



St Mary's is home from home for Grace and Tim's three children, and with one about to leave and one only just starting their school journey, they say St Mary's is exceptional at offering special opportunities

Grace and Tim have Ada in Year 6, Frank in Year 3 and Ivy in Nursery.

A welcoming and nurturing school

"The children are happy at school, they have great friends. It's a strange feeling to have one child coming to the end of their primary school journey and one just starting out. St Mary's is still a lovely, nurturing school, filled with welcoming and friendly faces. When we first looked around, we were impressed that every class had a TA assigned and the enrichment programme is fantastic," said Grace.

Dedicated teachers who teach specialist subjects

"Having teachers dedicated to teaching French, Music, Art and Sport has made a huge difference to our children. Knowing the children are getting dedicated time each week with specialists in their field is great. Learning to speak a different language has been important for all of them and they've picked up different interests because they've been introduced to lots of different, creative and sporting activities. Frank plays the piano, both he and Ada love art, and Ada has taken up gymnastics so it's been great to see them develop these interests," said Tim.

Trips to Paris and Peer Mediation

"The trip to Paris was brilliant, it happens every year for children in Year 5. It's a one-day trip where they leave at 5am. They travel on the Eurostar to Paris and it's seen as almost a rite of passage, they have so much fun and make lovely memories."

"Frank has been part of the Peer Mediation Scheme since Year 2. It's a brilliant initiative that teaches the children how to listen, support and problem solve. It provides kids with the opportunity to interact and learn with children in other year groups and Frank's confidence has blossomed knowing he has fellow peer mediators in older years," said Tim.

Making friends and celebrating with fireworks

"We've made friendships with other parents and there is lots to get involved with at school. There are the traditional events like the summer and Christmas fairs. We do an annual barbecue which is fantastic, we get a DJ and from the school grounds we have a brilliant view of Alexandra Palace. We tie it in with their fireworks display too, it's a very special event that happens every year," said Grace.

Support for every child

"Having had Ada go from start to finish at St Mary's we have seen changes in the staff, but more so at senior level. The classroom teaching staff have always been consistent, and sometimes TAs have stayed with classes as they've moved up through the school if they've bonded particularly well with a class. School put the needs of the children first. Each child has five people they know they can turn to if they need help with anything. They draw around their hand and write down the names of the five people and this is displayed in school. I think it's a great way for the children to develop and learn about having a support network and having different people to go to for different things," said Grace.

Opportunities to perform on the sports field and on the stage

"The sporting event side of school is full of opportunities. Ada has been at events most Fridays and has enjoyed lots of competitions from football to basketball. It's had a huge impact on her role in school. The children also get to perform at the Royal Albert Hall, it happens every two years and is in conjunction with other schools. The choir and band get to perform and parents go and watch. It's an incredible opportunity for everyone," said Tim.

Fantastic school spirit

"Ada is currently preparing for SATs. School have had a balanced approach to the tests and Ada is managing well and is taking it in her stride. I think having other things she enjoys doing at school helps and school are supporting the children prepare but are treating it as something that is just part of Year 6. Everyone is doing really well, there's no sense of unnecessary pressure. With the children splitting off to go to different Secondary School come the end of the year, the focus is making the most of the time they have left together, and to enjoy it. St Mary's has a fantastic spirit and I'd encourage parents to come and look around," said Grace.

Children say:

Ada says: "I love doing gymnastics."

Frank says: "My friends and I like playing at break time."

Ivy says: "I like my teacher."

Friendship, compassion, hope, wisdom, community and endurance.