

# Motivation, encouragement and **high standards** – Victoria has found all these for her son at Sandbach School



Sandbach School

*Opportunity, Achievement, Excellence*



**Victoria Palethorpe and her husband, Mark, live in Sandbach with their children Tom, 12, Evie, 10 and Matilda, seven. Tom is in Year 7 at Sandbach School.**

## The chance to make the most of talent

The Palethorpe family moved to Sandbach just over a year ago at the time they were starting to look for secondary schools for Tom. As Victoria is a music teacher and works in the surrounding area, she is fairly familiar with the local schools and has a good insight into what makes each of them tick. "I'm not sure if it's an advantage as a parent to see what goes on behind the scenes!" she says, "but I have always been impressed with the emphasis placed on music at Sandbach School. Tom is a good musician himself and he decided that Sandbach School was the best place for him."

Victoria describes the Music Department at Sandbach School as second to none and as a talented trumpeter, Tom has had the opportunity he wanted to be challenged in his playing. "The school has a particularly strong brass tradition and listening to them play I have to pinch myself to believe that these are just young boys," Victoria says. "Sandbach School really goes the extra mile to ensure the boys make the most of their talent and the results are wonderful."

## Smooth transition

As Tom was the only pupil from his primary school to move to Sandbach School, the school's Big Band was a valuable way of helping him to settle in quickly and start to make a new circle of friends. However, for children who do not have a specific interest pastoral care is, believes Victoria, taken very seriously. "Transition can be a difficult time for children but the Student Support Co-ordinator is very hands-on and aware that some might struggle more than others, so it was very reassuring to know that she was looking out for Tom in the early stages. I have never had cause to worry about his welfare or his school work and it's an added bonus that I can check on anything I need to through the parents' website."

## Interaction without distraction!

Whether or not the school building itself has anything to do with it, Victoria approves of the high standards expected from the boys in terms of behaviour and presentation. "The building is so beautiful and I think that is bound to have an impact as I'm sure the boys respect their surroundings. Generally speaking, they are always well-turned out and courteous and inappropriate behaviour of any kind is absolutely not tolerated. Of course, in an all-boys' school there are fewer distractions but they have the advantage of sharing certain facilities with the nearby girls' school so that is the best of both worlds."

## Motivation and reward

Academically speaking, Tom is performing above expectations and again, Victoria puts this down partly to the high standards expected of all students. "They are motivated and rewarded for quality and effort and seem to rise to the challenge," she believes. "They might have the incentive of a small individual prize or be treated collectively to a takeaway pizza for overall class performance! It all goes to show them that hard work and good behaviour pays off."

## Seeing the bigger picture

A further advantage for Tom is that the family now live close enough to his school for him to be able to walk there and back and that he has the chance to maintain school friendships easily during the holidays. "This is a more socially diverse area than where we used to live but that is an added bonus," Victoria says. "Now Tom is mixing with children from lots of different backgrounds he's getting a much better picture of life in the real world and that's a great preparation. We took quite a risk by uprooting the family to move here but it has proved a very positive experience and we are very pleased indeed with our choice."



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