

'Together we will make the difference'



Amanda and Oliver Martin live in Thornhill with Joseph, six and Isabel, four.

Amanda has **fond memories** of Joseph's first year at Thornhill Junior and Infant School and is looking forward to her daughter starting

Excellent experience

Amanda is very happy with her son's experience of his first year at Thornhill J&I.

"I grew up in Thornhill and went to the school myself for some years," she recalls. "It is also our local catchment school, and when we visited the head gave us a lot of confidence and we liked the general feel of the place. Everything seems quite open, the facilities were good and we felt comfortable with the thought of Joseph going there."



Smooth transition

Sending a young child to school can be an anxious time, but staff try to make the transition as smooth as possible.

"Joseph is our first born child, and my husband and I don't have educational backgrounds, so obviously we had a natural apprehension about him entering into the educational system," says Amanda. "However, the school really helped to ease our worries, making the transition very smooth for Joseph and ourselves."

Parental involvement

Amanda was pleased that parents were encouraged to get involved during that important first year.

"Joseph can be wary of new situations, but from day one he was absolutely fine," says Amanda. "The staff were very approachable and keen to help and answer our questions. In the first year parents could go into school for 'Stay and Play' and 'Stay and Read' sessions to help their children and see what they were doing, which was lovely."

"After these sessions the school offered small group workshops for parents which further detailed what and how the children were learning, and I found this both helpful and interesting."

Fabulous facilities

Children at Thornhill can enjoy the school's many facilities and extra-curricular opportunities.

"The facilities are very good, and there are lots of opportunities," says Amanda. "There is an impressive level of musical education with all children being given the chance to sing and play musical instruments. There is also a wide range of afterschool and lunchtime clubs. In his first year Joseph went to Jigsaw Club and this year is attending Story Time Club, but there are also other things like choir, violin, football, hockey, dancing and gymnastics to name but a few."

Student involvement

Students are encouraged to become involved with school production and educational visits.

"Joseph, along with all the children in the first three year groups, took part in the school's Christmas productions, which was lovely and a credit to the hard work of the staff. The children also participate in local church services at Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter, with each class and child having a role to play," says Amanda. "They have also been taken on small trips, for example to the park to see how the seasons change, and I like the fact that the school makes use of the children's local environment."

Individual care

All children are unique and staff work hard getting to know them.

"When we read Joseph's first report we felt his teacher really knew our child and the description of his character reflected all his little quirks," says Amanda. "It was nice that they had developed such a good relationship with him and recognised him for the child he is. We were quite sad when his foundation year ended, but we are looking forward to the next few years."

Looking forward

When Amanda's daughter starts at Thornhill in September, she has no doubt that Isabel will enjoy the experience.

"It's great thinking ahead to Isabel starting because, as well as being very familiar with the school, she has a big brother who is happy and settled there," says Amanda. "We are definitely far less anxious than when Joseph started, and Isabel is very excited. She would go tomorrow given half the chance."

Joseph says: "School is big and fun."



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