

The welcoming and happy atmosphere of Carlton Primary Academy leaves Emma in no doubt that it is the right place for all her children

Emma Bairstow lives in Royston with her children Lauryn, 16, Libby, 8 and Harvey, 7



The one and only

Emma's oldest daughter Lauryn attended Carlton Primary Academy from the age of four and based on Lauryn's experience it was Emma's first and only choice for Harvey and Libby, even though they had moved further away. "Carlton was always a lovely and welcoming place and Lauryn thoroughly enjoyed her time there, so I didn't feel the need to look elsewhere for Harvey and Libby. We have to travel a bit further now but it's certainly worth it; they love their school and for me that is what counts."



Together we can do anything

Mutual respect

Quite often, it's not one particular aspect of a school which stands out for a parent but the overall provision which makes it special. For Emma, it's the way her children have been given access to such a wide a range of facilities and opportunities that pleases her. "The teachers and staff are great, and that is very important. The children like and respect them and that is reflected in the high standards of behaviour in school. The teachers are also approachable so that if I ever have any worries – which is very rarely the case – I know I only have to ask and my concerns will be addressed and sorted out quickly and effectively, but in fact, there are very few occasions when I have needed that. Any playground squabbles are sensibly sorted out, and on an academic basis, I'm very pleased with my children's achievements."

The great outdoors

Both Libby and Harvey are up to speed, enjoying their lessons and have made good friends but additionally are able to take advantage of many other resources that Emma appreciates. "It's the outdoor space which does it for me," she says. "There is a massive playing field for them to use for sport and exercise but it's the beautiful woodland where they go in all weathers to play, grow produce, make camps and just appreciate the outdoors which I really love. They put on wellies and raincoats and have the chance to learn outside the classroom, and I believe completely in that ethos."

Flexible hours for working parents

As a working parent, Emma is glad of the Breakfast Club run by staff members at Carlton. Giving her the flexibility she needs, it means that she can drop Harvey and Libby off at 8am knowing that they will be given a good morning meal and be escorted to their classrooms in time for school. "I only need it a couple of times a week but it means I can go to work knowing they are looked after properly," she says. "The cost is easily affordable – far less than a childminder would be – and both Libby and Harvey enjoy it. As I'm in the process of changing my job I may also need to take advantage of the after-school provision

and that again is a weight off my mind, knowing that my children will be in a safe place until I can pick them up."

Opportunities

Carlton also offers a great deal of extra-curricular clubs, several of which Emma's children have enjoyed. "Harvey goes to football at the moment but they also do cheerleading, cookery, science and there is a gardening club where the children grow produce to present at Harvest Festival. These are great opportunities for the children and a bonus for parents who are working and may not have the time to do things like this at home."

A fun approach to learning

One of the best features of the school, believes Emma, is the way in which the teachers make learning so enjoyable. "The children find their lessons fun because of the way they are structured and that means they learn more. Just as Lauryn did, Harvey and Libby really like going to school and that's a major bonus! They have a good relationship with their teachers and feel appreciated when they are rewarded with treats – the school recently held an end-of-term sleepover which was apparently a great success!"

Nothing Emma has seen during all the years her children have been attending Carlton Primary Academy makes her doubt her decision to send them there. "As long as they are happy, safe and learning then I couldn't be more pleased. I have never had a major concern about anything and that is a bonus for me, too."

Children say

Harvey: "I love Carlton School because it's fun, and I like playing with my friends."

Libby: "I like all my teachers and they are very nice. I enjoy all the activities and it's the best school!"



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