

WORDS: SANDRA SHANNON

WITH DYSLEXIA



'SHE'S NEVER LOOKED BACK': Amy Agnew is more relaxed, happy and confident, says mum Elaine. Picture: MICHELLE SPERRY

CASE STUDY TWO

THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD Amy Agnew was treated for mild dyslexia at the DDAT Centre in Kenilworth.

Her mother first became aware her daughter was struggling with her writing when she was eight.

Elaine Agnew, aged 44, an Adult Education tutor for Coventry City Council, said: "In years two and three Amy didn't seem to be writing as much as she should have been in her story book, although her reading wasn't a problem.

"We wondered if she was left-handed like my sister, and trying to write with her right hand.

"Later on Amy realised she couldn't think about what she wanted to say, spell it, and write it down, all at the same time. In spite of this, she stayed at an average level."

But Elaine, who lives in Styvechale, Coventry, felt that all was not well with her daughter.

She said: "I spoke to Amy at some length and she felt she worked far harder than anyone else in the class to achieve the same results. She had also realised that she was misreading some of the questions.

"I rang the Dyslexia Institute and had her tested. They said she was mildly dyslexic and was having problems processing information, but that she wasn't bad

enough to have treatment.

"I was really concerned about her future. I wanted her to be happy, but thought there probably wasn't anything more we could do."

Then Elaine read some articles in the press about the DDAT Centre in Kenilworth.

Elaine said: "I decided to give them a ring and Amy was assessed and given a set of daily exercises to do. They consisted of throwing and catching beanbags, balancing on a wobbleboard and threading beads.

"Within a few weeks her speech improved dramatically and she seemed to be happier. Halfway through the treatment things got worse, but we were warned this could happen. After a few weeks she improved again and has never looked back. She finished the programme in November 2002.

"Amy is now a more relaxed and happier child. Her reading and writing speed increased. She works independently now and organises herself. She is not as tired and sleeps much better. Her confidence and self-esteem have improved.

"I think we probably spent around £1,200 on the treatment.

"I would like to have thought it would be available on the NHS but it's a small percentage to pay if it makes Amy's life easier."