



Natasha believes a school should offer **life skills** as well as **good academic results**, and that Milking Bank Primary School does that and more

So much to offer

As a primary school teacher Natasha knew what she was looking for in the perfect school for her children. She'd heard lots of positive comments from colleagues and friends about the academic results, the friendly teachers and the varied extracurricular activities and resources available at Milking Bank Primary School. They moved into the area in the hope of securing a place at the school. "You know a school is good when there's a long waiting list and you struggle to get in," says Natasha. "We knew from other families whose children had been to the school how happy they had been and that too was an important factor for us."

Natasha Mahmood and her husband, Babar live in Dudley with their three children, Mya, 12 and their twin daughters, Amila and Ambar, nine in Year 4.



A rounded, holistic approach

For Natasha and Babar, good academic results were important but they were looking for a school that offered a holistic approach to education. "At Milking Bank they focus on what the individual child is good at, which isn't always academic things. Mya's a fairly quiet girl but they turned that into a positive, which set her in good stead for her secondary education," explains Natasha. "The school is brilliant at making the children feel like they really belong. Our heritage is Pakistani and it was important our children felt included and had positive role models. It's a family orientated school and I feel their rounded approach, both academic and personal, provides a strong foundation for the transition to secondary school," says Natasha.

Happy, safe and secure

Over the years, Natasha's children have had experience with most of the teachers. She feels their rapport with the children and the atmosphere they provide is what makes the children feel happy and safe at school. "Children spend so much time at school that you want them to enjoy being there and to feel secure," says Natasha. "The teachers are interested in each child on a personal level, in what they like, their hobbies and interests and they incorporate this into lessons, which makes them feel valued. School feels like a friendly and caring place to be.

Going beyond the curriculum

"Milking Bank Primary School is very good at doing what's needed to satisfy the curriculum, but they go beyond that by including children's personal interests to support their learning and by adopting a fun approach which really gets children enthused about their learning and engrossed in their lessons," Natasha adds.

Drawing on individual experiences

Enjoyment at school has ensured Natasha's girls feel happy and comfortable sharing their own experiences of special Muslim celebrations. "The teachers are always interested and they value the girls' contributions and the individuality of what they are bringing to the school, but then it's all inclusive too. They get the balance just right."

Children say:

Amila says: "I love school because we learn new things with fun activities and every day is different!"

Ambar says: "I like Milking Bank Primary School because the teachers are kind and I've made lots of nice friends"



A strong community feel

Natasha feels strongly that education is also about teaching children that they are part of a community: "My children are achieving very well academically, but I also want a school to be setting a good example, teaching children that actions have consequences, and working together with parents to reinforce these values. This school does these things very well - their focus on citizenship is a real strength. They believe Every Child Matters."

Natasha adds: "For us, Milking Bank Primary School ticks the academic box but adopts a holistic approach which values children as individuals. It's the whole package!"

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