

Josh is happy and finally fulfilling his potential in the warm friendly environment at Saxon Mount



Amanda Sinclair lives in Nutley with her sons, Joshua, aged 14, and Nicholas, aged 10.



Joshua has ASD and cerebral palsy. He joined Saxon Mount in 2017 after spending a year out of school.

Enjoying learning

Amanda has been delighted to see Josh's life transformed after less than a year at Saxon Mount. "He now loves going to school and is so happy there he doesn't like being on holiday. He excels at History, Geography and Science and has won merits and awards for his work," she says.

Small class

"Since starting at Saxon Mount he has made incredible progress. He is in Year Nine and studying for his GCSEs. His passion is trains and the brilliant teachers have worked that out and include it as a theme in everything he does. Josh is thriving in a small class of eight, and in some of his GCSE options he is taught with only one or two other children, so at last he is getting the attention he needs.

Late diagnosis

"Josh was not actually diagnosed with ASD until he was 12 but it was obvious he couldn't cope with life in a mainstream school. He didn't want to go to school and became very depressed. When I discovered he was being severely taunted by some of his peers, I removed him from the school. However, when his EHCP application was about to go before a panel, I was sent the paperwork and realised six documents were missing - including his ASD diagnosis," she recalls.

Impressed by school

"We had to wait six months and then the council suggested a school I thought was unsuitable for Josh. I visited Saxon Mount on my own initiative and was completely bowled over. It felt very warm and friendly and the children seemed happy. The council said no to begin with. It was a difficult time and I was put under a lot of pressure, but I was relieved they finally allowed him to go there.

Kind staff

"Josh travels to school by taxi. When he first started he was afraid to get into the taxi but now he has a good relationship with his driver and escort. He adores the Head of School and gets on well with the Assistant Headteacher and his tutor. They have told me they have really grown up conversations with Josh and are hoping for great things from him.

PE progress

"Because of his experiences at his mainstream school, Josh had a fear of PE and didn't want to get changed to do it. To begin with the teacher said he could just watch, or do it wearing ordinary clothes. But, nearly a year on, he is joining in with PE, having got changed for it. He still has coordination

difficulties but because of the patience and tolerance of the staff he is now getting somewhere.

Help for parents

"The staff are all extremely helpful to parents and have great empathy with us. You can call them if you have any worries and they will get straight back to you. My younger son has ADHD and autistic traits and can sometimes antagonise his older brother, but staff at Saxon Mount have helped Josh learn to handle the relationship. You couldn't ask for more from a school," Amanda says.

Making friends

"Until Josh joined Saxon Mount he had never had a friend at school. Now he has three or four close friends who Skype each other in the evenings, which is lovely. Josh is also more willing to integrate with us at home. He now wants to have a go at helping with the cooking and chopping the vegetables. When he was so unhappy at school he was totally drained of energy. Now he is at Saxon Mount, I am thrilled to see him finally fulfilling his potential."



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