



Melanie and Stephen Rimell live in Watford with their daughters Jessie, seven and Cassie, four. Melanie is expecting another baby shortly.

When she saw Kingsway Infant School for herself, Melanie could not have been more surprised - or more delighted

Wrong preconceptions

Although she and her family live only a few seconds walk away from Kingsway Infant School, Melanie was absolutely determined that she was not going to send Jessie there. "It wasn't even on our list so when we were allocated a place for Jessie I was really annoyed," she says. "I rang to complain but was persuaded to go in and look round anyway and now the lesson I have learned is, never have preconceptions!"

Melanie had heard rumours about the school and listened to opinions she now knows she should have ignored before checking the facts for herself. "I can't believe we might have missed out because of what other people had said," she explains. "When I went to visit and met the staff and the Headteacher I fell completely in love with the school and I have never had cause to change my mind. It has so much to offer in so many ways and has been absolutely right for our children."

Motivation

Because she has high ambitions for her children, Melanie was particularly keen to ensure they would be adequately supported in their learning and that they had the chance to move forward at their own pace. "Jessie especially needs more challenging work as she is well above her age level and I didn't want her to be slowed down because of curriculum restraints. At Kingsway, both she and Cassie have been gently pushed and motivated to do their very best through teaching methods which address each child's needs. I really believe that children should be stretched and that most of them are capable of more than they think, and Kingsway recognises this fact."

One big, happy family

Although their daughters' education is of prime importance to them, Melanie and Stephen are also naturally concerned that they should have a safe and happy learning environment and, again, they have not been disappointed. A strict anti-bullying policy, the 'playground buddy' scheme and a high level of pastoral care all contribute to what Melanie describes as a family atmosphere. "The children are encouraged to look after each other, to be polite and well-mannered and to take responsibility for themselves and others, and because all the year groups mix in the same playground it's like one big, happy family. The teachers and the Headteacher will always make themselves available if I need to talk to them about anything, and any issues I have had have been resolved quickly and effectively; I am absolutely confident about the girls safety and their happiness while they are at school."

Opportunity

In addition to regular lessons, which even include Spanish for all the year groups, Kingsway offers a diverse range of extra-curricular opportunities, in many of which Jessie and Cassie are keen participants. "There are dance, music, drama and sports clubs, and with so many different things for them to try if they wish it all adds to the whole school experience," says Melanie.



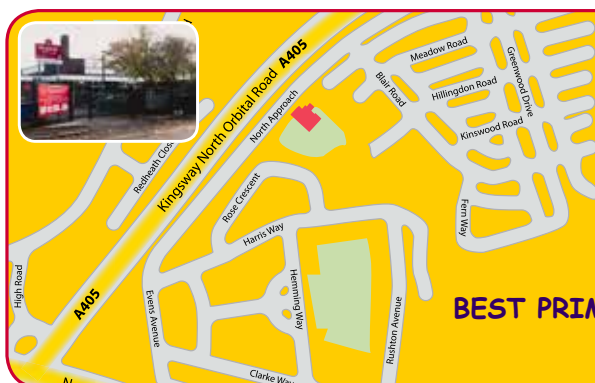
"That is why I'm so involved in fundraising for the school, so they can continue to provide all these opportunities and activities which make it such a lovely place. Kingsway Infant School has been turned around and we are delighted to have it there for our daughters."

Children say

Melanie says that neither Jessie or Cassie have ever been reluctant to go to school and that during the holidays they often ask when term is due to start again, and this is why:

Cassie says: "I like playing with my friends in the sand, and I love my reading."

Jessie says: "It's extremely brilliant!"



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