



Reflection Points

Being transgender

This extract is about Jen's first day in Year 4 at school when she arrives in a girl's school uniform. This can be photocopied and given to the group to read quietly by themselves or in groups and think about.

I walked up the long concrete path up to the entrance to the school yard. I felt such a mixture of emotions and everything seemed to be happening in slow motion.

I looked down at my feet, my black patent leather T-bar shoes glistening in the autumnal sunshine. Girls' shoes, beautiful, shiny, girls' shoes instead of those big clumpy boys' shoes I had been wearing before. My feet felt lighter - like I was walking on air. I wanted to twirl and pirouette and kick out my legs like a ballerina, but I knew I couldn't, not now.

My mum's last words to me as left the house were, "I'm proud of you sweetheart. Don't let any of those children make you feel like you are wrong. Hold your head up high and just be you."

I knew how lucky I was to have a mum that understood me, and encouraged me to be myself. She met with my teachers last term; explained what Transgender was and that I was legally changing my name from James to Jen. The school was really reluctant, so my Mum had to have a big meeting with the governors. Eventually, they agreed I could start the new term as a girl (and wear a girl's uniform).

And here I was...walking onto the playground in a red and white checkered summer dress, white socks and a little red cardigan - emblazoned with the school crest. A couple of children looked up from their games, as I walked past, they didn't say anything, but I could tell they were confused. My heart began beating faster: I saw my friend Finn kicking a ball against the wall. I waved at him. He looked puzzled for a second, then jogged over to me.

"Hiya James...er...I mean Jen," he said awkwardly. I smiled at him sensing how uncomfy he was feeling. He broke the silence, "do you still like football then?" he asked hopefully.

"Yeah of course," I said, "I still love football."

"Phew, that's a relief!" he exclaimed. "Let's play first three to goals. I will be Man Utd, and you can be Spurs."