

Only one thing matters to Shahlaa and that is the wellbeing of her children. That is the reason she chose to send them to Paddock Nursery, Infant and Junior School



Shahlaa Asghar lives near Huddersfield with her children Aneesha, 18, Farris, nine and Safiya, seven.



A mother's instinct

Shahlaa has only one main priority in life and that is the happiness of her children so when, eighteen years ago she happened to walk past Paddock Nursery Infant and Junior School, she decided there and then that was where one-week-old Aneesha was going to go. "I saw how happy the children in the playground looked, and several of them waved to me and said 'hello' and I thought what a lovely place it seemed," she remembers. "Since then we have moved house several times but I have never, ever considered moving my children from Paddock School."

Priceless

The ten-minute drive she has now is nothing compared to the time it took Shahlaa to get to the school when she was temporarily living elsewhere. "For two or three months I had to drive an hour each way, twice a day, to get Aneesha to school but it was worth it. I can't put a price on what Paddock has done for Aneesha and subsequently for Farris and Safiya, and I wouldn't move them for the world. My first instinct has proved to be spot on, and for reasons I wouldn't have expected."

Different children, same opportunities

One of these reasons is for the specific care the school has offered to Aneesha and Farris, both of whom suffer from an extremely rare condition which affects their hearing, and Farris also has problems with muscle weakness and balance. "The school installed a special radio system so that the children's hearing aids were as effective as possible and that has made their lives a great deal easier," she says. "Aneesha in particular hated wearing her hearing aids but with the gentle encouragement of her teachers she was persuaded that it was the right thing to do. It was all handled with great sensitivity and in fact both Farris and Aneesha have always been treated just like any other child as far as possible; neither has ever felt stigmatised or that they are different, and they have had just as many opportunities as any of their friends."

A risk worth taking

Opportunities such as Farris' recent three-day trip to France: "I was absolutely terrified in case he had a fall and was hurt but the staff were very reassuring and because I trust them completely I agreed for him to go. It was a marvellous experience for Farris, very successful and he'll be going again next year."

It was a very big responsibility for the school to take Farris because of his mobility problems, but the teachers felt he should be given the chance and were prepared to do everything they could to ensure his safety. I think it's unlikely that some other schools would take the risk."

Massive support for children and parents alike

For some years Shahlaa has been a Parent Volunteer at Paddock School, and she is now a student there herself – studying to become a Teaching and Learning Classroom Assistant. "Naturally there is no guarantee that I will get a job there when I qualify but I will do my utmost to try. Paddock is actually the only school I want to work in, just like it is the only school I want for my children, and I am grateful I have had the chance to do my college placement there, at least. One would expect a school's main duty of care to be to the children but at Paddock, that extends to the whole family and I am not alone in having been supported massively as a parent."

Everything a parent could want

The way that Shahlaa knows she has made the right decision in choosing Paddock School is in the way Aneesha, Farris and Safiya have responded. "Aneesha took time off college recently to attend the leaving ceremony of one of her old teachers, and all three children have always looked forward to the start of term. All I have ever wanted for my children is their safety and happiness and I thank Paddock School for going such a long way to help provide that."

Children say

Farris: "I love maths, my teachers and Bagel Club!"

Safiya: "I love maths, my teachers, PE and All my clubs!"



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