



Paula and Joseph Appiah live in Watford with their children Renaye, seven, and Cameron, five.

With serious allergies, Paula's children needed the commitment to their safety that Kingsway Infant School was able to provide

Living up to expectations

Kingsway Infant School was Paula and Joseph's first choice of school for various reasons, not least because it is close to where they live. However, had the school not lived up to their expectations they would, says Paula, have reconsidered. "Kingsway has definitely improved in recent years and I am pleased with virtually every aspect of it. On the occasions where I have felt the need to discuss any issues with the teachers my concerns have been taken into consideration and dealt with, but these concerns have been few."

Safety first

One thing which is always uppermost in Paula's mind is her children's health, as both suffer from potentially dangerous allergies and need to have medication close to hand at all times. "Before Renaye joined the school we had meetings with the teaching staff and the catering team to make sure that they were fully aware of the situation and that they knew how to cope if Renaye had a reaction," she says. "They have always been very good at letting me know if either of the children has felt unwell or if they have needed treatment so I am quite confident that they will be safe at school."

Pastoral care

Kingsway certainly makes a great deal of effort to ensure that the children's general wellbeing is assured, such as in the way a strong anti-bullying campaign sparked positive discussions around what constitutes bullying, and how to stop it. Paula has also seen at first hand how children are encouraged to be independent and confident: "Moving up into the Infant School from Nursery was easier for Cameron as he had his big sister to look after him, but his teachers were concerned that he might not integrate with the other children enough so they limited the time he and Renaye spent together. I wasn't really sure that it was necessary but it's true that, when Renaye left to start at the Junior School Cameron didn't find it difficult or miss her too much, so I can understand the logic behind the actions."

Another way in which Kingsway promotes confidence in the children and which Paula thoroughly approves of is the reward system that acknowledges effort and achievement in both work and behaviour. "They are so proud when they are presented with a certificate for something they have done, and I like the fact that their achievements are recognised. All the children are at some point singled out for praise and it's a very effective way of getting them to do their best."



Transition

The transition from Infant to Junior School can be challenging for some children, and although Paula was not too concerned about Renaye she appreciates the way that Kingsway handles this. "There was a structured, phased integration plan involving children attending a number of different sessions at the Junior School, and before that they used the IT facilities and the swimming pool regularly so they got used to layout of the school and their new teachers; there's also a playground 'buddy' system in place. It's a good system and means that the children aren't overwhelmed by the new setting."

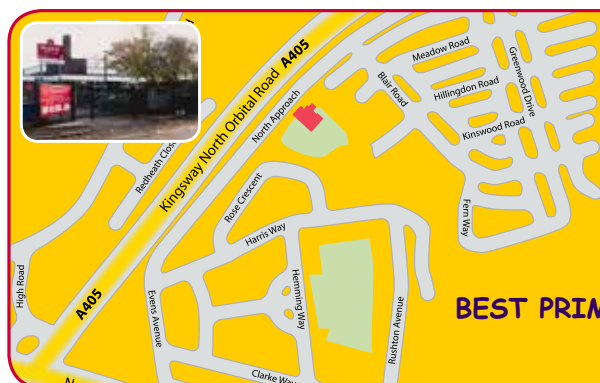
Quality of care

The quality of the teaching staff is something of which Paula has no doubt. "Particularly in the Reception Class, the teachers are brilliant. They are flexible and accommodating and the children like and respect them a great deal. For me, it's good to know that I can trust Kingsway Infant School to look after my children's welfare as well as their education."

Children say

Cameron says: "I love golden time when I get to play and have adventures with my friends. Also the dinners are yummy!"

And Renaye's comments: "I liked learning Spanish because it helps when I go on holiday and I want to travel the world when I get bigger. And the work in the infants is easier than the juniors and I wouldn't mind going back!"



Kingsway Infant School
North Approach, Watford,
Hertfordshire, WD25 0ES
Telephone: 01923 675 005

E-Mail: admin@kingsway.herts.sch.uk
Web: www.kingsway.herts.sch.uk

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