

# St. Helen's Primary School





#### Inspiring environment

We provide an inspiring, happy and stimulating environment. We want to ignite a love of learning within our pupils, and for them to become lifelong learners. In all aspects of school life we aim to be the best we can be.

We believe that our children need to have access to many enriching experiences, and we aim to provide opportunities for children to succeed in many different areas of life. Whatever a pupils abilities, we will help them achieve their goals without putting any limits on their learning.

them to be able to make informed choices, think for themselves and be confident to stand up for what they feel is right.

I am very proud of our highly experienced and dedicated staff, who work hard to ensure the highest possible academic standards for your children. By promoting positive attitudes, we can move forward with confidence, preparing our pupils for their future lives in and out of school. They are an integral part of your child's learning journey.

is to be part of a strong school community where we celebrate the relationships and contributions of staff, parents, governors and children as a whole school community. This is evident through extra-curricular activities, PTA events and our parent partnerships during the school day.

As you will see, by reading the many parent and pupil stories within this prospectus, you and your child are very important to us. We champion the link between school and parent and work very hard to involve you in every step of your child's time here...and increase your child's enjoyment of learning.

We would urge you to visit our amazing school. I am truly confident you will find this a welcoming and supportive school, with staff that listen, consult and actively encourage your involvement. To make an appointment to visit, or to simply ask us a question, please call the school.

# **Ipswich Primary Academies Trust**

We are a member of Ipswich Primary Academies Trust. Initially centred in Ipswich, the Trust is a group of Suffolk schools aiming to make a real difference to education in our local area. Bringing together our skills and expertise, as well as learning from the best practice nationwide, our vision is to create a hub of outstanding practice in teaching and learning, and provide real opportunities for children in Suffolk...that help them to achieve the best outcomes possible!



The school gates open for the start of the school day at 8.40am and school doors open at 8.50am. School finishes at 3.20 pm (3.30 pm for KS2).

Morning sessions in nursery start at 8.30am and finish at 11.30am and afternoon sessions start at 12.30pm and finish at 3.30 with a flexible collection from 3.10pm.

#### Wraparound clubs

We provide before and after school child-care clubs. The emphasis is based on providing a relaxed and comfortable period of time at the beginning and end of the school day. There are books and board games, as well as art and craft and sporting activities in the school playground.

#### Uniform

We expect to see all children in a school uniform. This ensures the children look smart, which in turn, encourages them to take pride in their school and approach learning in the right frame of mind. A school uniform helps promote a sense of belonging and community.

#### School meals and snacks

Children have the choice of either a hot nutritious meal from the on-site kitchen or bringing a packed lunch into school. Free school meals are available for Reception and Key Stage 1 children, and to those older children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.

#### Break-time and drinks

Under the Fruit in School scheme children are entitled to a piece of fruit each day free of charge. This is given as a playtime snack. Water is available throughout the day although children are encouraged to bring to school a plastic water bottle. Milk is provided free to pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals and children of nursery age are also entitled to milk free of charge. Milk is available to other pupils through the Milk in Schools Scheme for a small charge.

# Corinne believes St. Helen's Primary School offers a caring environment where children are well behaved, polite and eager to learn

Corinne and Chris Payne live in Ipswich with their children Josh, 25 and Rosie, 11 in Year 6.

#### A positive ethos

Rosie started at St. Helen's Primary School in nursery, aged three. Chris and Corinne chose the school because Josh had been there some years earlier. Originally they came from outside the area and what initially struck them about the school was how polite the children were. "It's still something that really impresses us. The teaching team and the children are all very polite and friendly. The ethos of politeness, hard work and good behaviour in a pleasant atmosphere is still central to the school," says Corinne.

## In good hands

Corinne also believes the pastoral care available is excellent. "I feel it's equally as good as the academic standard; they achieve a very good balance. I feel Rosie is in very good hands and I trust the people she is with. The breakfast club and the after school clubs are great for working parents and Rosie has good relationships with the staff. I think St. Helen's covers it all very well."

