



Joanne has been involved with Holly Hill Primary School since she was a child, and could think of nowhere better for her own children to be educated

Joanne and Andy Faulkner live in Selston with their children Abbie, ten and Zak, seven.

Heart of the community

In many ways, Holly Hill Primary School could be described as the heart of the Selston community, as Joanne and Andy are by no means the only local parents who went there themselves as children. "It has always been a very friendly school and I meet lots of my old school chums in the playground at the beginning and end of the day," says Joanne. "We didn't really consider anywhere else for Abbie and Zak because Holly Hill is close to our hearts but of course, if it were not as good a school as it is, we would have looked elsewhere."

Encouragement and reward

Overall, Holly Hill offers Joanne and Andy's children everything they could wish for: high educational standards combined with fun, and both Abbie and Zak are keen learners who enjoy every school day. "Because the home/school communication is so good, we are always completely up to date with the work they are doing, the homework they are given and with their progress, and every so often there are open days when we can go into the classroom to see everything at first hand. We also enjoy the Holly Hill Heroes Assembly where the children are rewarded for particular achievements with a certificate in recognition of effort. Things such as this encourage the children and help to involve parents, which I really like."

Onwards and upwards

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Holly Hill suffered a fall in rating a few years ago but this was swiftly and effectively remedied making it, believes Joanne, an even better school than before. "We were actually very surprised by the result as we had not had cause to be particularly concerned about anything. Nevertheless, the school made a huge effort to address the issues and within a few months everything was not only back on track but actually improved. We saw this episode as a small glitch and are more than pleased how things have worked out so well."

Everything a parent could ask for

Everyone has their own ideas about what a school should offer and how it should be presented and, as well as her satisfaction with the quality of education, Joanne is impressed with many other aspects of Holly Hill. "The After-School Clubs are terrific, and both Abbie and Zak make the most of them. The emphasis on security is reassuring, and the premises are always clean, tidy and well-maintained. The Headteacher knows every child by name and all the staff are approachable and helpful, and to me that all adds up to an excellent package."

Joint effort

Joanne is a dedicated member of the school's PTA, helping its committee with fundraising events and other projects. "Because I believe so strongly in Holly Hill I want to do what I can to help," she says. "It does take quite a lot of time and effort but it is worth it to me for the benefits it brings in terms of extra funds and in raising the school's profile. Many of the staff also give up their own time to support the PTA and we work well as a team – there's no 'us and them' attitude, just parents and teachers wanting to support a great school."

Familiar faces

Another thing which stands out for Joanne is the fact that staff turnover at Holly Hill is minimal, which shows what a pleasant environment it is in which to work. "Although none of the current teachers were there when I was a pupil, I do remember a few of the teaching assistants! It is lovely to see familiar faces but even better to know that the children have continuity in the staff. I think it helps them with the transition periods between Nursery, Foundation and beyond. As far as my own children are concerned, their Foundation Stage at Holly Hill was when they made a massive progression, and that set them up so well for the rest of their primary years at the school we are so lucky to have in our village."

Children say

Abbie: "There's a variety of things to do after school. There's always someone to talk to about problems or worries as the teachers are approachable, and I feel safe."

Zak: "I like my lessons, some are fun! And Reading Morning because parents can come in to read with you. Also the teachers are nice and helpful when you're hurt."



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