



Eddie and Sarah Vidler's son, Stephen, joined Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship in January 2016

“GANF are embracing Stephen's individuality”

Full steam ahead for Stephen

In his mum's words, Stephen is a cheeky, cute little boy who is MASSIVELY into trains, particularly diesels! He has a great sense of humour and is very inquisitive. He has a fabulous relationship with his dog, Buster. Stephen now lives in Grantham with Mum and Dad and has an older sister, Jasmine.

But this wasn't always the case for Stephen, who was diagnosed aged 4 with Autism and Hypermobility, which causes him severe pain in his wrists, knees and ankles.

Aged 5, Stephen started mainstream school in Sleaford. He made it through his Reception year with help from a full time 1-1 support. (A Statement of Educational Needs was approved before starting school).

Stephen began to dislike going to school and half way through Year One, differences between him and the other children became apparent to his parents. He was becoming very frustrated some of the time.

A meeting was held with his school where his parents enquired about a specialist school provision, but the school felt he was fine as he was for the time being.

When Stephen went back to the school in September for Year 2, everything became too much for him and it was a constant daily struggle for his parents to get him to go to school. They even had to resort to taking him in a wheelchair just to physically get him there.



A Second Chance

By the October, his school decided they could no longer meet Stephen's needs as he was becoming physically violent through his frustrations.

In November of the same year, Stephen was accessing a part time timetable. Sadly, in December he was under threat of expulsion and school gave permission for him to have authorised absence for 2 weeks until the end of term to avoid this happening.

At the age of 6 and in January 2016, Stephen moved to Ambergate



Sports College to continue his education.

Stephen's parents, Eddie and Sarah, saw a very quick improvement in their son's emotional wellbeing and behaviour within just his first week at GANF. Even at home he was much more settled.

Things were getting better and better for 'The Vidlers'.

Living in Sleaford it appeared that the only thing Stephen struggled with was coming into school every day via transport. So Mum and dad took the decision to move to Grantham. Sarah said, "Stephen was doing so well at Ambergate and we didn't want the transport issue to stop him progressing."

The family have been here for 11 months now. Sarah, "Stephen has come so far and exceeded our expectations. GANF are embracing Stephen's individuality".

Sarah added, "Stephen first came to Ambergate wearing his ear defenders all the time but now he doesn't wear them at all, at home or school!! Stephen wouldn't take part in dressing up with other children before he came to Ambergate but he has now taken part in World Book Day as the smartest giant in town! We are thrilled for him."



"Stephen has come so far and exceeded our expectations"

Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship -

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