

When I was very young I was in my own little world, all the time, I never spoke to anyone or looked at anyone. As soon as I was diagnosed with autism, I was transferred to a special school in Northwich called Rosebank, and that was when I began to change. The staff there worked with me and helped me start talking, reading and writing; this came quite quickly since all the information around me I was taking in, but unable to let it out. Then they introduced me to new experiences slowly and not all at once. To conquer some of my biggest fears Rosebank and my mum would help me approach them for a little bit, but a bit more each day, and on the occasions I did feel scared I could eventually just tell others calmly, rather than through a series of violent meltdowns.

At the end of Year 6, family and Rosebank both decided that the best high school for me would be a mainstream school with support ready for when I need it. There were no schools in my local area available, so I was enrolled into Wilmslow High School and let me say, that school really changed me and helped me spread my wings.

I didn't require constant supervision, but I was comfortable knowing that somebody to turn to for support was always there whenever I needed it. It felt good making friends at Wilmslow, but my social skills sometimes made things difficult. Luckily, I had frequent speech and language therapy sessions like I did at Rosebank, where I learnt how to appropriately behave and communicate and most importantly, shape my character so I could become more capable.

At the end of Year 11, I received my GCSE grades which were straight As and A\*s. Now I attend sixth form and I'm coping very well. Even though I'm still not as independent with daily tasks as most other people my age, I'm slowly getting there, bit by bit, and that's the best pace to do it at. I have done things I could never have done without the efforts of family, Rosebank, Wilmslow and speech and language therapists. I can't thank you all enough.

Anything can happen if you fight for it to. No matter how long the battle is, things that you might not even be imagining now, can happen soon.

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By Rachael, Rosebank ex-pupil