



## Amber knows a good thing when she sees it, and that is why she chose Dronfield Infant School for her daughter

Amber and Laurence live in Dronfield with their children Eira, six and Colton, two.

### Seeing is believing

Working with young children herself, Amber has a professional insight into early years and primary education so when it was time for Eira to start school, it was Dronfield Infants which stood out for her. "There are some great schools in the area but what I loved about Dronfield Infants was the overall atmosphere, the resources and especially the emphasis on learning through play, which is something I'm a big believer in."

### Getting to know you

The school offers a phased introduction for reception children, so that they start with half days and half the year group, and that gives the teachers the chance to get to know each child well. "I am really impressed by how the staff know each child individually," says Amber. "Not just their names but their interests, personalities and their needs."

### Reassurance

That is of particular reassurance to Amber as, from personal experience, she is fully aware that the SEND provision is very proactive, and that any child who is deemed to have additional needs is given help wherever possible. "I have seen for myself how the children's specific needs are identified early, even before a formal diagnosis has been made, and measures put in place to ensure they are supported appropriately."

### The best of both worlds

Dronfield is a relatively large school and a recent restructuring programme has involved the introduction of mixed-year classes. At first, Amber admits, she had reservations. "I wasn't sure if that might hold Eira back academically, or that she could struggle to keep up in a more desk-based environment, but in fact it has worked out better than I anticipated," she explains.

"In many ways it is the best of both worlds and she is absolutely on point with her learning, with access to both the more play-based EYFS and to more structured KS1 education."

### Smooth transition

Prior to enrolling at Dronfield, Eira attended a nursery elsewhere but Amber is delighted that Dronfield has now accommodated a charity-run nursery on the school site, and which will be a feeder into reception at Dronfield. "When Eira started in reception she didn't know anyone in her class but it will be great when Colton joins as he will be moving up with friends." In the same way, Dronfield Infants is a feeder school to the adjacent junior school. "Having the three settings in such close proximity is ideal in terms of transition," says Amber. "It makes life much easier for everyone!"

### Getting it right

Having seen the way Eira has been cared for at Dronfield, where she is in her last year, Amber is confident that it will also be the right setting for Colton when it's his turn. "Colton is very different to his sister, but knowing how the teachers take personal interest in all the children, I know he will flourish in the same way that Eira has. I have no hesitation in saying that Dronfield Infants is an absolutely brilliant school, and we've been lucky to have it so close."