#### A caring approach

According to her delighted parents, Rosie is progressing very well at St. Helen's Primary School. "Rosie has always progressed at a good rate at St. Helen's. I know if, now and again, Rosie has had time off with illness, the teaching assistant has always taken her aside and made sure she feels up to speed with class work, which I know she has appreciated."

#### An effective behaviour policy

Corinne believes the underlying reason why children enjoy their time at St. Helen's has much to do with the effective behaviour policy in place. "I personally think that because the behaviour of the children is so good, it has an enormously positive impact on all other areas of teaching. The children aren't disrupted in class and

can focus on their lessons and the teachers have the opportunity to spend more time working with smaller groups."

#### Fond memories

Corinne can say with confidence that her children have been happy and content at St. Helen's. "Josh has very fond memories of his time at St. Helen's and was keen for Rosie to go there too. I know Rosie is happy there too; she likes school and often comments about the supportive, friendly atmosphere and how able she feels to ask for help should she need it, which I think is important. The teaching team come across as a team who genuinely care about the children and their education."

## Great links with the local High School

As Rosie nears the end of her time at St. Helen's, Corinne feels she is being well prepared for the next step in her education. "I think they spend a good amount of time preparing them for the transition into secondary education. There appears to be very good links with the local High School and there's been visits to help get them used to staff and new surroundings. There's a residential trip coming up in Year 6 too, which I'm sure will be great for Rosie and will help with developing independence ready for moving on from St. Helen's."

#### Amongst people who care

Corinne adds: "We will miss St. Helen's! You can be sure your child will progress at St. Helen's Primary School and that they will be amongst people who genuinely care."

#### Children say:

Rosie says: "I like how enjoyable lessons are; they're never boring! I also like that you know that if you ask for help, you will always get it!"





Our first objective is to ensure that your child will be happy in coming to school in order to learn effectively. The teachers assess your child's needs and match work to their stage of development. The curriculum is divided into three stages:

Early Years Foundation Stage: from ages 0-5

Key Stage 1: from ages 5-7

Key Stage 2: from ages 7-11.

#### Reception

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is based on seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics • Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design.

#### **Key Stages 1-2**

Areas of the curriculum are:

- MFL?????
- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Science
- Information and Design Technology
- History
- Geography Music
- Art
- Physical Education
- Religious Education Philosophy
- Citizenship
- Personal and Social Education

# Respect for each child and strong multicultural values are the key strengths of St. Helen's Primary School for **Roushanara and Noman**

#### A positive ethos

Roushanara Begum and Noman Siddiqui live in Ipswich with their three children Nurhan, 15, Mahfuza, 12 and Burhan, 10 in Year 6. "We'd heard good things about St. Helen's Primary School from family members and it appealed because of how multicultural it is. It's also our catchment school, so there were lots of good reasons for choosing it for our family," says Roushanara.

#### Respectful for different cultures

As a bilingual mother, whose first language is Bengali, Roushanara has been impressed with the support offered to families where English is an additional language.

"We've always felt informed regarding the contents of the syllabus, particularly in terms of Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) in the curriculum. They approached me, and ensured we felt comfortable with what was included in the lessons. It shows a good level of respect and understanding for different religions and cultures and confidence." we were really happy with how it was handled."

#### Close relationships

Roushanara adds; "I believe there are over twenty different languages spoken amongst the families of St. Helen's Primary School. The school has close relationships with the different local religious buildings and takes the children on visits to them, which I think is brilliant. Teachers not only have close relationships with children, but with parents as well, through parent's evenings and homework books. This gives us good insight into our child's learning and an opportunity to ensure our child is progressing

Noman finds the 'share days' interactive and informative, feeling they provide him with insight into how the children are working in school. "It's a very inclusive school and we know the children have all felt settled there."

# Specific support where English is an additional language

Whilst all lessons are taught in English, some of the support staff speak other languages, "I think this is very useful if children are struggling with English. Right from the very beginning, we've felt supported with English as an additional language."

