



Julie's daughters have flourished in every way at Holly Hill Primary School, and she is its most passionate supporter

Julie and Andy Smedley live with their three daughters Jaimie, Brooke and Darcie, who are 11, eight and five years old respectively.

Looking back and moving forward

Julie was not quite sure why Andy was so determined that their daughters should attend his old school – until she saw it for herself. “Because he had enjoyed his school days at Holly Hill so much he was adamant that he wanted the same experience for Jaimie, Brooke and Darcie,” Julie says. “When we went to visit I could see immediately what he meant – it was still the warm, friendly and lively school that he remembered. The children were all polite, well-mannered and respectful to adults and other children alike, and we have never had a moment’s doubt that we made the right choice.”

Transformation

Even during a brief period when the school's rating dropped, Julie and Andy had few concerns. "Because I am in the school a great deal in my role with the PTA, I could see how quickly and effectively the staff addressed the difficulties, working incredibly hard to put things right. Within six months, Holly Hill underwent a transformation in front of my eyes; it has introduced some fantastic measures which have made a huge and positive difference."

Communication counts

One thing in particular which stands out for Julie is the first-class communication between home and school. No more out-of-date letters crumpled and forgotten at the bottom of school bags! "The new website is wonderful, and I use it all the time," she says. "I know exactly what classwork and homework is being set, when assignments are due in, what the weekly spellings list contains and anything at all which is relevant to the school or my own children in particular. I also get regular texts to let me know if an after-school club is cancelled, for instance, or that one of the girls has arrived safely on a school trip and what time they are expected back. The system is superb and I wouldn't now be without it."

A stake for all in children's early education

For the last eight years, Julie has been a committed member of the Holly Hill Parent Teacher Association, at first as a helper at discos and fetes but more recently as Treasurer and Assistant Chair. "The PTA is far too valuable an asset to lose so when those positions became vacant I was happy to step in. It is not just a fundraising organisation, although we do raise quite a lot to support various projects and to purchase extra equipment, but it is also a means of bringing families into the school community. With teachers, support staff and parents working so closely together, everyone feels that they have a stake in the children's wellbeing and education."

New initiatives for excellent results

From an academic point of view, Julie is delighted with the progress all three of her daughters are making and believes that new initiatives embraced by the school show in the excellent results. "One thing I really like is how all the children are rewarded for their efforts, and every achievement is recognised. This positive attitude makes the children want to work and to do their best because they know their teachers care about them."

An accepting and caring ethos

Jaimie is in her last year at Holly Hill, currently taking her final SATs (for which Julie was amongst a group of parents who volunteered to provide a fortifying breakfast at school!) "Jaimie is excited about moving to High School, and the transition process is being handled very well, but she will miss Holly Hill where she feels so much at home. She feels a part of the family and she is not alone in that; I have spoken to many children who feel the same – including those who have a disability but have not felt judged or out of place, because the school has a very accepting and caring ethos."

A little, hidden gem

It is not too strong to describe Julie's feelings towards Holly Hill Primary School as passionate: "I am totally in love with this school! Because it is tucked away and out of sight, a lot of people don't know it's there but they should, and I will do what I can to make families aware of what a little gem it is."

Children say

Jaimie: "My teacher is not just my teacher but my friend!"

Brooke: "I love learning lots of new and interesting things, and it's fun."

Darcie: "My school makes me feel very happy."



Head teacher: Mr Mark Eadon

Holly Hill Primary and Nursery School, off Portland Road
Selston, Nottingham.
NG16 6AW

Telephone: 01773 783909

Fax: 01773 783909

E-mail: office@hollyhill.notts.sch.uk



..... No limit to learning