



Ellis' Life at Belmont

BY ELLIS' FOSTER MUM

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"The school staff are brilliant: they're all very knowledgeable."

"...he loves the gardening and getting outside the classroom for his horticulture lessons."

When Ellis was placed with Mandy, his foster mum, it was only planned as a short-term respite placement, as he waited to go into residential care. His previous foster placement, just like his previous school place, had, irretrievably, broken down because of his poor behaviour.

"I couldn't bear the thought of him going into care and as one of my own sons has ADHD I thought I'd try to extend the foster placement. I thought he was being a bit hard done by - having to go into care - and I fought to keep him. That was 14 months ago and we've only had a couple of problems since; neither of which were major," says foster mum Mandy.

"Ellis is a lovely lad and we got on very well from the start. Of course, we have our ups and downs, just like any mother and son but he knows I'll be straight with him and won't take any nonsense. I'm straight and I'm strict - it's how I am with my own children and I don't treat Ellis any differently."

Ellis has fitted in well at his foster parents home - Mandy has two grown up children and daughters aged 16 and 7.

"He gets on brilliantly with the other children and he's really good at home. He has contact once a month with his Nana and that all works really well.

When I fostered him, Ellis was already at Belmont School and had been since Year 6. Since he has been with me, he has settled down brilliantly, both at home and at school."

Mandy's own son, who has ADHD, went to five special schools and so she's perfectly placed to compare Belmont with them.

"Belmont is a very good school. I'm very impressed with the school: I like the Principal and I like the small class sizes.

The school staff are brilliant: they're all very knowledgeable and I like the relationship they have with the kids. They can have a laugh with the pupils but they still have their respect.

They know the children really well and they respect the pupils and vice versa. It works two ways. They don't treat them like children. They treat them like adults.

School are very good at contacting me and vice versa. I've phoned and suggested they keep an eye on him if something has happened at home and they'll let me know if there are any problems.

He's now doing really well at school. He loves art and he loves the gardening and getting outside the classroom for his lessons.

He knows what's expected of him at school and he knows his boundaries at home.

He's doing fantastically at school and he'll be capable of doing GCSEs. Before, he had the potential but he couldn't keep his concentration, control his attitude, or manage his behaviour.

All I want for Ellis is what I want for my own kids - I want him to be happy and do well at school so that he can move on to college or university and get a decent job at the end of it.

It's just a brilliant school. I can't fault it. I have no issues with it at all."

Ellis on Belmont

"It's a good school. I like the smaller class sizes: my class has two members of staff between seven of us.

The staff are fair here. If you're good you're rewarded for it and I like that.

There is no bullying here at all. If anyone tries it, it's stamped out straight away.

At the back of the school there is a gardening department and we keep chickens which is good - you wouldn't get that at many schools!

It's great to get outside the classroom to work and horticulture is one of my favourite subjects.

Lots of other schools don't have horticulture on the curriculum and I'm hoping to get some qualifications by choosing horticulture as one of my option subjects. There is a good chance to get a job in horticulture at the end of it."

"POINT IN TIME" OFSTED PUPIL SURVEY

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
I enjoy school		✓			
I feel safe when I am at school	✓				
Overall, teaching is good at my school	✓				
Teachers explain to me how I can achieve more	✓				
My school takes account of my views		✓			
My school encourages me to do things for myself and to take on responsibility	✓				
My school helps me to understand and respect people from other backgrounds	✓				
My school helps me to prepare for the future	✓				
The leaders in my school do a good job		✓			

Academic Progress

Ellis is now on target in core curriculum subjects of English, Maths and Science.

He's ahead of target in ICT and Geography.

He's chosen to do City and Guilds in Horticulture when he starts in Year 10.