

Hedgehogs Keep Abbey School Students on the Move

For many years the Hedgehogs charity has supported special needs students at The Abbey School with donations to help insure the minibuses and cars which take them on trips & visits, to college, work experience, training and sports events. This is an invaluable element of the school curriculum as well as life-skills training.

This week, former chairman of the Hedgehogs, Cyril Trust, visited the school with his son Richard, a former student of The Abbey, to present a cheque for £1,000 to help with the transport costs for this year. Headteacher, Mr Chris Gardiner, was delighted to welcome the guests who accompanied Cyril and Richard, Nigel Parcell and Jack Stacey, the Hedgehogs' president, and take them on a tour of the school.

"I am always pleased to have an opportunity to show people around the school so they can see what we do here and to show off our fantastic students and staff. Richard will hardly recognise the place – it has been doubled in size and completely refurbished since his school days. We now enjoy state of the art IT equipment in all classrooms, have fully equipped science, art, ICT, DT and Food Technology rooms and an appropriately stocked library, as well as new therapy suites. None of this would have been possible without the fund-raising efforts of charities like the Hedgehogs. In Richard's day the school had a single minibus, now we have 2, plus a van and 3 cars for small groups, all generously donated by local charities and businesses. As you can imagine, keeping this fleet on the road really eats into the school budget, so we are extremely grateful for this help from the Hedgehogs."

The benefit students get from off-site activities really help them develop the skills they need when they leave the school and go onto college and then, hopefully, follow in Richard's wake into successful and sustained employment/careers.

Cyril, who has extensive experience of a number of local schools serving over many years as a governor at both Freemantles and The Ridgeway School, where he was Chairman for 6 years while it was rebuilt, and being involved in the development of the innovative nursery school established at The Pilgrims' Way, cast his expert eye over The Abbey as it is today and said:

"I am amazed at the progress of The Abbey since my son was a pupil. It is a tribute to the head teacher and his staff"