Roushanara adds; "There's a supplementary school on a Saturday especially for the bilingual children to receive support with their homework. It's run free of charge by the Bangladeshi Support Centre at the school and all of my children have utilised it. We've been very grateful to have it available to our

#### One-to-one support

Roushanara also likes the support offered inside the classroom. "Burhan received some specialist one-toone support in Years 1 and 2. He was incredibly shy and would talk very quietly, so these sessions were important for him and really helped increase his self-

#### A sense of pride

Noman adds: "We feel the teaching staff want each child to achieve the best they can. The school's motto, "Be The Best You Can Be", gives the children a source of pride, confidence and determination to put into their work. We are proud to be part of St. Helen's Primary School."

Roushanara is equally positive about the family's experience at St. Helen's Primary School; "It's a friendly, welcoming school that is very respectful of people from different backgrounds and people with other beliefs. They have prepared all of our children really well for life at Secondary School. We've absolutely no regrets in choosing it for our children."

## Children say:

Burhan says: "I really like PE at St. Helen's Primary School. It's fun and helps me to be more active and healthy."

Mahfuza says: "St. Helen's helped me to believe in myself more. They taught me that giving things a try was more important than getting them right first time. I felt welcomed and valued and enjoyed every moment at St. Helen's.

Nurhan says: "I believe St. Helen's prepared me well for secondary school; I felt welcome and it made me a hard-working and determined student."





# Lindsay believes St. Helen's Primary School is a nurturing school which strives for excellence in each of its pupils happy

#### Lindsay Barker lives in Ipswich with her two children, Oscar, 12 and Amelie, 10 in Year 6.

Whilst Oscar is now at Secondary School, Lindsay's two children both started at St. Helen's Primary School in Reception. "When it came to choosing a school we'd heard great things from other people about St. Helen's. Parents were really impressed with the arts and culture focus and I have been too.

#### A united approach

"I particularly like how multicultural the school is; it's learning style, he would never have enjoyed English really important to me that my children grow up in an environment which teaches the importance of living with people from all different backgrounds and cultures. The children integrate really well and they learn about each other's backgrounds and religions. They take it for granted that people have different approaches to life and that, for me, is a really important lesson."

#### Striving for excellence

"For me, it's a school that seeks to strive for excellence. It has high expectations and aspirations for the children, which is really great."

According to Lindsay, her two children are quite different in personality. "Oscar is bright at maths and quite literal in his thinking. He devours books. He's very scientific with a logical brain. Amelie is delightfully creative and always busy. She's emotionally intelligent, very organised and she works really hard. The teachers have identified these traits in A fantastic experience my children and adapted their teaching in ways which appeal to their individual strengths so they've been able to get the best from them both."

#### Adapting learning styles

Being naturally more gifted in maths and science, English is a subject Oscar needed a little more encouragement to enjoy. "His teacher knew he preferred more logical learning. She somehow taught him English through the lens of maths, in a way that really appealed to him.

"She challenged him with his reading and gave him lots of tasks to adapt his writing style. In Year 4, she chose him for a poetry workshop, which he surprisingly enjoyed. He continued to write poetry and ended up in the top twenty finalists in a poetry competition. He came out with a highly commended award and, I believe, had it not been for the way the teacher adapted the teaching style to Oscar's

#### Supportive, responsive teachers

or got as much from it as he did."

According to Lindsay, Amelie suffered a loss of confidence in Year 3. "The teacher really listened to my concerns and nurtured Amelie, gently encouraging and motivating her. Amelie was made a maths mentor for the younger children, which I feel really helped to build her confidence. She loved the additional responsibility and it really helped her to progress her own understanding and learning. I thought it was a clever tactic on behalf of the

"Amelie has commented how able she feels to voice if she doesn't understand something; it shows how comfortable she feels in her learning environment and that she's confident teachers will listen. It's a joy to watch her now in Year 6."

