

Dylan's Story



Underley Garden

Name:	Dylan
Age:	February 1997
School start date:	January 2008
Local Authority:	Bury
SEA:	ASD with profound learning difficulties
Type of Provision:	Residential pupil, formerly day pupil

Dylan is a familiar face at Underley Garden School - he's been a residential pupil since 2008 when he started his secondary education.

"I knew as soon as I arrived at Underley that it was absolutely the right school for Dylan," says his mother Julie. "The big wide open spaces outside, the classroom set up, and the welcoming atmosphere made me know that it would be perfect for him. I knew it was right as soon as I reached the top of the drive and saw the walled garden, but as I was shown round and saw the whole set up I knew instinctively it was the right school for my son."

Dylan has ASD and a rare disorder known as Sotos Syndrome which affects his growth. After spending his primary school years close to home in Bury, his parents knew that the best outcome for Dylan would be at a specialist residential school and she fought and won that for him via a tribunal.

“I set my perimeters as soon as I knew we had won the tribunal. I wanted a school within 90 minutes of home, and I knew it would be best for Dylan if the living accommodation was actually on the school site rather than him needing a journey each day. I looked at eight or nine schools that appeared to offer that – but none of them did!

“Only Underley Garden offered in reality what they offered via brochures and on the website.”

Dylan’s parents’ determination to find the right school, and the subsequent fight to win him a place at Underley Garden has been rewarded by the progress his family have seen, and keep seeing.

“I can honestly say that Dylan is different every time he comes home,” said Julie. Dylan goes home every other weekend. “Every time he is doing something he couldn’t do before. It might only be a small thing but it’s progress.”

“He’s made educational progress but he’s also made so much progress socially by forging relationships with the staff and other pupils and with his communication,” says Julie. “His progress in his independence is also so noticeable. He does little jobs at school and he’ll repeat them at home.”

The school is working closely with the family on ensuring Dylan integrates into his local home community as well as he does at school.

“A trip to the local shopping centre used to be ruled

by Dylan, and it was a bit chaotic to be honest,” Julie admits candidly. “I think we just gave in to him for an easy life, but he’d be darting into a shop here, and a shop there all around Bury precinct.

“When we spoke to school about our problems, they arranged to send a member of his care team home for the weekend and he came out shopping with us.

“It made such a difference,” she said. “Andrew, his key worker, taught us how to ensure we were in charge but Dylan could be given small incentives along the way. It was great for us all. They were teaching us the strategies that they use at school so it makes sense for Dylan and it helps us as well.”

“He’s made so much progress in so many ways. The reward scheme in class really suits him,” she laughed. “I think he’ll do almost any task if he thinks it might win him some time on the computer! He loves computers.”

He’s also developed a love of gardening at school which his parents have been able to continue with weekend visits to a gardening club near their home.

“He loves the gardening club and it’s something his Dad and I can do with him at weekends. He is given his own tasks and he loves filling the bird feeders. We really enjoy going with him, and we have to admire his determination to do a good job. It’s lovely to see him enjoying and completing his tasks each time.”

Dylan is making progress with his independent living skills. He now makes a cup of tea, strips and remakes his own bed, deals with his own laundry and completes the tasks he’s set at the school bungalow he shares with three other students.

Underley Garden encourages every pupil to have their own bedroom decorated as they wish. In Dylan’s case, this means minimalist. He doesn’t like pictures on the wall, and hasn’t been able to understand the concept of a wardrobe, so it has been removed.

“His clothes are now kept in his big rucksacks,” said Julie. “I have had to learn to ‘let go’ of things that don’t matter and realise that if Dylan is happy with clean clothes out of a rucksack, it doesn’t matter. I found that difficult to accept at first but the school has helped teach me what really matters and what doesn’t.

“He interacts so well with the staff in the bungalow and his teachers, and I can see that. He has great affection for the team at school and those are the things that matter: the fact that he is happy at school.

“Never once has he cried when I have left Dylan at school, and I know he’s happy there,” said Julie.

