

## Isabella's story

### Background

Isabella has a diagnosis of Autism, which she received whilst attending nursery. In nursery Isabella received outside agency support from speech therapists, Ladywood Outreach and Educational Psychologists. Her EHCP application journey began in nursery. Isabella left nursery in 2021 and transitioned to a mainstream primary school, which was not easy at all for her. Whilst in mainstream school, Isabella really struggled to cope. She would scream loudly, hit out at others and throw things – ultimately becoming a danger to herself and others in the environment she was in. Isabella would come home from school and struggle to regulate her emotions until the early hours in the morning, every single day due to the stress of the mainstream provision. Myself and the SENCO agreed to reducing her timetable. Initially to half a day, shortening further to one hour per day. I was happy to do this as I could not bare to see how unsettled she was. Her EHCP draft was given in January 2022, which is when our hopes of Isabella's school experience began to look brighter. All we wanted was for her to be happy in school. We then had to wait for the Panel to get together to see if Isabella would be offered a place in a specialist provision.

The panel sat on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and I received a call on 15<sup>th</sup> June to say that Isabella had been offered a place at St Teresa's primary school – starting in September 2022. I can remember saying to staff at St Teresa's when we arrived for transition days that all I ever want is for her to be happy, anything else is a bonus. Fast forward to now... Isabella is the HAPPIEST little girl and it is all thanks to St Teresa's primary school. Her steps towards her targets, both academically and socially, are absolutely amazing and all of the family are thrilled with her progress. Before starting St Teresa's, Isabella would not even tolerate other children, now she is so caring and loveable, wanting to make friends and share her loving personality and laughter. St Teresa's primary school ensure that she has an accessible curriculum, in a positive environment that supports her needs. She is fully integrated into school life – attending some mainstream classes with support, attending assemblies and being part of whole school performances. She is also provided with outer school activities such as visits to the library, forest school, swimming lessons and local walks. This would not have been possible without the support of well trained staff that have helped to support Isabella with her social and emotional development.

From a parent view, the ASD resourced provision at St Teresa's primary school enriches the ethos of the school by providing a safe space that creates a sense of belonging for children that struggle to access a mainstream provision. This contributes to the well-being and the success of the pupils in the school.

St Teresa's primary school has changed my daughter's life! And I will forever be thankful to all of the wonderful staff that support her, include her, and most importantly, make her happy.

Rebecca Bracegirdle,

Isabella's Mother