

# Ewan is **helping** to bring teachers and parents even **closer together** within the Parent Teacher Association at Maldon Primary School



**Maldon Primary School**  
*Inspiring success for all*



Ewan Forster and his partner Fiona live in Heybridge with their daughters Anuk, eight, Iben, five and two-year-old Inis.

## **More than just a school**

Ewan feels strongly that a school has more than one role to play in the lives of children and that it should be a place of community for families as well as an educational setting. For this reason amongst others he decided to join the PTA at

Maldon Primary, which his two older daughters attend. “There were several reasons why we chose Maldon,” he says. “We liked the traditional feel to the premises, the fact that it is very inclusive and it seemed to have a joyful, informal approach – less regimented than some other settings we had seen. Everything about it just seemed right for us.”

## New innovations

Anuk joined the school at the same time as a new management structure was being implemented and Ewan and Fiona have seen how new innovations have added significantly to the overall provision. "Quite a few new members of staff joined the team, bringing in fresh ideas and great enthusiasm," they explain. "Our children have loved such things as having their own vegetable plot, the chance to be Star of the Week and especially their classroom pets – Mrs Tiggywinkle the hedgehog and Scrambled the snake! A lot of small initiatives like these add up to a great deal."

## Making a contribution to school life

Before joining the school's PTA, Ewan didn't have much idea about what it entailed but hoped to make a contribution to the life and running of the school. "I was more than happy to play a part in helping to raise funds as that is an important aspect of what the PTA is there to do. On the other hand, I felt it would also be beneficial to place a greater emphasis on the 'Association' aspect of the organisation and find ways of bringing parents and teachers more closely together."

## Building a stronger community

Ewan has discovered that Maldon Primary is popular with families who, like his own, have relocated from London, and who may have few if any connections in the area. "Whilst some families have a long association with the school, others move here without knowing anybody locally and can find it difficult to integrate. As a school environment is the ideal one in which to redress this, the PTA is setting up a project through which we can bring everyone together: parents, children and teachers in a range of outdoor activities which anyone can take part in. The purpose is to help build a stronger school community and give every family a real sense of involvement in the life of the school."

### Children say

Anuk: "I love our teacher's classroom animals! I love the Good Work Assemblies and I am very proud to be a Digital Leader so I can help my friends if they get stuck in IT lessons."

Iben: "I look forward to being Star of the Week so I can take home our kangaroo and write his weekend diary."

## A welcome for every family

The Get Together Project, for which the PTA has been allocated Lottery Funding, is specifically designed to bridge any gap between home/school communication, and to ensure that every child feels welcomed. "It can be difficult if a child joins a school mid-term when the others have already formed their friendship groups," believes Ewan. "If we can bring families together in an out-of-school context, giving them the chance to socialise on a basis of complete equality, then we can build a greater and stronger community atmosphere within the school. Every family which joins the school has its own skill set to offer and that is something which should be promoted and encouraged."

## Valuing parents' input

This attitude is endorsed in many ways throughout the school, and Fiona appreciates the measures taken to make sure that parents and families feel their input is valued. "I have seen at first hand how Maldon Primary actively encourages feedback from parents; how it listens to what parents need and how it is prepared to address any issue which could impact on the quality of its provision. I am really pleased that the school recognises the importance of family engagement and is doing everything it can to provide a welcoming and inclusive community spirit."