The family is hoping that Dylan will make the transition to the adult services provision at Underley Garden.

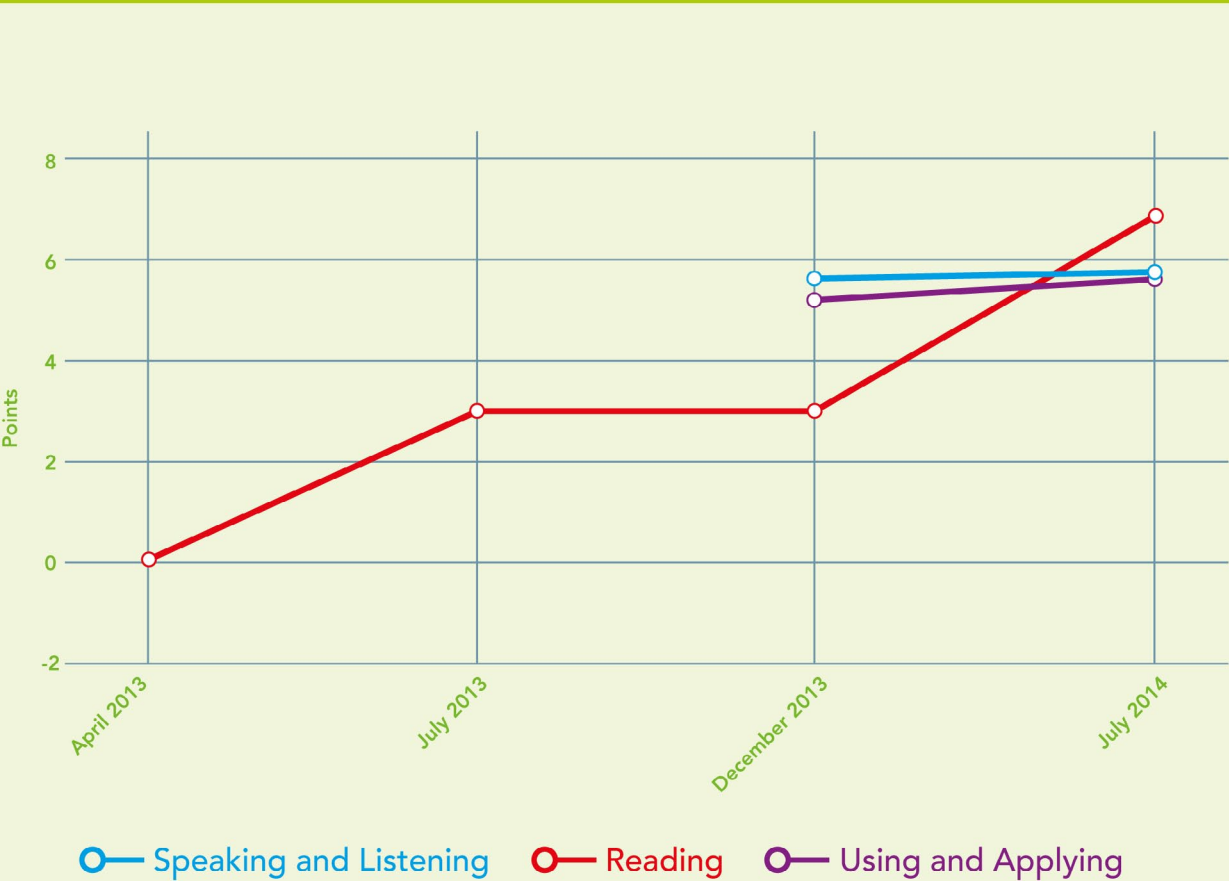
“As a family, we accept that Dylan will always need care, and I just hope to goodness he can stay where he knows the school, the place and the people, and is making excellent progress.”



