find a good special needs school for her here, as I wanted the best for her and knew she wouldn't be able to cope in a mainstream school.

Calm environment

"I asked around locally about schools and a neighbour told me about Saxon Mount as her daughter had just started there. I went to have a look round the school and was very pleased with what I saw. They have small classes, which I thought would suit Charlie, and lots of facilities that I thought might help her. The school has a calm, friendly atmosphere and if a child is having problems, the staff deal with it in a very unruffled, natural way. I like the way the staff are always very natural with the students," Carol says.

Small groups

"Charlie is getting on well with the academic work. She enjoys Maths and is progressing well but she isn't quite as good at English and often needs help, which is always available. The small classes suit Charlie and I am sure if she was taught in a larger group she wouldn't learn as much.

Encouragement with learning

"I feel it is a very supportive environment for Charlie as they make sure the students understand the work they are given and don't give them too much to take in at any time. They are very caring and if a child is having a bad day they can spend time in the 'blue room' where they can be supported to do their work in a quiet place to help them feel better," Carol says.

Varied curriculum

"Charlie likes doing PE and enjoys football, gymnastics, and swimming. She likes drawing and looks forward to her art lessons. Now she has started doing cookery, she likes to try to make different things at home. We are really pleased to

see Charlie is gradually becoming more independent and learning to do things for herself.

Kind staff

"I find everyone at the school very helpful to the parents and carers. If I have a problem I am confident about phoning the school and any issues are sorted out quickly. There is always a warm welcome when I go into the school and the staff are all very friendly and approachable.

Safe at school

"I am pleased Charlie is in a safe environment with pupil welfare and safety being a priority in all activities undertaken, including site security and restricted and controlled access to the school grounds and buildings. The staff check up on the students regularly to make sure they are happy and feel included in everything. I can tell Charlie is enjoying school and is happy there because she gets disappointed if she can't go when she is ill, or if it is the holidays," Carol says.

Enjoying conversation

"We are thrilled Charlie's speech and language is so much better than when she first started at Saxon Mount and we sometimes joke that she never stops talking now. Charlie is so happy and settled at the school, I often wish they had a sixth form as it would be marvellous if she could stay on there rather than leave at 16 to go to college.



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