



GOOD RECOVERY: Sophia Trewick, pictured with her mum Julia

My battle to recover from debilitating ME

dren's Hospital in Brighton.

She had suffered a virus in August 2009 from which she never seemed to recover.

There was little treatment the hospital could offer, apart from medication for her migraines and monitoring.

She also tried an alternative treatment, called the Lightning Process, with the help of life coach Sherree Ginger.

With all the support and back-up treatment, Sophia managed to battle her way back to health and is now doing well at school.

Here she talks about the impact the condition had on her life.

"When I had ME I felt very tired and achy in my legs.

Sometimes I would have to sit out of sport at school and when I tried to play tennis because my body got tired so fast.

I didn't want people to think I was weak so sometimes I would try and carry on.

It didn't work, I just felt much worse later.

I often found it hard to get to sleep and trying to work on the computer made me feel sick too.

Sometimes I felt very sick and had a churning tummy and this made me not want to eat, which was not like me at all.

Primary school was a very different thing for me because I couldn't do the things I loved anymore.

My friends were surprised because this was not like me at all.

I told some of them what was happening but only a couple of them actually understood.

Dr Patel only wanted me to go to school part-time and I had to build that up very slowly to half a day, which was even weirder for my friends.

They thought if I was well

RESEARCH has revealed that one in 100 schoolchildren across Sussex may be affected by the debilitating condition ME. But the condition remains undiagnosed for many, prompting calls for a dedicated specialist service to be set up in the county.

Sophia Trewick, 12, from Brighton, was successfully treated for ME after being diagnosed two years ago. She tells health reporter SIOBHAN RYAN her story.

enough to do half a day then why couldn't I do a whole day?

I ended up only doing maths and English at primary school which was alright for a while because I enjoy English, but I was missing things like art, music, history and PE.

I think the teachers did their best.

They hadn't had a pupil on half days before but some of them didn't seem to understand that I didn't want to be treated as special or different. I wanted to be treated like all the other kids.

I know I was a bit different at that time and sometimes it was difficult to concentrate if I wasn't feeling right but I didn't want the teacher to over focus on me.

All I needed was for them to

know but not make it obvious.

Sometimes if I felt really unwell my face would go a grey colour and it helped if some of them would recognise this.

I have played tennis for a long time and it was very frustrating for me not playing.

When I was very ill I think half the reason that I got better was because I had lots of different goals that pushed me forwards and they gave me the motivation to try.

My tennis coach supported me for the whole time and I am very grateful to her for helping me.

Dr Patel told my mum and dad about the Lightning Process which I did at the end of that school year when I was ill.

Sherree Ginger is incredible and

I would recommend her to anyone, young or old.

She taught me some techniques and strategies for dealing with my symptoms and they have stuck with me ever since. I still use them today.

On my first day with Sherree she told me to go swimming with my mum, something that I hadn't done in ages. It was brilliant.

I just used my newfound strategies and I was OK.

When I do big trips or go away from home on a school trip without my parents, I can get very scared and tired and worried that ME might come back.

I think I had grown reliant on my parents when I had ME and to be split off from them makes me not feel so confident in myself.

I use the things I learnt when I was doing the Lightning Process so that I feel more confident.

Now I am at Dorothy Stringer School in Brighton and I am doing all the things I like to do with my new friends.

I am back at school full-time and I have been since the beginning of Year 6.

Finally, I think the most important thing for me was the support I got. Not just from home, from everyone."

● Have you or someone you know been affected by ME? Tell us your stories by emailing siohban.ryan@theargus.co.uk or leaving a comment at theargus.co.uk/news

● For more information about health services in your area go to theargus.co.uk/localinfo

Call for specialist services

THE Sussex ME Society is calling for more specialist services to be made available for children in the county.

They are backed by charity patron and Hove MP Mike Weatherley.

NHS Brighton and Hove says the way in which children in Sussex with suspected ME will be assessed and diagnosed and then supported in the

community is changing, but patients will not be deprived of a service.

Children will continue to be assessed and diagnosed at the Royal Alex but will do this via a team of paediatricians rather than just via one consultant, Dr Patel. Dr Patel will continue to be a part of this service and will be a source of expertise for the wider paediatric team.