

Remy and Cara have both flourished in the caring atmosphere of St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy

Cathy Murphy and Brandon Adams live in Seven Kings, Ilford, with their daughters Remy, nine, and Cara, eight.



Settling in

Cathy and Brandon chose St Aidan's because the school had a kind, cosy atmosphere and they didn't want anywhere too austere or strict for their girls. Cathy says: "Remy started school in the September after her fourth birthday in the August and was incredibly timid, but she was treated with overwhelming kindness by the teachers and all the staff, including the dinner ladies."

Good mix of staff

Remy's class teacher was very caring, Cathy recalls. "She asked the oldest girl in the class to be Remy's mentor and to look after her, which worked like a dream. They were very sweet together and their friendship set Remy up for the future at St Aidan's. Her teacher was very intuitive."



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Catholic Primary Academy**

Staff at the school are a fantastic mixture of old school and new blood, says Cathy. "Some have a wealth of experience and some have youth and energy. The head teacher is dynamic and knows all the children as well as their parents."

Developing social skills

It was a different story when Cara started in the nursery at St Aidan's. "She was very keen to join the school and settled in without any worries at all," Cathy says. "Both girls are now flourishing academically, but the school has been brilliant for developing their social skills as well. The children are taught good manners. I have been on outings with classes from St Aidan's and the children are always very well-received. They behave well because they are representing their school and are proud to do so."

Celebrating all faiths

Cathy says: "I really like the Catholic influence within the school. The children pray every day and those from other religious backgrounds are encouraged to join in. When the children have assemblies and their parents are invited, everyone literally sings from the same hymn sheet. The Catholic element is handled very gently. Other faiths are told: We are a Catholic school, but we will celebrate your religion too."

Good teaching

Remy excels at reading and literature but also enjoys Maths, which is very well taught at St Aidan's, Cathy says. "In science week, Remy suddenly got very inventive because they know how to make learning fun. St Aidan's uses the Mantle of the Expert approach, which is very subtle and employs an activity such as running a shop, to teach the children to work as a team, use spreadsheets and do presentations. The children are learning, but because they find it enjoyable, they don't think of it as hard work."

Ready for secondary school

"Remy will be in Year Six next year. It is a fantastic year when they become prefects and have jobs around the school, which gives them a sense of responsibility. By the end of Year Six they are well prepared for secondary school," Cathy says.

"I like the way St Aidan's integrates the classes in forums so they all get to know children from other years. The older ones become very protective of the younger ones."

Overwhelming kindness

"We chose wisely when we decided to send our daughters to St Aidan's. There is an overwhelming sense of kindness and community spirit within the school. The teachers all know everyone and, when you live in such a busy area, it is wonderful for your children to be able to attend somewhere that has the atmosphere of a village school," Cathy says. "When Remy was very young and finding it difficult to settle in, everyone went the extra mile to help her. I would say to other parents: A young child coming into the school couldn't have more kindness and support."



Children say

Remy says: "All our teachers teach us really well."
Cara says: "Our teachers make every day at school seem like fun."



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