

Spotlight on Jonathan Middleditch

Jonathan Middleditch, aged 17, was the winner of the Young Person of the Year Award at the 2015 Shine a Light Awards. Jonathan, who attends Moor House School and College in Oxted, Surrey, has a diagnosis of severe specific language impairment, dyspraxia¹, dyslexia² and dyscalculia,³ resulting in difficulties confidently functioning in everyday life situations.

He was recognised by judges for his determination, courage, enthusiasm and motivation, which has resulted in Jonathan achieving things both his family and professionals wouldn't have thought would be possible.

Jonathan, from Sudbury in Suffolk, started Moor House School and College at Key Stage 2 with severe speech and language disorders, resulting in unintelligible speech. However, with unwavering determination to develop his skills to the best of his ability, Jonathan has achieved success in all areas of his life and is now seen as a role model to others in the school.

Within the past 12 months, Moor House School has applied for funding for up-to-date specialist equipment to help students develop their speech clarity. Jonathan became an integral part of the bid, volunteering himself to be an advocate for the specialist approach to ensure all pupils at the school would be able to have the same opportunities that he has had.

The funders were so overwhelmed by Jonathan's progress and his explanation of the effectiveness of the therapy that Moor House School was granted a sum of £90,000. In addition to this, Jonathan is an ambassador for speech and language therapy, taking the time to regularly demonstrate therapy to students, staff and external visitors.

Jonathan has shown that with the right access to speech and language therapy mixed with motivation and a good sense of humour, anything is possible. Jonathan achieved two GCSEs and despite not having the required entry grades, attended a mainstream college interview and through his ability to explain his skills and experience with confidence, was offered a place on his chosen course – agriculture.

Jonathan has worked tirelessly over the past academic year to achieve success in the level one course and has since been offered an unconditional place on level two. Jonathan has even achieved his tractor licence, trailer license and achieved functional skills maths and English qualifications. He has achieved more than he ever dreamt possible.

¹ Developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a condition affecting physical co-ordination that causes a child to perform less well than expected for his or her age in daily activities and appear to move clumsily. (NHS)

² Dyslexia is a common learning difficulty that mainly affects the way people read and spell words. (NHS)

³ Dyscalculia is usually perceived of as a specific learning difficulty for mathematics, or, more appropriately, arithmetic. (British Dyslexia Association)



Jonathan has been awarded the *Young Person of the Year Award* in recognition of his amazing progress and journey from a child that had unintelligible speech to a young man who is full of confidence, a mentor and a true inspiration to other students, staff and therapists.

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