



Louise believes that Church Hill Infant School is the only one which could have brought out the best in her very different sons



Louise lives in Thurmsaston with her sons Joseph, nine, and Daniel, who is six.

Challenging situations

Louise has had two very different experiences of Church Hill Infant School but in a strange way both have had a very positive impact on her family. With some very challenging situations to face, Louise has been more than grateful for the understanding and support she has received from her children's school.

No-one really knows what to expect from a first child and although Louise had registered that Joseph's speech seemed slow to develop she had no real concerns until he started school. "It quickly became apparent that he was quite a long way behind the other children and before long his teacher mentioned to me that she thought he would need some extra help," she says.

"By the end of his first year Joseph had been diagnosed with autism and it is greatly to the credit of Church Hill that they took his condition on board and put a range of measures in place to make sure he had all the help they could provide."

Going the extra mile

Joseph was given extra one-to-one sessions to encourage his speech and the school brought in a specialist speech and language therapist who not only worked with Joseph but with his teachers, too, so that they had a greater understanding of how to support him. When Louise attended a course run by the Local Authority for parents of autistic children, the school arranged for a member of staff to accompany her. "The school went to such a lot of effort and we all learned a great deal about Joseph's condition, so it was not only Joseph who benefitted but any other children with similar needs who might join the school. There was never a time when anyone at Church Hill said 'we can't deal with this'; they just got on and did it, willingly."

Different children, different needs

At the other end of the scale, Daniel is a bright and enthusiastic child, keen to learn and achieving well above average. "He's always the first to put his hand up in class and can't wait to do his homework after school!" says Louise. "His teachers are wonderful with him in the same way they were with Joseph but in Daniel's case by pushing him gently to do the best he possibly can. I am so impressed that Church Hill has shown the willingness and the ability to address the needs of two such different children."

Role model

At around the time Joseph was diagnosed, Louise herself was identified as suffering from post-natal depression, partly brought on, she believes, by her difficult personal situation. "I was going through a divorce which made everything that much worse," she explains. "It could have been very unsettling for the boys but the school helped enormously. Providing a shoulder to cry on when I needed it and realising that Joseph and Daniel might be affected. I felt it was important that the teachers should be aware of our circumstances so they could make allowances if necessary and everyone was sympathetic and understanding. It was a particularly good thing that at the time Daniel had a lovely male teacher who provided a very valuable role model for him in the absence of his father."



No better place

There are many other things which Louise could point out about Church Hill, things which have convinced her she could not have chosen a better school for her two boys. "It has been a fantastic school for us all and has brought out the best in my children despite their very different personalities. At the end of the day, no-one could ask for more."

Children say

Joseph says: "School dinner is the best!" and Daniel: "I like learning new things and I learn a lot of new things at school!"

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