



Davina Mellor and her two children, David 14 and Daisy 7, live in Ovenden

Moving schools can be a risk, but Davina believes that moving to Whitehill Community Academy was definitely a risk worth taking



Practicality

It was purely for practical reasons that Davina recently moved Daisy from her previous school to Whitehill Academy but now she wholeheartedly wishes she had done so sooner. Although Daisy had been doing reasonably well at school and Davina had not had any serious concerns, in the few months since the move the change has, says Davina, been nothing short of remarkable.

"Daisy had struggled a bit for various reasons but she had been more or less keeping up so I wasn't too worried," she says. "It was only when I started going to pick up my niece from Whitehill that I noticed how different it was and that all the staff appeared to be so approachable."

"I just liked the whole atmosphere of the school and when it came to the point that I was having to collect Daisy from one school and my niece from another, I started to think that it would be sensible if they were both in the same place."

An easy choice

Davina's sister suffers from a range of on-going health problems which often prevent her from getting to school and Davina was more than happy to step in to help. With the two children at schools several miles apart and with Davina's impression with Whitehill, it was not difficult to make the choice. "Since Daisy started at Whitehill her academic work has improved wonderfully and she is now slightly above her age targets," she says. "She is also much happier and is so keen to get to school she's ready an hour early! The difference is absolutely amazing."

Playing to strengths

Understandably, moving to another school where she knew no-one was a challenge for Daisy and the first couple of weeks were a bit difficult. However, her teachers were aware of the situation and helped her feel at home by making sure she had designated 'buddies' to show her the ropes and introduce her to her new surroundings. "The pastoral care is excellent," Davina explains. "Daisy was very well looked-after and she now has a big circle of great friends. The school is also very effective in accommodating children, such as my niece, who have special needs, and that has been a huge bonus for my sister. My niece's previous school had not felt able to support her effectively but at Whitehill her needs were met without fuss. We wanted her to stay in mainstream education and Whitehill was prepared to make sure she could do so, by playing to her strengths rather than any weaknesses."

A person, not just a child

Davina likes the fact that not only does she feel welcomed into the classroom to talk to Daisy's teacher if she needs to but that even the Headteacher knows every child by name. "He seems to know them as individuals, their own little quirks and personalities, and it feels more like a family than just a school," she says.

"In fact, Whitehill's approach is to embrace the whole family rather than just the children, such as making arrangements for my sister to use a more convenient entrance so she doesn't have to walk too far. It is little things like this, as well as the bigger picture, which convinces me that it was right to move Daisy to Whitehill Academy. I couldn't be happier with the choice I have made."



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