

FROM MRS PATEL

Milan started secondary school in September 2011 and started having back pain every couple of weeks and this pain cleared up when he had some painkillers. Between September and November he had a few more episodes and we took him to the doctors and advice was growing pains and he had Xray of his spine and we were informed everything is fine.

During December he had no pains however the pain started on 27 December and this time pain got worse day by day and he was struggling to lay on his back. He is very keen on sports and doing activity seemed to ease the pain. Doctors saw him and again “growing pains” was mentioned and referred for blood tests in case there was problem with his kidneys.

With all the pain he was determined to go to school and playing regular football for the local club. On Friday 13 January 2012, Milan had been having this back pain continuously for 2 weeks and we took him to a private physiotherapist and she looked at his back and was very concerned and suggested we took him to a hospital. He was admitted to Warwick hospital that afternoon and by this time he was struggling to walk and the doctors suggested that he have a MRI scan. Unfortunately there is no MRI service at weekend so he had the scan, eventually, on Monday afternoon. He was advised not to walk and to use a wheelchair and on painkillers continuously. The MRI showed a lump in his back and he was transferred by ambulance to Birmingham Childrens Hospital the next day where the surgeons told us that if they don't operate that night Milan would lose his legs as he couldn't walk at all.

On Tuesday 17 January. Milan had the operation and a lump was removed from his spine and at the time we thought that was it and once he had recovered that would be it. Ten days later the news that we never expected came – Milan's lump was cancerous and the surgeons had removed 99% of the tumour but there may still be the odd cell in his body. We were told he had Ewing's sarcoma (bone cancer) which affects about 35 children in England every year. Milan was obviously distraught, he thought he was going to die!

The oncologist told us that his prognosis is good but he would need 14 cycles of chemotherapy and 6 weeks of radiotherapy.

Milan started chemotherapy on 31 January 2012 and this continued every 3 weeks. When he was having chemotherapy he would be in hospital for 4-5 days, feeling sick and then the following week his blood count would be low so he would have infection, temperature and generally not well. He would pick up the week after and then back again for next round of chemotherapy.

This continued until December 2012 and throughout that time Milan has been determined to go to school as much as he can and play football, tennis whenever he could. Sometimes we would come back from hospital where he has been quite poorly but he would still go school the next day.

Sports & school has been very important to him as that was the time he could be a “normal boy”.