

Katrien Verbruggen and Ben D'Exelle live in Norwich with their children Oona, 8 in Year 4 and Leon, 11 in Year 6.



## Katrien **appreciates** the way Colman Junior School **embraces diversity** and **truly values** each child

When Katrien and Ben moved from Belgium to Norwich four years ago they visited ten schools. Colman Infant School came out as the absolute best for them and they were consequently confident Colman Junior School was the right choice for the next stage of education for their children. They've not been disappointed!

### **Focus on inclusivity**

With English as an additional language (EAL), Katrien speaks from experience when she says she believes it excels at including everybody. She says, "They ensure everyone can participate fully in school life and they value everyone including those with disabilities, different religions and from different ethnic backgrounds. We have felt our children have been made very welcome. The school reflects the reality of society in a very safe way."



## English as an additional language

Katrien is very impressed with their focus on developing English as an additional language. "There is dedicated time with a teacher for the children to develop their English," explains Katrien. "We really like the way the children are given the opportunity to show their native language. Oona loved that she was asked to translate a book from Flemish, reading it aloud in English to the class. Developing their English, whilst also including their first language is actively encouraged and we really like that."

## Dedicated EAL experience

Working with children whose first language is not English is something Katrien feels comes easily to the staff at Colman Junior School. "You can tell most of the staff have lots of experience in this area. They're not embarrassed by it; it's just one of those things.

Katrien adds: "Whilst Leon was speaking English well by the time he reached junior school, he wasn't reading very well yet. This took a big boost from teaching staff at junior school. It was wonderful to see how it all came together in Year 3."

## Positive progression

Katrien believes this progress is down to the continuous support Leon received and his trust in the school environment. "He continued receiving support from the EAL teacher which helped his confidence. When he first started in Year 3, Flemish was still Leon's first language, but we now think English has at least reached the same level."

## No complaints

One of the greatest ways a parent can measure the happiness of their children at school is by their willingness to go. "We've not had a single day where either of them have complained," says Katrien. "They love how much they learn and how engaging the lessons are. They also comment about how kind the teachers are and how many friends the children have. Oona particularly enjoys the learning process. Leon is especially keen on play time, but for us, that's a good indication of how he feels about the friendships he's formed."

## Friendly and approachable teachers

Katrien's enthusiasm for the school is really clear. "We're very happy with Colman Junior School. The staff are approachable and the Headteacher is very good. We've been very impressed with them all."

## Fantastic array of after school clubs

Katrien and Ben believe the after school clubs offer excellent opportunities. "The school attracts a lot of outside providers which is nice. They have Indian dance, cooking, film, sports clubs, music clubs, arts club - there really is something for every child."

Katrien adds: "As a working parent, the opportunity for Leon and Oona to attend these clubs and the enjoyment they get from them is crucial to our family."

## A school that excels

"We feel Colman Junior School offers everything! It values every child and excels in embracing diversity."

### Children say:

Oona says: "I love learning so many new things!"

Leon says: "I like everything about school!"



### Colman Junior School

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