

Not Stupid: The Story of One Mother's Fight to Rescue the Lives of Her Children from Autism by Anna Kennedy

When Anna and Sean Kennedy discovered that their sons Patrick and Angelo suffered with Asperger's Syndrome and autism respectively, they were truly devastated - but their family's troubles were just beginning. Placed in mainstream nurseries and schools, Patrick and Angelo endured traumatic experiences in a system woefully equipped to cater for their complex needs. Like so many parents, Anna and Sean, having been turned away by no fewer than 26 special needs schools when searching for appropriate educational facilities for the boys, were down - but not out. The local education authority had a fight on its hands. Anna was determined to prove that for children like her sons, the challenges of growing up with autism did not have to end in defeat. Through sheer guts and determination, they turned their situation into a victory for parent power by transforming a disused local school into a centre of excellence for the care and support of those with autism. Their inspirational cause has since gone from strength to strength. With more than half a million people in Britain affected by autism, it is little wonder that their school, established after much heartache and hard work, quickly became over-subscribed - proof, if it be needed, that educational provision in this field is inadequate in the United Kingdom today, and proof also that it is still possible to transform a vision into reality through simply not giving up.

Anna's story, and that of her ever-improving sons, is a beacon of inspiration for parents of special needs children all over the country. "Not Stupid" offers readers a rollercoaster of emotions - from the depths of frustration and despair to the dizzy heights of joy - but most of all, it offers a sense of real hope for those whose lives are affected by autism.