



Tim Reilly and his partner, Dawn, have seven children, ranging in age between 13 and one

Tim has seven children, and seven reasons to be happy that Whitehill Community Academy is such an outstanding school



No better choice

Tim and his partner, Dawn, have seven children. All their children have either been to Whitehill Community Academy, are still there or will shortly be joining. Tim is quick to emphasise that the proximity of the school to his home has very little to do with his and Dawn's choice. "Even if Whitehill was on the other side of town I'd fight to send my children there," he says. "I don't believe there is a better primary school in the area, even amongst the private settings, and I feel very fortunate indeed that it happens to be on our doorstep."

Results speak for themselves

Having seen at first hand various other schools' approach to education and from listening to friend's experiences, Tim's impression of Whitehill is that the children are inspired to learn by the attitude of the teaching staff. "It seems to me that the enthusiasm of the staff comes from the top down, and that because the Headteacher expects a lot from his staff, the teachers in turn expect a lot from their students, and the children respond very positively to that message. All of our children who have been to Whitehill have done as well as, or even better than we had hoped, and that says it all."

A fresh approach

If further evidence were needed that Whitehill Community Academy is getting it right, it would be from the children themselves, none of whom - from Brandon, 13 down to Teagan, three, and at Nursery - have ever shown any reluctance to go to school. "They genuinely enjoy being there," says Tim. "It is quite obvious that they like both the lessons and their teachers and that helps them to absorb what they are being taught. They have actually taught me a great deal, too. They are studying things that I didn't get to until I was at secondary school and it's fascinating to hear the things they come out with! It's a very fresh approach, and it works."

Pastoral care and family allotment

Aside from the all-important educational aspect of the school, Tim also appreciates the pastoral care afforded to both children and their families. And he includes the wide range of after-school clubs which are offered including sports, arts and crafts. In addition, Tim is one of several parents who maintain a Family Allotment in the grounds where he is able to grow fruit and vegetables, so keeping the family garden free for the children to play in. "It is a very friendly, family-orientated school and on the rare occasions I have had any concerns they are always addressed quickly and effectively. As an example, when I was worried about Brandon under-performing in several subjects, not only was he given extra support and encouragement but his teacher also picked up that he had dyslexia and helped us with referrals to specialists. Brandon overcame his problems and has since done very well at secondary school."

Safety first

One thing which all parents have in common is concern for the safety of their children whilst they are away from the home. A recent, upsetting event brought this fact too close for comfort when a man was suspected of approaching local children inappropriately.

"Thankfully, nothing serious happened but as soon as a potential threat was identified all the school staff were alerted and on duty at the school gate. The children were also given extra talks about safety and 'stranger danger', and this was very reassuring. Even though I live within sight of the school, obviously it's not possible to be there every minute and knowing that everything was being done to protect my children was hugely reassuring."

Tireless commitment

There is nothing Tim can think of about Whitehill Community Academy which would persuade him that his children would fare better elsewhere. "Year on year, my children have improved in their all-round performance; they have good friends amongst their peers, are happy to be at school and are as safe as I could wish. The staff work tirelessly to achieve this level of care and Dawn and I are able to relax in the knowledge that every one of our children will have had the best possible early educational experience."



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