



Westmorland
School

Ben's story

Ben arrived to Westmorland School with a negative experience of education. He had refused to attend his previous school and thereafter he was home schooled, which resulted in low expectations of him taking part in education. The frustrated boy found it difficult to socialise with peers and was often mean to them as he couldn't articulate his thoughts and feelings.

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Settling into school

With his diagnosis of Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) and a variety of sensory processing needs, Ben was placed in a low stimulus class with three pupils all of a similar age. The teaching staff in his classroom were all TEACCH qualified and had a strong understanding of autism and PDA. To help improve his social skills and bilateral co-ordination, Ben accessed therapy sessions four times a week for speech and language, alongside occupational therapy support.

With the extensive support in place, Ben began to settle into life at Westmorland and started to quickly flourish. Staff and his parents witnessed an improvement in his behaviour as he no longer posed a threat to himself or others around him. To help manage his behaviours he was now using a variety of self-regulating strategies and had the option to request brief 'out of class time' to calm himself down.

Success

The ultimate indicator of Ben's success came in the form of joining the school's football team. As an avid football fan he showed off his skills at playtimes and soon became a valuable and popular member of the team. When Ben confidently ran onto the pitch with his team mates for the first time everyone was so proud, especially as it was an away game. The little boy that found break times daunting and couldn't even be considered for off-site activities had come so far. Ben's journey wasn't just restricted to school life or the football field, even his parents noticed a much calmer boy whose anxieties no longer restricted him enjoying family time – for Ben, the sky is now truly the limit.

 www.witherslackgroup.co.uk/westmorland-school

 01257 278 899



Meet Ben

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