



KEY FACTS:

Year child started at Mary Hare School: 2012
Local Authority: Bath and North East Somerset
Child's hearing Loss: Profound - Sensory Neural
Child's Achievements: Good scores in her tests, top marks for effort in class and a starring role in the school's production at the end of her Year 8.

How easy was the decision to board?

This was not easy but there was no other choice as we could not move to be closer to the school and it was obviously the best school for my daughter's needs. Being able to meet and speak to the care staff beforehand made this a little easier as I could be confident that they would take care of my child and I was able to feel comfortable about them doing so.

I think the decision to board was probably more difficult for me as a parent than for my daughter! She quickly made friends at school and the activities kept her occupied enough to reduce the homesickness although she did suffer with homesickness at times but was able to skype regularly. We did not make any mid-week visits as we thought this may make it worse for all with another goodbye to be said. My daughter has come home every weekend except at the end of this year (her Year 8) when she stayed the weekend with all her school friends. She enjoyed this and has said she wants to stay more weekends in the future. This will be harder on me than her I suspect!

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It is a wonderful school where the staff truly care about and are interested in the children in their care."*

How easy was the transition process to Mary Hare for your child?

It was a difficult move to 'big' school, made more difficult due to the distance but she was excited about it and had a friend already at Mary Hare in the tier above her. The staff at school were very welcoming and certainly made it less traumatic than it could have been. Leaving her primary school was a big step and she felt a mixture of excitement and nervousness. She had one friend at Mary Hare already albeit in the year above, which made the transition a little easier. Her friend had told her a lot about the school before she started. The visits to the school for the Open Day and the Entry Assessments also helped. She liked the school more than the local mainstream schools we had looked at.

Did you require any particular support from Mary Hare?

No we did not. The LEA did not put up too much of an objection once I was able to express the determination I had that my child should go to Mary Hare.

Having looked at the local provision (or lack of) and with the fact that her brother was already at Mary Hare Primary School I was fairly confident we would not have to go to tribunal but made it clear to the LEA that I would fight for my daughter to go to Mary Hare if need be. Prior to starting we had been to Mary Hare for two open days. The application process was straightforward, I cannot remember any problems with that and the same applies to the November assessments. We purchased uniform on the first day of term which worked very well as we had a scheduled appointment.



How has your daughter settled in?

She was homesick for the first couple of terms but has since settled in very well and made some very good friends. She enjoys her time at school and having stayed for one weekend now, plans to do so more often in future years. Friendships are the main factor that helped her to settle in as well as the evening activities such as dodgeball and volleyball. Seeing her friends is the most enjoyable part of school life for her now and she has had friends stay for weekends and uses skype to stay in touch with them over the holidays.

What advice would you give to new parents considering Mary Hare?

Put Mary Hare at the top of your list! It is a wonderful school where the staff truly care about and are interested in the children in their care and will give any child the best chance to achieve their potential. I would recommend anyone considering Mary Hare to visit the school and speak to the staff, current pupils and parents if they have an opportunity. I liked the 'feel' of the school and the staff when I first visited. I knew that my child would be well looked after and happy at the school. These were my main priorities along with giving my daughter the opportunity to achieve her full potential.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Sending my children away to boarding school is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do but sending them to Mary Hare is possibly one of the best decisions I have ever made to date. They have done so well and developed into very confident and happy individuals. My daughter has done well in her academic studies and learned a lot more than I believe she would have in mainstream school. The work is more accessible to her due to the smaller class sizes and group hearing aid system as well as constant input from trained and dedicated teachers of the deaf as well as regular speech and language therapy. She is very happy and fully included in school life. She has secured a job in the youth club as a waitress which she has enjoyed and this has boosted her confidence greatly. She plans to continue at Mary Hare until the end of 6th Form when she will possibly go on to University or into the work environment.

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Securing the future of deaf children and young people

