



Roseline Noubissie has three children at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School: Beverley, ten, Cindy, nine and eight-year-old William.

Roseline wanted Christianity to be at the heart of her children's education and she has found that and more at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

A favourable first impression

Although Roseline's principle reason for choosing St Joseph's was for its status as a Catholic faith school, if her first impressions had not been as favourable as they were she might have had to look elsewhere. "I liked the fact that it was quite a small school and I was struck by the welcoming atmosphere and the friendly teachers," she says, "so it was an easy decision to make."

Language skills

Since Beverley started at St Joseph's in Reception Roseline has been consistently pleased with her choice, not least because of the support Beverley has been given in terms of her language



skills. "As we are a French-speaking household, Beverley only started picking up a bit of English when she started Nursery just before she was three," Roseline explains. "For that reason she was at a bit of a disadvantage when she started in Reception, especially as she was one of the youngest in her year, but I was amazed by how quickly she began to learn to read and speak English. Obviously, the school is used to pupils who have English as a second language but I was really pleased with how the teachers addressed the situation, and Beverley's progress has hardly been affected. She is doing very well and gets the help she needs if she needs it so I have absolutely no complaints."

Learning from others' mistakes

The approachability of the teaching staff is another aspect of St Joseph's which Roseline appreciates. Though she has never had many causes for concern, on the few occasions she has felt the need to speak to a member of staff she has been welcomed and her worries put to rest. "At one time, Beverley had been subjected to some mild bullying and it got to the stage where she didn't want to go to school. I don't know the detail of how the school handled things but it all blew over very quickly and we haven't had a problem since. I do believe that they used the incident as a teaching tool, however, explaining to the class about how bullying is unacceptable and its consequences, so perhaps something good came of the situation."

There have also been a couple of occasions when Roseline has felt that Beverley's enjoyment of some lessons – maths in particular – has been compromised through a lack of fluency but, again, she has been supported to the extent that she is now more confident and able to understand some of the terms with which she had been unfamiliar.

From student to teacher!

Ironically, it is largely Beverley who has been instrumental in helping Cindy and William to pick up English earlier than she herself had done, so that when they started school they were in a better position. "Very soon after she started in her Reception Class, Beverley would come home and practise some of what she had learned and that gave Cindy and William a head start. They are also gaining a more English accent which will help them, so I feel they have the best of both worlds – bi-linguality but with a less pronounced accent so they are better understood by their peers."

Community spirit

Roseline's Christian faith is a very important part of her life and she welcomes the way in which St Joseph's school puts this at the heart of its offer. "The children attend Church once a week and prayers are a regular part of the school day," she says. "Although I know there are families of other faiths at the school, there is a very friendly, community spirit amongst us all and because St Joseph's is a fairly small school many of us know each other well. All in all, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School addresses virtually all of the criteria I was looking for as a primary educational setting for my children."



Children say:

William: "The school is fun and we learn a lot. I particularly like literacy; when our teacher reads us a book and then asks us to write about it. I also enjoy doing maths at school because it's fun and it feels good. I also like playtime."

Cindy: "The activities are quite fun. It's not always work and work. We have time to go outside and have fresh air. Some of the work involves games like bingo: it's a game that involves timestables; even though we have to concentrate it's quite fun."

Beverley: "I like the fact that it's a sporty school (we do a lot of physical activities). Even though we work hard we still have time to play. I have lots of friends. If someone new comes to the school, that person is always welcomed by all the children. When a child first comes to school, the teacher helps them to gradually learn the routine. I also like the fact that we go on a lot of trips where we learn different things."