



Paul and Lynn Welch live in Halifax with their daughters Hannah, 14 and Bethany, who is 8

Whitehill Community Academy has a lot to offer



Without hesitation

The Welch family moved to Halifax five years ago and one of their first and most pressing tasks was to find a good school for their daughters. As a Methodist Minister, Paul's preference was for a Church school but having researched the available options in the area he and Lynn had little hesitation in choosing Whitehill Community Academy.

"Everything we saw and heard, we liked," he says. "There was a general positive feeling about it, quite apart from the excellent Ofsted reports it is known for and although it isn't a Church school it has strong links with the local community, which is something I feel strongly about."

The school offers its ICT Unit as a training facility for use by local residents, holds community Coffee Mornings, sends the Choir to perform in the local community and gives donations of harvest produce to those in need in the area, amongst other charitable gestures.

Pastoral care

Moving to a new school at the age of nine can be daunting but for Hannah it was a smooth transition.

"On her first day she was elected to the School Council and the following year became one of the newly formed School Ambassadors. The pastoral care at Whitehill is taken very seriously, and they recognise the importance of giving pupils responsibility, acknowledging their achievements and ensuring their overall wellbeing. There is always someone the children can talk to if they have any worries and it's quite clear that the staff have a good relationship with the students, as indeed they also have with parents."

Parental involvement

Parents are actively encouraged into the school, for the weekly Achievement Assembly, Coffee Mornings, Open Days and the annual Party on the Field, as well as in the role of volunteers. When Bethany was in KS1 Lynn helped out in Bethany's class, Paul helps to run the girl's and boy's football clubs and officiates at the Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival Services, too.

"There is a real sense of family engagement and that makes a large school of 500 pupils feel like a close community. We were slightly concerned about how Hannah would fare, coming as she did from a much smaller primary school, but Whitehill is so friendly, everyone knows everyone else, and the children are encouraged to look after each other, so the size has never been a negative issue for us."

High quality education

The quality of the teaching staff has also impressed Paul and Lynn. Both Hannah and Bethany are achieving well, Hannah at the local Grammar school and Bethany at Whitehill. "The staff are enthusiastic about teaching and want to help the children to achieve their potential. The reward system for effort, attainment and positive behaviour encourages the children to do their best and feel valued.



Whitehill Community Academy

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