

Rosette and Denis found the right nursery education to support their children with special needs at Sure Start Whitley Children's Centre



Denis and Rosette Kom live in Whitley with their two sons, Keynes Stephan, four, and Peter, three.

Support

Denis and Rosette had only recently moved to the Whitley area and needed to find nursery education for their eldest son. When they visited the Sure Start Whitley Children's Centre to enquire about nursery provision, they soon realised that they had found a very useful resource and have not regretted their decision to enrol Keynes there.

Sure Start Whitley



where every child matters

Having already been concerned about the fact that Keynes was not yet speaking, they were pleased to be offered advice as to why this might be. "We knew that Keynes wasn't communicating as he should for his age, but we weren't sure what the problem might be," says Rosette. "We had tried to get him a hospital appointment to see a specialist but had been waiting for a long time and nothing had happened. Because the staff at the Children's Centre realised that something needed to be done, they were extremely helpful in pushing for an earlier consultation and Keynes was diagnosed as having an autistic spectrum disorder. Whilst this came as a surprise to us, it was a relief to know that now he could start to get the support he needed."

Speech and Language Therapy

At the Children's Centre, Keynes was offered Speech and Language Therapy to encourage his verbal communication skills and his progress has been so good that he has now been discharged. "He had one-to-one therapy both at the Children's Centre and at home, and there has been a marked improvement, to the extent that he no longer needs that level of support," says Rosette. "Having said that, the Therapist still stays in touch to make sure he is still progressing well, so we feel we are not left to cope alone."

Continuity of care

The continuity of care from the Children's Centre is something that Denis and Rosette particularly appreciate. "They really do seem to genuinely care about the children, almost as if they were their own" believes Denis. "Their professionalism and expertise has been a great support to us and we trust their advice totally. Because we are still not completely convinced about Keynes' diagnosis we are interested in doing anything we can to make sure he has every chance to progress as well as possible, and we are more than happy to take on board what they suggest."

Despite his condition, Keynes has applied to a mainstream school and receiving ongoing monitoring from the Speech and Language service. However, Rosette and Denis had to accept the fact that Peter, too, was showing signs of delayed speech and he is also receiving Speech and Language Therapy at the Children's Centre. "Peter is more forward than Keynes, but the Children's Centre staff felt

that he could benefit from some early intervention to make sure he didn't fall behind," says Rosette. "We were very happy to be offered that and more than grateful that they were prepared to ensure his welfare."

Settling into a new area

Of great value to the Kom family is the fact that the Children's Centre has been a means of introduction into a new and unfamiliar area, by giving them the opportunity to meet local people and make new acquaintances. "There is no doubt that the Children's Centre has helped us to settle here," says Denis. "We meet other parents, and the staff are so good at keeping us informed of what's going on in the community. Aside from the support we have had with our children, we are so pleased with the level of commitment they show to families like us."

From the heart

Denis and Rosette believe that Sure Start Whitley Children's Centre has been the best thing which could have happened to them in their particular circumstances. In a new environment, additional support for their children and an all-round welcome have made their lives easier than they might otherwise have been. As both Rosette and Denis say: "The Children's Centre staff are professional, committed to their work and they do the job with their hearts."



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