

Bridge School Malvern headteacher Sue Hornby receives MBE

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EDUCATION

PEOPLE

By James Reece

A MALVERN educational leader has insisted her MBE award is reward for a "team effort".

Sue Hornby, the headteacher and co-founder of Bridge School Malvern, was given the accolade on the New Year Honours List for services to special educational needs.

The school supports young people with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) who struggle in the mainstream classroom environment or have left without the prospect of further education or employment.

Mrs Hornby said: "I was surprised but honoured to receive the award.

"The Bridge has only been able to achieve the successes it has with the support of a really dedicated team of staff and governors, some having been with us from the start, and also the practical and financial support of many, especially in its early days.

"The award is really a recognition of that team effort."

Established in 2007 as a charity, the Bridge started as a small alternative provider based at West Malvern allotments.

It soon moved to its current location at Hanley Workshops, Hanley Swan, and was registered as a school in 2016.

Mrs Hornby continued: "It has been a real privilege to see how hard the young people work to overcome their barriers.

"The five-acre care farm at the Hanley site has played a large part in the practical hands-on approach to learning that we wanted.

"The sixth form in Barnards Green also has a unique approach to preparing its students for work by giving them the opportunity to work alongside one of the three 'in-house' businesses on site and integrating work experience with local businesses as a cornerstone of the student's experience."

One ex-student revealed through their experience what the Bridge team has achieved on a daily basis.

They said: "My teen years were a mental battle. Being diagnosed autistic from an early age, my needs in education were drastically different from others.

"I was bullied for it and this led to lots of issues in my self-worth, image, mood and behaviours.

"I retreated internally and isolated, spending my days hiding away in my bedroom."

The former student said they were now working and had friends and healthy relationships while "trying every new opportunity that comes my way".

They added: "This is in no small part due to the Bridge and the absolute miracle workers who put up with me so thank you all."

