



Gemma wanted a caring and homely environment for her children just as much as she wanted good education – at Holly Hill Primary School she has found that, and more

Gemma Huckerby and her children Ruby, six and Freddy, three, live in Selston.

Part of the community

What does any parent want from their children's school? A good education, a setting where they are safe, cared for and happy, and in the right place to be able to be a part of the local community. That is certainly what Gemma wanted and is what she has found at Holly Hill Primary School.

"Holly Hill was the closest school to where we lived and that was a significant factor for me when I chose it for Ruby," Gemma says. "I work long hours and needed the convenience that the location of the school offers, but if I hadn't been more than happy with the school I would have had to make other arrangements. Thankfully, Holly Hill has more than lived up to my hopes and expectations, and in more ways than I first thought."

Second home

Gemma describes Holly Hill as her children's second home; through nursery, preschool and beyond both Ruby and Freddy have always thoroughly enjoyed being there and as Gemma is grateful for the after-school provision, that is very important. "Because I am self-employed it is vital that I can ensure I am always able to be where I need to be on time, so the wrap-around care option is excellent for me," she says. "I can drop Freddy at school at 9am and his teachers will take him to Nursery at 1pm, so I don't have to leave a job in the middle of the day. Then, I can pick both Freddy and Ruby up together at the end of the afternoon; it is a perfect arrangement." Staff also make sure that the children are first in line ready to go promptly on the two afternoons when Gemma has to rush to get to her second job.

Pride in achievement

Gemma says she can't really explain why she loves Holly Hill School so much but it is clear that there are many reasons for her appreciation. "I'm fortunate that I have never had any particular issues with Ruby's progress but if she has ever needed a bit of extra help she's had it straightaway," she says. "Ruby is above average in her work and I put much of the credit for that to her teachers. In Holly Hill Heroes Assembly, when the children are awarded Certificates, you can see the real pride on the teachers' faces and that is lovely to watch. They honestly care about what the pupils are achieving."

Giving something back

Because of her long working hours, Gemma is not able to attend events at the school as often as she would like but she makes every effort to contribute as far as possible. "I try to help the PTA when they organise fundraising activities, or I'll go along to clean and tidy the classrooms, and I go in to read with the children every so often. Having seen how incredibly hard the staff have worked and their dedication to the school, I feel it is only fair to give something back and I enjoy doing so."

Family atmosphere

Another reason why Gemma values the family atmosphere of Holly Hill is that Ruby and Freddy are able to experience a far more stable and secure life than she herself experienced as a child. Coming from a Services family – her father was a Royal Marine – she and her parents were constantly moving around the country and she was rarely able to make lasting relationships. "Holly Hill is a very friendly little school and my children are making friends there who they will be going on to secondary school with, and hopefully beyond. That continuity is important to me for their sake and it makes me so happy that they have such a caring and supportive early educational setting."

Complete trust

Every parent wants to be certain of their child's physical and emotional wellbeing during school hours, and as a working mum, Gemma especially needs to be able to trust that Ruby and Freddy are completely safe. "I feel that at Holly Hill they are being looked after almost as I would do myself, and the staff are supportive, understanding and kind. I really could not ask for anything more."

Children say

Ruby: "All my teachers make me feel special like you do, Mummy."

Freddy: "I like to paint everyday and like to play outside."



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