



KEY FACTS:

Name of Daughter: Jessica
Year Jessica joined Mary Hare: Year 7
Current Year Group: Year 9
Local Authority: Suffolk
Hearing Loss: Progressive hearing loss with one cochlear implant

Background

Jessica was diagnosed with a progressive hearing loss at the age of 5 years.

Over time Jess attended three different Primary Schools, it was only at the last one that she received the help and understanding that she needed.

However as our county had a three tier education system the time soon came to move to Middle School.

What was middle school like for Jessica?

Middle School was terrible, Jess was bullied constantly, Jess could not hear the teachers or follow the lessons. She was very unhappy and cried every day. Unfortunately the school would not admit that there was a problem even lying about support that was supposedly given to Jess.

How did you find out about Mary Hare School?

One day at an NDCS event Jess ran off ahead into a marquee and when we caught up with her she was talking to representatives from Mary Hare who were telling her about the school. We watched from a distance and soon Jess came running up to us, handed us a folder with a disc inside and told us "this is where I want to go".

We knew we had to make it happen. We attended an open day at Mary Hare and as soon as Jess walked through the doors she turned to us and said "I am home" (in typical dramatic 'girl' style!)



How did you find the funding process?

Because of the Middle School's unwillingness to admit their failings we unfortunately had to fight them as well as the Local Authority to get Jess to Mary Hare. It was so hard and Jess was caught in the middle, life was made even more difficult for her at school.

It took a year long battle, attending many healthcare appointments, meetings at school and gathering evidence of Jess's need to attend Mary Hare. To satisfy the Local Authority we visited two local schools with deaf units, but the class sizes were large (30 children) and there was maybe one other deaf child in Jess's year at one school and none at the other.

After nearly a year of fighting and no end in sight, out of desperation I sent a complaint to the Director of our Local Authority about their neglect of our child and I enclosed copies of all of our evidence. Very soon after that a lady came to our house to personally deliver the news that Jess finally got her wish. We had won! This was the best day ever!

"We will never be able to repay the wonderful staff at Mary Hare for what they have done for our family"



How did Jess settle in to school life at Mary Hare?

September 2013 was a life changing month for Jess, not only did she start at Mary Hare but a week later she had bilateral Cochlear Implants at Addenbrookes hospital in Cambridge. Jess could not wait to get back to school after her operation and things have just got better and better.

Jess finally has real friends and we have even gained an adopted daughter!

Jess can at last hear the teachers, not because of her implants but because the classes are so small and the teachers at Mary Hare face the children when they talk to them and take the time to make sure that everyone understands what is being taught.

Academically Jess has caught up with all the things that she missed and is doing so well, at her recent review we were told that if she keeps it up she will go to university.

How does Jess find boarding life?

There are so many activities for the children to enjoy and weekend trips. Jess has just been to Longleat and is looking forward to the next trip which is Thorpe Park.

Jess enjoys going to Coles Diner youth club and even works there.

“We attended an open day at Mary Hare and as soon as Jess walked through the doors she turned to us and said ‘I am home’”

Anything else you would like to add?

Getting Jess to Mary Hare was a long hard fight but it is the best thing we have ever done for our whole family as Jess’s unhappiness affected all of us.

We will never be able to repay the wonderful staff at Mary Hare for what they have done for our family - they have changed all of our lives. And most importantly given our wonderful daughter her life back.

Jess’s View

“Throughout the past two years Mary Hare has always been an inspiring place. I have received a good level of support from my Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Care Staff that simply didn’t exist in my previous schools.

The best thing about Mary Hare is my friends and boarding here. I feel boarding actually helps my focus and my education.

All the staff are extremely helpful - and fun! I love it here!”

Securing the future of deaf children and young people

