



Ryan and Samantha's daughter loves Church Hill Infant School so much she doesn't want to miss a day



Ryan and Samantha have two daughters; Sophie is six and Maisie, one and a half.

First choice

Church Hill Infant School was Ryan and Samantha's first choice and, although not their nearest, was where they were very pleased to secure a place for Sophie. "We had heard excellent reports about Church Hill from other parents and because most of Sophie's nursery school friends were going there we didn't want to separate her from them. Even at three years old, it's clear that children can form a bond with others of their age so we put our application in early and, thankfully, we were lucky. It is also a springboard to a selection of very good secondary schools - there's nothing wrong with thinking ahead!"

A welcome addition to classroom-based learning

The couple have never had any regrets about their choice. "It's a fantastic little school," says Ryan. "It is clean, bright, friendly and welcoming and we have always been happy with how Sophie has settled in. I love the creative approach to learning and how the teachers use everyday objects as tools, such as playing outside with sticks, water or sand for counting and measuring. This is a welcome addition to purely classroom-based teaching, and something the children thoroughly enjoy - and that enjoyment makes the learning experience even more effective."

Listening to parents

Ryan and Samantha's only slight concern was with the transition between Foundation Year and Year 1 and they approached the Headteacher to ask if Sophie could be put in a class with her existing friends. "We liked the fact that we were listened to and our comments taken seriously. The school was very accommodating and did as much as possible to make sure Sophie was made to feel at home; Church Hill does have a very homely feel about it and the way they dealt with our concerns illustrates that. We were reassured that the transition would be smooth and pupils would be supported as they progressed into their new classes. Sophie has made lots of new friends this year as well as strengthening the existing friendships she had when she first started school."

Smooth transition

Transition from one school setting to another can often be a difficult time but because, as Ryan explains, Church Hill Infants has a close working relationship with Church Hill Juniors, this is a hurdle which should not present a problem. "The Infant school uses the swimming pool on the Junior site so by the time the children transfer they are already familiar with the premises and some of the teachers. They also visit to watch the Junior Christmas production and during the final half term, the Year 2 children participate in a range of transition activities like joint Y2/Y3 sports day, and spending a whole day at the Junior School with their current Year 2 teachers. I particularly like the fact that Sophie has swimming lessons, which is something I feel strongly about. Being able to swim is a major life skill and it is yet another reason that we are so pleased with the provision at Church Hill."



Taking pride in achievement

From an academic point of view, Ryan could not be happier with the standard of teaching which has seen Sophie attain above her age in literacy. "She loves the fact that she now has to visit the Year 2 classroom to get her new reading books! Taking pride in her achievements is an encouragement in itself and something the school promotes," he says. "I was a little apprehensive at first that she had two different teachers but this has turned out to be a positive thing - it's almost as though she is getting twice as much from her lessons because she is seeing two different aspects of a subject. Both teachers have the same dedicated and knowledgeable approach and work well together so there is no lack of continuity. It also means that Sophie has to adapt to two styles of teaching which can only be a good thing."

Love of learning

Sophie really loves her school, says Ryan, to the extent that she and her friends often play 'schools' in the car on the way home. "She honestly hates it if she's not well and has to miss a day and she is very proud of her 100% attendance record for this year."

Sophie says:

"I like my school because I have lots of friends and they are all kind. I like my teachers and I like my head teacher because some times they make me laugh and giggle."

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