

Supporting the transition to Primary School for children with SEND

A parent's perspective

My son was diagnosed with Congenital bilateral Glaucoma and Cataracts at the age of six weeks, he had lots of hospital visits and eye operations in his first year, along with many different eyedrops on a daily basis and patching for two to three hours a day.

At around 22 months my son was referred to SLT and Social communication clinic as we had concerns regarding repetitive patterns of behaviour and lack of interaction with other children, along with sensitivities to noise, smells, certain textures, and difficulties to manage group situations.

He was discharged from both services after a number of sessions as his speech had improved, as well as progress with social interactions.

Moorfields eye hospital referred my son to the local authority, we got support from a lovely lady from 'Action for blind people' who would visit my son at home and then at the setting once he started there.

During his time at nursery, he was still displaying similar behaviours, he was then referred to the area SENCO. He visited an occupational therapist to help support his sensory needs and an educational Psychology Assessment was requested so that the appropriate support could be put in place.

After being accepted into our Primary School, the reception teacher and nursery nurse came to visit my son in his setting, along with the area SENCO, the QTVI, nursery manager, key worker, and myself. This was so beneficial to him as he was then able to put a face to a name whenever we talked about him going to big school, and both teachers were then familiar to him. Also, the nursery practitioners are then able to discuss the child's needs on a different level and I was able to voice my concerns. The reception teachers also visited him at home, which is something that was in place (pre covid) for all Reception children starting at that School.

The Primary school SENCO put together an 'about me' sheet, this was given out to every member of staff in the school, and this was really beneficial.

My son's support from 'action for blind people', who had got to know my son very well, popped into school at lunchtime in his first week and made sure he had something to eat that he was familiar with, which was just really lovely.

My son's needs and difficulties at the time may have been a lot less complex or challenging than some children have, however, the support that we received from all the people involved with the transition would benefit a child with any need. I, like a lot of parents I meet today, was, somewhat in denial that my child needed any

extra support, it was only because of the care and perseverance of the nursery that I **accepted it and I'm really** thankful that I did.

My child is now in Year 6, head boy of his school and is very happy.