

Claire likes the way that her twins are treated as individuals in their own right at Worthing High School

**WORTHING
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Claire Leitch's 15-year old sons Jack and Matthew are in Year 11 at Worthing High School, which they joined in Year 8 from The Vale Middle School.

A GOOD INDICATION OF A GOOD SCHOOL

Of the three options open to her, Claire chose Worthing High School for Jack and Matthew on instinct as much as anything else more concrete. "It just felt right," she says. "At the Open Day all the staff were very welcoming and approachable and I noticed that all the students seemed happy, which is obviously a good indication. It also felt more homely in terms of its size - not too overwhelming for two eleven-year-olds!"

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Claire liked the idea of the Community House system and throughout the boys' time at the school has always felt their Pastoral Leaders to be her first point of contact. "The Pastoral Leaders have a good personal relationship with the students and are always able to give me a coherent overview of every aspect of their school life," she says. "Whether it's concerning the educational aspect or their social welfare, I know the Pastoral Leader will be able to address any concerns or questions I may have."

HEALTHY COMPETITION

Not that Claire has had many concerns; both Jack and Matthew are exceeding in virtually all subjects and are both very happy at school, despite the sibling rivalry which is exacerbated by their twinship! "They are both very competitive so it's probably a good thing that the school's policy is to put twins in different forms unless specifically requested to do otherwise. Their teachers will occasionally let one of the boys know that his brother has got a slightly higher mark, but it's done sensitively and in fun, and in the spirit of encouraging healthy competition!"

NO RESERVATIONS

As both Jack and Matthew are predicted high grades in their GCSEs, Claire believes that Worthing High has done very well by her boys and has no reservations about enrolling her youngest son, Samuel, there next year. "They have never been treated as 'the twins' but always as individuals in their own right," she says. "The teachers are accessible and will respond straightaway to a telephone call or email so I am always up to date and can find out what's going on, even when letters mysteriously go missing on the way home from school! I am confident that Samuel will benefit in the same way as his brothers."

A GENUINE INTEREST IN EACH STUDENT

Jack also liked the smaller and more intimate feel to the school and even on his first visit felt that he was welcome for himself rather than for his academic potential. "I was treated like a person with something to offer, whatever that might be," he says. "The teachers I met seemed genuinely interested in me and keen to help me make the most of my education. They also seemed to be there because they enjoyed what they were doing and certainly didn't come over as people who were just doing their jobs. Worthing High was an easy choice to make, and I have never regretted it."

BELIEF IN POTENTIAL

Four years down the line, Jack is even more convinced. Asked if the school has lived up to his initial expectations he is quick to respond. "Definitely. It is even better than I expected and for someone like me who really wants to knuckle down I couldn't have asked for more. When I started my GCSE course my predicted grades were an average B; now I am looking at A's and A* 's, and that has to have a great deal to do with the huge effort put in by my teachers to make sure I am doing as well as they believe I can."

MUTUAL RESPECT

Although Jack is a keen and hard-working student, he also has a good circle of friends at school and makes the most of the social downtime. "It is a very friendly environment and generally speaking, everyone gets on very well," he says. "There is no stigma attached to wanting to work; we all just do what is expected of us without feeling that being committed isn't cool. There is an attitude of mutual respect, and there are few students who don't fit in with that way of thinking."

REAPING THE REWARDS

Whilst Jack would be content to carry on working as hard as he does without additional incentive, he does appreciate the merit system which rewards students who demonstrate aptitude not only in their studies but in standards of behaviour, presentation and general attitude. "Basically, if you make an effort you will reap the rewards," Jack explains. "The prospect of a voucher or a special outing is a great encouragement, but I think most of us realise that the prospect of a place at a good college and university is encouragement in itself. That is what I believe Worthing High promises its students."



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