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HEADLINE: Special gift for a brave pupil

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A boy with a rare genetic disorder is riding high - after receiving a pony of his own, thanks to staff and parents at his old school.

Five-year-old Mark Brough of Oakerthorpe, who started at Alfreton Park Special School in September, became the proud owner of 12-hands-high Jazz earlier this month thanks to the fund-raising efforts of Alfreton Nursery School in Grange Street.

His mother Alison explained that Mark has Angelman's Syndrome, a rare condition which means he has severe learning difficulties and has only just learned to walk.

"His former teacher Laura Dolby was going to run the Robin Hood half marathon in October and she asked if we would mind if she did it to raise money for Mark," said Alison.

Parents and staff at the school rallied round to get sponsorship for Laura, who raised more than £ 700 in the end.

Some of the money went towards a family computer for the Brougs and the rest towards four-year-old Jazz who arrived just after Christmas and is a great hit with little Mark.

"He loves riding and has been a few times with his new school," said mum Alison.

"He rode Jazz last week and he is going to have lessons.

"It was a lovely gift from Laura and the school."

Laura said: "Mark is a very special boy with very special needs and he formed a real bond with all the staff during his time at the nursery."