



David and Eloise want to be involved in their children's education and at Church Hill Infants School find that they are welcomed in every way



David and Eloise Hollis live in Thurmaston with their children Ben, 7 and Katie, 9.

A great school on the doorstep

Eloise and David feel they were fortunate to have three good schools close to where they live of which Church Hill Infant School is one. Being within walking distance for Eloise as a non-driver, and as it was where many of their children's friends were moving to from their preschool, they had no doubt that Church Hill was the right choice. "It was partly for convenience but had Church Hill not turned out to be such a genuinely great school we would, of course, have moved them," says David. "As it happens, both Katie and Ben have always been eager to get through the door in the mornings and we have never had any issues at all with any aspect of the school's provision."

Involving parents in education

For Eloise, one thing which particularly stands out is the approachability of the staff. "It is one of the friendliest schools I have ever come across," she says. "The teachers are open and honest, always willing to talk and there are no artificial barriers put up between school and parents. In fact, parents are actively welcomed into the classroom to take part in lessons and I really love the fact that we have the chance to be so involved in our children's education."

Both David and Eloise agree that the transition from preschool to infant school was smooth and easy. "It is very daunting for a parent if, having been so much a part of their child's nursery education you have to suddenly leave them to the care of others at infant school. At Church Hill we feel that the transition process is gentle, gradual and sensitively handled, and that the school considers parents' involvement to be an essential part of the learning process."

Enjoyment not endurance

The way in which the curriculum is presented is, believes Eloise, a very effective way of engaging the children's interest in learning so that it is something to be enjoyed rather than endured! "They show the children that it is fun to learn and lessons are often very creative. The teachers manage to find ways to get through to all the children by adapting lessons to appeal to every child. They also make sure that the more able children are stretched by giving them extra challenges - and for a very competitive boy like Ben, that is very welcome!" David also expresses surprise at the nature of the work his children have been given. "I think they are at least a year or more ahead of where I was at their age without being unduly pressured. Church Hill has brought both Ben and Katie on in leaps and bounds."

Social maturity

Eloise and David set a great deal of store by good manners and behaviour and are pleased that at Church Hill these traits are reinforced from a very early age. "They are taught to respect others and to be polite in all areas of their lives and this message is put over from day one," says David. "It is not enforced in an intimidating way but taught as something which should be a matter of course. We have noticed how socially mature our children are at school, at home and in other situations and I appreciate the fact that Church Hill shares these values with us."



Family atmosphere

David has been further impressed by the extra-curricular provision which for Ben has included football and fencing, but in particular the Year 2 residential visit where the children spent three days away and out in the open building dens, preparing their own lunch and having an all-round amazing adventure. "It's a young age to be staying away from your parents but the atmosphere is so homely at Church Hill that it was like being with family for Ben," David explains. "Just like the experience Katie had on the same trip two years beforehand, it was a fantastic experience for Ben and he didn't miss us one little bit!"

Children say

Ben sums it up by saying "I can't decide what's best because I like everything!" But when pushed to elaborate he described how he enjoyed the challenges at Church Hill, both inside and out of the classroom: "Sometimes the work is harder, but the teachers always tell us how well we have done on the difficult things, and that makes me feel good." And referring to the weekly full school Assemblies (which parents are invited to) "We get to show the rest of the school the big projects we have worked on. Designing and making the vehicles in groups was my favourite thing to show." Getting the chance to use up his excess energy is always going to play a part in Ben's top choices: "We get to play lots of different sports and I love the after-school football and fencing."

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