School Progress

	Family Perspective	School Progress Report
Education	<p>We're really pleased with the way they teach Dylan and how they teach him.</p> <p>He's learning things like handling money, the calendar, and he's now added the date to the day of the week and he can achieve the targets that are set for him.</p>	<p>One of the secrets of our success here is that very carefully we analyse the needs of each student and then investigate all the resources we can gather together here to match their needs.</p> <p>Sometimes they are unusual and unique programmes, but if that is the best way forward for a particular individual, that's what we do.</p>
Communication	<p>Dylan hardly spoke at all when he started Underley Garden. Now he can make himself understood with people who are used to him.</p> <p>He might only say one or two words to me but from that we can have a conversation about what we're going to be doing for the day ahead.</p>	<p>We have a very innovative education team and as we build up a deep knowledge of a student, we can come up with a unique plan that will ensure success.</p>
Social Interaction	<p>He knows he's part of a group of boys who live together at school. If he doesn't want to be part of what the group is doing he'll take himself off and watch a video in his bedroom.</p> <p>He is genuinely fond of his teachers and other staff at school. He interacts with them as well as he interacts with us at home.</p>	<p>From their starting point with Underley Garden, young people are able to see something right through to an end result.</p> <p>Underley Garden School give much consideration to an individual's social curriculum, the friendships that they're able to make.</p>
Independence	<p>His independent living skills are improving. With Dylan the progress is only in small steps but they're constant steps.</p> <p>He can make a cup of tea on his own, and he'll sort out his laundry or remake his bed</p>	<p>Our young people will have a range of different outcomes in their lives.</p> <p>What we're aiming for is that each individual who comes to UG can fulfil their potential and be as independent as possible.</p>
	2008	2014
Communication	<p>Dylan made requests using single words.</p> <p>He would use his own terminology to refer to activities or request items which were not able to be understood beyond the people who worked regularly with him.</p>	<p>Dylan now uses full sentences when making requests.</p> <p>Dylan has broadened his vocabulary after extensive work. He now uses language correctly and frequently interacts positively with other people.</p> <p>He is also able to engage in simple conversation with people he does not know.</p>
Behaviour	<p>Dylan displayed inappropriate behaviour including kicking when a school activity was not of his choosing.</p> <p>He also displayed inappropriate behaviour if he was not able to do exactly as he wished.</p>	<p>Dylan's behaviour has improved dramatically.</p> <p>He no longer kicks school staff. He may still kick off his shoes if he is upset. Instances are much more infrequent - perhaps once a month rather than multiple instances daily.</p>
Independence	<p>Dylan relied heavily on staff to complete most tasks for him.</p> <p>Even with tasks that he enjoyed doing he still heavily depended on staff to take a leading role.</p>	<p>Through work done in both Life Skills and PSHCE lessons, Dylan has learnt to follow a shopping list with support, cook simple recipes and is working on correctly identifying coins as part of his maths curriculum. This will enable him to pay for items in shops with minimal staff support.</p> <p>He is completely independent in life skills including toileting and dressing.</p>
Rigidity in thought	<p>Dylan would only wear one set of clothes constantly and was very unwilling to let these be washed.</p> <p>He was also very attached to one specific pair of shoes and he would react in a very volatile manner whenever he was asked to change these shoes or wear a different type of footwear.</p>	<p>Dylan would only wear one set of clothes constantly and was very unwilling to let these be washed.</p> <p>He was also very attached to one specific pair of shoes and he would react in a very volatile manner whenever he was asked to change these shoes or wear a different type of footwear.</p>

Core Subject Progress Graph



“Dylan takes part in all aspects of school life. He enjoys time in the classroom, with the wider school and outside in the community.”

“Dylan’s level of independence has improved enormously and this is directly linked to the activities that have been provided. The success of his programme is a result of the holistic approach and combined working of education and therapy staff. Highly personalised approaches offered to Dylan have been successful.”

“We also see how much his confidence has developed. The level of independence Dylan has developed will ensure a positive difference to his future life and it is a pleasure to witness him applying his learned skills to new and different situations.”

Head of Education