

Brenton's life has been turned around by the wonderful care and support he has had from staff at Hatton School



Kerry McGinness lives with her son, Brenton, aged nine, in Redbridge. Brenton started at Hatton School and Special Needs Centre at the age of three. He is severely autistic and non verbal and has a range of medical problems and special needs.



Changed behaviour

Brenton's Mum, Kerry, can hardly believe how he has changed since he started at Hatton. 'He had challenging behaviour at the beginning when he refused to cooperate and was very difficult to deal with. He used to have to go and sit behind a screen, but now he is literally back in the room,' Kerry says.

Supportive staff

Hatton have been great with him. They have coped with him at his most extreme, when in the midst of his challenging, violent outbursts. But Brenton is now off the medication and is happy at home. I am so grateful that the school stood by him throughout everything. The staff at Hatton are a great bunch of people who have given me fantastic support. It really is a wonderful school.'

Consistent help

When Brenton first started at Hatton he cooperated with the staff sporadically and on his terms, Kerry says. 'He would shut down and sit in the corner and just rock himself. When he was going through bad stuff he would not access the curriculum at all. There were times I thought he would be thrown out, but the school never gave up on him and they have also supported me through it all.'

Enjoying school

Now Brenton is nine and in Year Four he will sit with the others at the table and get involved in the curriculum. 'He doesn't isolate himself so much any more and there are many things he enjoys doing at school. He likes messy play, going on the trampoline and going in the splash pool. He also likes the sensory room and playing in the playground with the tyres,' Kerry says.

Valuable training

'Brenton had to live in a residential home for ten months when I couldn't manage him on my own but I always insisted that he remained at the same school. Brenton is physically very challenging so his personal care became a problem,' Kerry says. 'But I have now managed to get carers to come in and help me look after him at home and Hatton have also provided me with training about autism and how to manage his behaviour.'

Communication skills

'Brenton still has outbursts from time to time but they have become more and more infrequent. He has a great sense of humour and is very playful. He is actually a clever little boy and knows how to communicate with hand gestures and photos. He communicates with me by taking my hand and leading me to what he wants. If he wants to go for a walk he will take my hand and lead me to the door and place it on the door knob. I keep drinks and snacks on top of his wardrobe and if he wants something he will throw his hand up in

that direction. If I am having a conversation with someone and mention a particular book he will take my hand and lead me to the book case and take out the book I was talking about and place it in my hand,' Kerry says.

Kind to parents

'I would encourage any other parents to apply for Hatton School because the staff have been so wonderful and so supportive to us. We have had to go on a long and difficult journey to get to where we are now but the school have always been there for us, the only consistent thing in our lives. The staff are lovely, very honest and have empathy. They are really kind people who care about the parents as well as the children.'



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