

The Chatha family feel blessed by all the love and support from St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy

Nikki and Jag Chatha live in Seven Kings, Ilford with their sons, Amarvir, ten, Karamvir, eight, and Tejvir, three.



Happy atmosphere

Nikki and Jag originally chose St Aidan's for their eldest son, Amarvir, on the strength of its academic reputation and because the school had received a good report from Ofsted. But they quickly came to appreciate the happy atmosphere at St Aidan's and the way parents were encouraged to become involved with the school. "It is a small community where everyone knows everyone and you feel the warmth whenever you go in there," says Nikki. "It makes you want to stay for a while and talk to the other parents and to the teachers. St Aidan's is a very loving school and the teachers show that they really care about all the children."



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Traumatic time

The Chatha family felt the full strength of that love and care at the time that they needed it most, when Amarvir became seriously ill. Nikki says: "He suddenly became very poorly when he was in Year Two and was quickly diagnosed with leukaemia, which, of course, was a terrible shock for us. As soon as I informed the school, we received fantastic support from them. He had only been in Year Two for three weeks but the head teacher and his class teacher immediately came to see him to cheer him up and brought him messages of support from his classmates. Their love and concern made all the difference to such a traumatic situation."

Extra support

Amarvir had to miss most of Year Two and was able to go back only part time in Year Three and Year Four. Nikki says: "He has now been given the all clear and is back at school full time. He has been given extra support by St Aidan's to help him make up for the time he has missed academically. The school have been absolutely fantastic throughout what has been a terrible time for us. The teachers offered us support during his illness and Amarvir's friends and their parents were also really caring and showed that they hadn't forgotten him."

Encouraged to achieve

Nikki and Jag's middle son, Karamvir, is excelling in lessons at St Aidan's and has been given extra work to allow him to progress. Nikki says: "He is very talented and has been pushed to achieve his full potential by the school. He has a very competitive streak and has been encouraged to join clubs and pursue his interests, which include football, chess and playing the drums."

Community spirit

"As Sikhs attending a predominantly Catholic school, my boys have been made to feel really welcome," says Nikki. "Because the boys wear mini turbans I was concerned about the reactions of the other children to begin with. I asked the school to hold an assembly so that my husband could go in and give a presentation about Sikhism. But even though they wear turbans it has never hindered them, or affected the way the other children behave towards them. St Aidan's has such a strong community feeling that all the children mix well, whatever their religion."

Opportunities for all

Nikki is pleased that St Aidan's gives everyone equal opportunities. "Every learner's achievements are celebrated and everybody is regarded as an individual," she says. "I am glad the school encourages all the children to learn about other faiths. I wanted my children to grow up in a mixed community where there was no barrier to them learning."



Children say

Amarvir says: "I like my teacher and all my friends, who showed how much they cared about me when I was ill. They sent me 27 Get Well cards and encouraged me to come back to school when I was better. Playtime is so much fun because all the different years play together in the same playground." Karamvir says: "Playtime is so much fun because I love to play football in the playground."



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