Lindsay adds: "Attending St. Helen's Primary School has been a fantastic experience for both of my children. I've watched them thrive and grow in its nurturing environment. I think the teaching is excellent. Importantly, I've always had confidence in St. Helen's and I know Amelie and Oscar have both enjoyed their time there. I've absolutely no hesitation in recommending it!"

#### Children sav:

Amelie says: "School feels like one big family and there is always someone to help you." Oscar says: "I really enjoyed St. Helen's; being stretched in maths was really good."



We arrange visits to the school by theatre groups and those with professional expertise such as singers, artists, musicians etc.



We are very proud of our diverse community, and are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and racism. Our school roll includes children with Special Educational Needs.

## **Special Educational Needs**

St. Helen's Primary School values the abilities and achievements of all of its pupils and is committed to providing each pupil the best possible environment for learning. The school aims to meet the individual needs of all children and to provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum. We recognise and embrace that good quality teaching for all is vital to unlocking potential and achieving goals.

#### Additional support

Children progress at different rates and every effort is made within the school to cater for this. Children who have special educational needs may receive additional advice and support from the local authority's Special Needs Support Service and other agencies. All children have access to the full curriculum and work is planned accordingly. More information can be found on the school website http://www.sthelensprimary.

The school building has a lift to aid access for children with disabilities. Disabled toilet and changing facilities are available. Further adaptations will be made to the building if pupils admitted to school have additional needs which require them.

#### Gifted and talented children

We recognise that all children are individuals with their own specific needs, gifts and talents. Children who are identified as being exceptionally able or talented, are monitored and provided with stimulating and enriching lessons appropriate to their needs. Opportunities are sought for such pupils to meet and work with similarly gifted pupils in the area.

# Julie believes St. Helen's Primary School offers excellent support for children with additional needs

Julie Stammers lives in Ipswich with her son, Jake, 11 in Year 6. Jake started at St. Helen's in Nursery.

#### Positive support with additional needs

When choosing a school for Jake, Julie's family already had a connection with St. Helen's. "It's our catchment school but my mum had been to school on the same site, so it felt right to send Jake there. Plus, I'd heard very positive recommendations from others about St. Helen's. Jake was diagnosed with people told me what a great school it is for those children who have additional needs."

#### Like a family

Jake was in the process of being assessed for autism during his time in Nursery. "The staff were very good at helping us to clarify anything we didn't understand and supporting both of us. What I really appreciated during Jake's time in Nursery was how caring everyone was. They were like a family to Jake and I and that has continued throughout Jake's progression through school."

#### Building stronger relationships

According to Julie, Jake is a happy and caring child who can find it difficult to socialise with others. "He prefers to work alongside others rather than He does have additional needs and was very quickly provided with one to one support, which has helped him enormously. Jake built a strong relationship with his teaching assistant."

#### Preparing for change

Jake can find changes in routine and environment difficult. "If there's anything that Jake has to participate in outside of his usual routine, they are excellent at preparing him and helping him to cope with the changes. They use tools like social stories so that he is aware of what to expect; it's really helped

# Increasing confidence and team working

Julie feels certain that without the one to one support he has been provided with, he would not be the child he is today. "He's more confident than I could have imagined he would be at this age. They've taught him how to work alongside with others, using high functioning autism when he was three and many things like the Lego Therapy group, which Jake has got a lot from. He's much more able to work as part of a team now, which has been of great benefit to him in terms of socialising with others."

#### Inclusive of everyone

To support Jake academically, the school has introduced a special writing programme. "Jake hates to feel singled out, so the teachers have incorporated this writing programme in a way that doesn't make him feel like it's special to him. He feels included and they ensure he doesn't feel different to the other children, which I think is really important and I know he feels very much part of the class."

# A totally different child thanks to St.

"He's a totally different child to what he was; he's actually with them. He likes to keep school and home really come out of his shell which has been wonderful separate, but has made lots of friends within his class. to watch. He has a willingness to participate and I feel they are very good at praising his achievements, which Jakes thrives from."

