



"We moved home but not the school,"... Madhavi knew her son was in the right place at Clifford All Saints

Madhavi and Varun moved to the UK three years ago from India. Their son, Arhan, is 11 years old and attends Clifford All Saints Primary School.

Challenge

Finding a school place mid-term can be difficult, especially when moving to a new country with a completely different education system, so Madhavi and Varun faced a challenge in obtaining somewhere suitable for Arhan when they arrived in Yorkshire in January.

"The primary schools in our catchment area were either oversubscribed or not quite what we wanted, so when we were offered the option of Clifford All Saints, 20 minutes away, we decided that despite the distance, it was worth looking at", says Madhavi. "When we went to visit, we were really impressed by the warm welcome we were given, and how the staff made a real effort to help with the application process, so we had no hesitation in enrolling Arhan there."

Distance no object

Within a very short time Arhan had established a close circle of friends, was achieving very well academically and thoroughly enjoying his new school, so when the family moved house to a new area, entailing a longer journey, neither he nor his parents wished to move school as well. "We could have found a school much closer to our new house but Arhan was reluctant to lose his friends and the teachers with whom he had such a good relationship. Although it now takes an hour to school and back, he has no regrets at all, and neither do we."

Help for working families

The fact that Clifford offers both a Breakfast Club and an After-School Club was an added bonus, as both Madhavi and Varun work full-time and were not always able to do the school run. Madhavi is particularly impressed that the After-School Club now runs until 6pm, which is an enormous help for working families and unusual for primary schools.

Inclusive and accepting

Whilst Clifford All Saints is a predominantly Christian school, as a Hindu, Madhavi is pleased that other faiths are given as much recognition and respect. "The children celebrate Easter, Christmas and other Christian festivals, but they are also taught about other religions and have been taken to visit Hindu Temples as well as other places of worship. This helps to make the school a very inclusive and accepting environment, and for that I am grateful."

New opportunities

It is not only in his academic achievements that Arhan is flourishing, but because of the range of sports provision at Clifford, he has been able to try baseball, badminton, tennis, hockey, cricket and a sport new to him – football. "Football is not anything like as popular in India as cricket, but it is Arhan's new passion!" says Madhavi. "It's so nice that he's being introduced to a whole new range of sport options."

Part of the team

Arhan's early education in India was mainly conducted in English, so he is completely bi-lingual alongside his parents' native Hindi, which they speak at home. However, Madhavi, whose English is also excellent, acknowledges that the only issue in terms of language is accent. "English spoken in India naturally sounds different to that in the UK, and as an adult it is not so easy to change pronunciation. Coming here at such a young age, Arhan has easily adopted the local accent and speaks English like a native!"

Smooth transition

With transition to secondary education coming up, Arhan alongside his Year 6 friends has been given introductions to his new school including visits, mentoring and advice, and will no doubt be glad that Clifford All Saints helped to make his introduction to the UK such a positive and enjoyable experience.