



A small school with big opportunities for Maeve and Greg's three children

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Maeve & Greg's three children have settled well into life at St Mary's and their lives are very much connected with the school community. "The school is sufficiently small that you feel you know the teachers, and the teachers know your children – it feels like an individual relationship for each child. At the same time, the school's large enough to offer a really wide range of activities and experiences. For us, it's great being able to attend a local school that has a strong community feel. We've got to know lots of local families and the children have plenty friends nearby," says Maeve.

Each child is an individual

At St Mary's, children are seen as individuals with unique interests and ways of learning.

"The children are accepted and supported for whoever they are, and the school acknowledges that there are lots of different ways of being in the world. They tailor as best they can the provision in a busy classroom for children who need adjustments," says Greg.

Christian values

"The school calls them Christian values but they are also human values. Our children have had certificates for acts of kindness, as well as perseverance, and school is very supportive of them as individuals. Greg was even presented with a certificate in assembly for endurance after completing the London Marathon! The school had been fantastic in supporting his fundraising and it was a lovely way for him to share his story with all the children," says Maeve.

A nurturing approach where children grow in confidence

Terapia is a locally based organisation who train people in child and adolescent psychotherapy. They are in a partnership with the school and provide therapeutic support for some children as well as mental health support for parents.

"There is a strong sense of children's emotional well-being at St Mary's; the whole staff bring a sense of nurturing and friendliness which is felt throughout the school," says Maeve.

Loving learning

"The children have enjoyed learning about volcanoes; that was a big Year 4 topic. Cara also enjoyed having caterpillars in the school nursery – they were kept in the classroom so that the children could watch them turn into butterflies and then they were released into the wild. Then there are various events throughout the year like Christmas and summer fairs. The annual sports day is always a lovely occasion, where they really focus on celebrating team effort," says Greg.

Feeling safe and secure

Safety and care is highly valued at St Mary's. "It feels like the children are safe and protected. It's very much a child-focussed environment and school take care to teach the children to be self-aware and safe in various aspects of day-to-day life," says Greg.

A light filled atrium at the heart of the school building

The building is modern, with a light-filled central atrium. "All the classrooms open out into the atrium; it's like the backbone of the school. There's a central play area outside and a green field that the children have access to all year round. The school is also at the end of a cul-de-sac so it's very quiet and safe without traffic. Inside, the school is filled with the children's paintings and drawings. There are quiet spaces and areas for one-to-one sessions, so the building does really reflect the whole-person approach the school takes to learning," says Maeve.