#### Best interests at heart

Julie feels certain that Jake will miss St. Helen's when he moves on to High School. "There has been a lot of interaction with the outreach team in preparation and there are going to be visits including Jake so that he feels prepared for the changes in the environment and the structure of his day. I feel they have Jake's best interests at heart and it's always felt that way."

#### A family orientated approach

Julie adds: "I've always felt happy knowing Jake was at St. Helen's. If I could keep him there, I I would; it's a wonderful school, with a very family orientated approach to caring for all children."

## Children say:

Jake says: "I like my teachers at St. Helen's and I like my friends."





There are a wide variety of lunchtime and afterschool clubs for children to enjoy. Recent examples include:

- Arts and Crafts Club
- Maths Club
- St. Helen's Gets Cooking
- St. Helen's Singing Stars
- Books in the Batcave
- Squash Skills Club
- Ball Mania
- Football
- Gymnastics Spanish
- Swimming.

At St. Helen's we believe that PE is a vital part of the school curriculum and we aim to give all our children the chance to play and compete in as wide a range of sports as we possibly can. As well as a broad selection of sports being taught through PE lessons, the team at St. Helen's also offers a diverse and exciting range of extra-curricular clubs for children from all year groups.

#### S.H.E.E.P.

Working alongside the team from S.H.E.E.P. (St. Helen's Healthy Eating and Exercise Project) the children are learning about the importance of eating well, being active and taking care of their bodies.

#### Be The Best You Can Be

Minds are also important at St. Helen's and our 'Be The Best You Can Be' programme ensures that children learn about the mental qualities of good sports people - resilience, determination, hard work, team work, good sportsmanship, courage and respect.

For children interested in music, we provide a range of instrumental music lessons including:

- recorder
- brass

We have a good supply of tuned and un-tuned instruments throughout the school.

# Brendan believes St. Helen's Primary School has an outstanding team of teachers with a genuine enthusiasm for education

Brendan Keaney and Dr Magdalene Rosairo live in Ipswich with their two daughters, Saoirse, 10, in Year 5, and Caoimhe, eight, in Year 3.

#### A real sense of pride

Brendan and Maggie moved to Ipswich in 2013; having viewed a number of schools they decided St. Helen's was the right choice for their family. "We moved from London, and felt it was important to choose a school that really celebrated diversity. What struck us about St. Helen's was that air of industry and hard work, but in a relaxed and comfortable environment. The teachers we met impressed us too. They were incredibly committed and we felt a real sense of pride in the school," says Brendan.

"The other children were welcoming and friendly and that's something else that really stands out. Our eldest daughter has developed friendships across the years which we've not really experienced before and she is enjoying school life at St. Helen's." there is a real sense of older children looking after the younger

#### Extraordinary teaching team

For Brendan, an outstanding aspect of the school is the teaching team. "I think the school has an extraordinary team of teachers. Both of our girls consistently find their teacher inspirational. Saoirse always comments how she would like to be a teacher and we're sure this is down to the role models they have in their own teachers. Both girls have respect for their teachers; they feel listened to and that's really important. The teacher's go that extra mile for the children and the children feel valued."

Brendan feels that in spite of Saoirse having dyslexia, she is progressing incredibly well at St. Helen's Primary School. "She's a very bright child and the school are very aware of her issues with spelling and we feel they look after her needs really well. She's had some one-to-one support and she has a spell

checker she can use; they are really helping to build her confidence and liaising with home as well, to support the transfer of learning outside of the school environment. Her spelling is coming on well and we can see a huge change in her self-confidence."

According to their delighted parents, both children are very happy and content in their school environment. "They love, respect and rate their school. We believe they feel they're at a good school and we think that's important; it alters their view on

Brendan adds, "Since joining St. Helen's their critical awareness of the world and their ability to articulate that has grown enormously. Both girls are on the school council so I feel there is an opportunity to contribute really strong sense of discussion and debate within St. Helen's; I think that freedom to discuss and debate reinforces a sense of value in the children."

