

The O'Connor sisters have all blossomed in the jolly atmosphere of St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy

Donna and Danny O'Connor live in Newbury Park, Ilford with their daughters, Kiera, Cliona and Caoimhe.



Enjoying school at home

Cliona and Caoimhe O'Connor love going to school so much they even play 'schools' when they are at home. Cliona is eleven and in Year Six and Caoimhe is eight and in Year Three at St Aidan's. Their mum Donna says: "In the holidays they will sit together with pens and paper and pretend they are at school, they love it so much. It gives me a real insight into how much they enjoy school and how good the staff are, listening to them pretending to be their teachers."

Mixing well in the playground

Donna says the whole atmosphere at St Aidan's is jolly. "There is a real buzz about the place and the playground is a good place to make friends, with older



**St Aidan's
Catholic Primary Academy**

years looking after the younger children and different year groups playing together. All the parents know each other because of the inclusive nature of the school. There are lots of Mums to call on if I need someone to pick up my children in an emergency. Everyone is very supportive and if a child falls over on the way into school you see other parents rush to help."

Quality teaching staff

Donna and Danny chose St Aidan's after researching online and looking at Ofsted reports. "We're now in the process of moving to Brentwood as Cliona is in her last year, but I will still keep Caoimhe at the school because it is so fantastic." Donna believes the quality of the headteacher and staff is what makes the school so good. "The headteacher knew Caoimhe's name straight away when she started and all the teachers know children in other classes. They all work together as a team."

Getting the best out of pupils

St Aidan's helps children to achieve their best possible results by providing the right support, Donna says. "Each child is looked at as an individual and treated according to their needs. All my girls are different, my eldest one, who is now at Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School, responds well to praise and encouragement, my middle one is intelligent but needs pushing and my youngest one needs cajoling. The school knew how to get the very best out of all of them."

Musical education

Donna says St Aidan's has a strong musical tradition. "I liked the way Cliona's class learnt the violin as a group for three consecutive years. They all received free music lessons, so no one was left out. I loved going to their concerts and hearing the class all playing together. They sounded fantastic."

Learning about different faiths

The O'Connors like the Catholic ethos of the school. "Even if we hadn't been Catholic, we would still have felt welcome," explains Donna. "St Aidan's teaches children about all faiths. It is a diverse school and people are invited in to explain about different customs." She said pupils benefit from the good discipline. "When they join clubs out of school they are welcomed because they are from St Aidan's. All the secondary schools in the area like to take children from the school."

St Aidan's just gets better and better

"My message to other parents is: If you get the chance to send your children to St Aidan's, you should feel privileged. The school gives children the very best start. My eldest child started secondary school at the top level for all her subjects." Donna believes St Aidan's improves year on year. "The school has always been good, but it keeps getting better."



Children say

Caoimhe says: "I like the way all the Year Six children come to talk to us in the playground. If they see someone on their own without friends they'll come and play with them. I enjoy Maths and particularly like learning different ways to work out the answers. I like it when we get the chance to add our answers to the Maths wall."



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St Aidan's Catholic Primary Academy
Benton Rd
Ilford
IG1 4AS
London

Phone: 020 8590 5223
email: admin@st-aidans.redbridge.sch.uk
www.staidansacademy.org