

Student Journey

Here we share the story of a special young man who has made great strides since joining our independent therapeutic school in 2017.



Meeting Jonathan

Jonathan's transition from his mainstream setting to School for Inspiring Talents was challenging. Excluded from his previous school and experiencing high levels of trauma induced anxiety, he would often run away from his parents before reaching our school grounds.

When in school, Jonathan displayed a significant lack of trust of all adults. His low self-esteem and self-worth made him feel incapable of achieving anything, personally or academically. As a result, he would harm himself and others, often lashing out with violent outbursts.

His teacher and keyworker, Paul, immediately identified the need to establish trust with Jonathan.

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A therapeutic approach

Dedicated time for therapeutic conversations gave Jonathan the space to discuss with Paul anything on his mind. It was his time. The sessions helped Jonathan to feel prioritised and gave Paul the insight on Jonathan's feelings and emotions that created the basis for building trust. As a result, all staff were made aware of the triggers to avoid, as well as the strategies to adopt, to help create a nurturing and supportive environment.

Family Practitioner, Charlotte, part of the school's multi-disciplinary team, has worked alongside Paul, Jonathan, and his family to facilitate two-way communication between his parents and the school.

“In Jonathan's case, we have been fortunate to have a great relationship with his parents who we communicate with on a regular basis. If Jonathan has had a bad morning or is unusually tired, they will let us know before the school day so that staff are prepared to help Jonathan tell us how he is feeling in his own way.”

In the classroom, the Zones of Regulation

framework has helped Jonathan understand his emotions and implement strategies to allow them to de-escalate. If he becomes dysregulated and lashes out in class, that staff member will work empathetically to help Jonathan understand why the situation has happened and discuss with him ways to avoid the same situation happening again.

Therapeutic tools have helped Jonathan recognise his own needs for specific support around managing his anger. Working with our specialist Mental Health Practitioner, he has been able to show remorse for his actions, have restorative conversations and continue to build trusted relationships with staff.

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Building Trust

Gaining Jonathan's trust has been a significant breakthrough in his journey. It has allowed new opportunities for Jonathan including taking drumming lessons at a local mainstream school. Once comfortable in this setting, he was able to join a Maths GCSE class. After just a few weeks attending his class with a member of our team, Jonathan felt secure enough to attend his lessons on his own. He was soon predicted a level 8 in both Maths and Statistics.

He has also started a vocational course at a local specialist school, learning trades including construction, catering, and mechanics - a significant leap for Jonathan and something that wouldn't have been considered when he joined us.

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Positive future

Jonathan's progress has been identified by the whole team of staff who support him at school, as well as his family.

“From day one we knew that School for Inspiring Talents was the right place for Jonathan. Their whole approach was exactly what he needed to support him through his trauma and anxiety, and to build his trust. The change in him is astounding. He is no longer an anxiety ridden, angry boy with no self-worth. He is now looking forward to the future. It's not an understatement to say that the school saved Jonathan and our family. A special thank you must go out to his teacher Paul for bringing out the best in him both academically and as an individual.”

Jonathan continues to develop socially and emotionally. While he recognises that he finds it difficult to socialise with his peers, he takes part in regular RPG sessions (Role Playing Games) to help him build his social circle.

As a measure of his progress, Jonathan has been elected as the School Council Representative for his class. He is happy

to come to school and no longer has unauthorised absences. He continues to work towards his Maths GCSE, Level 2 Functioning Skills in English and a Level 1 in Construction.

Now in his final year at School for Inspiring Talents Jonathan has some great opportunities ahead of him, and he will be fully supported in his transition to his next steps. Paul adds, “When the time comes for Jonathan to leave our school, he will be very much missed by both staff and students, I'm extremely proud of him.”

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