#### A school that genuinely loves educatio

Brendan and Maggie believe St. Helen's Primary School is a great school with a great culture of learning and respect. Brendan says; "It's a place where I feel learning and children are at the centre of its ethos. There's always this strong sense that they're working hard, but they will work harder. 'Be the Best You can Be' really sums up the school and the staff are an extraordinary asset; they have such an enthusiasm for teaching. The staff at St. Helen's love education, there's no doubt about it!"

#### Children say:

Caoimhe and Saoirse say: "We really like our school because it's a really friendly place. We really enjoy it and feel there's a real respect for learning." Caoimhe says: "There's a real bond between the teachers and the children."





The Ipswich Primary Academies Trust is responsible for admissions to the school. This responsibility is devolved to the local governing body of St Helen's Primary School, and carried out in partnership with Suffolk LA. All information required to make an application for a place can be found by visiting the Suffolk County Council website. Information and application forms are also available on the School website.

## Admission into other year groups

If you are considering St. Helen's for your child, you may find it helpful to arrange an informal visit to the school. Please contact the office to arrange an appointment where we will be very happy to show around our school

#### **Application**

Please ask about applications at the school office. Forms can be downloaded via the Suffolk County Council website. Entry to Reception will need to be made directly to the County Council. http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/applying-for-a-school-place/

Tel: 0345 600 0981

Email: admissions@suffolk.gov.uk

Web: http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/applying-for-a-school-place/

#### Parents' forum

We have a Parents' forum where we actively ask for parental involvement in shaping our school. Parents' Forum meetings are open to all parents and we work proactively to invite and welcome new people to these meetings. Regular meetings are held with dates set out for the year ahead.

#### Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

We have an active PTA, which raises additional funds for the children. Every parent is automatically a member; its function is to develop closer links between the parents, teachers and local community and to provide financial support towards educational resources and equipment. The events that are organised vary from year to year and are well supported by our parent community.

#### Do you want to join the PTA?

We welcome any ideas for fundraising and encourage parents and carers to share these with us. Information about meetings are shared with

parents, and you can find more information on the school website. Please come and share your talents with our school!

#### **Voluntary helpers**

We value the contribution of parents and family and we actively encourage your help during the school day. Parents and family help with a variety of activities which include reading with our children and helping them to choose a reading book, sewing, cooking, and acting as extra pairs of hands on educational visits. We accept all help gratefully. All volunteers must have a DBS check before they commence work in school.

#### Governorship

We have a full and active Governing Body, which includes parent governors as well as representatives from staff, the local authority and the local community. The Governing Body has a range of duties and powers and a general responsibility for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement including setting

targets for pupil achievement, managing the school's finances, making sure the curriculum is balanced and broadly based, appointing staff and reviewing staff performance and pay.

Vacancies for Parent Governors are advertised as they arise.

#### Do you want to be a Governor?

Our Parent Governors give parents a voice in decision making. They are elected by parents through a ballot. If you are interested in becoming a Governor, please contact the school office



#### **Our Vision Statements**

Our curriculum and ethos will

- provide the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding that will enable our pupils to "be the best they can be"
- provide 'irresistible' learning activities and experiences both in and out of lesson time
- prepare our pupils to live a healthy lifestyle and for a life of learning and work which is satisfying and worthwhile
- widen horizons and deepen thinking
- be aspirational and promote excellence in all areas
- promote tolerance and understanding
- give pupils dreams and develop the life skills they will need to reach them

#### Our staff will

- keep our pupils at the centre of our decision making
- promote high expectations for every pupil
- provide the best quality teaching and learning
- know and listen to our pupils
- know, share and provide the next steps in learning for every pupil
- make sure that every moment in school counts

#### Our school will

- take the lead in training and recruiting the best teachers
- be confident in our own ability to research, develop and innovate best practice
- promote high expectations for our staff and community
- work in partnership with our families and community to ensure our pupils are supported and ready for learning
- act with energy and determination to ensure that every pupil thrives

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