

Natalie is so pleased she lost out on her first choice of school – at Parkside Academy her children have everything she could have wanted, and more

Natalie and Paul Cadman live in Royston with their children William, six, Amelia, four and three-year old Annabelle.



How things turn out for the best

Natalie and Paul moved to Royston two years ago shortly after William started school. As William had initially started his education in a church school, they were keen to find another near their new home but as the only available one was oversubscribed they accepted a place at Parkside.

"If I knew then what I know now, Parkside would always have been our first choice," Natalie explains. "Shortly after William started at Parkside a place became available at the other school but he had settled in so well that we decided not to move him. Since then, he has come on in leaps and bounds and we are now very glad that things turned out the way they have."



New confidence for a shy child

Part of the reason that Natalie is so pleased with Parkside is the effort the school has made to address William's speech difficulties. "William was slow to talk and when he started to do so we realised that he had a stammer. Through speech and language therapy and one-to-one support in class, his speech has improved considerably and he has also gained a great deal in confidence. For the first week or so he used to cry when I left him which was distressing for us both but within a short time he settled in and started to make friends. He also attended the school's Nurture Group, for children who are shy or anxious and again, that has made a great difference."

Catching up lost ground

Now a popular member of his class, William is catching up on the ground he lost because of his earlier communication problems and Natalie is more than happy with his progress. "When I first went to look around the school I was very impressed with the welcome we were given, the friendliness of the staff and the sensitivity the teachers showed in making the transition from his previous school as smooth as possible. Having later seen how well they have handled all the things we were concerned about, I could not have wished for a better environment for William."

Embracing a new experience

Natalie describes Amelia as a very different personality to William; bubbly and outgoing, she adores school and has embraced all it has to offer. Annabelle, too, loves the Nursery. "As full-time mum, I have never had to put my children into childcare so they weren't used to being away from me or our family for any length of time so I am amazed at how well they have adapted to school. Their teachers make them feel so at home and apart from those couple of weeks when William was finding his feet, there have been no problems at all."

An overnight sensation!

One thing which could, however, have been a problem was that Annabelle was not completely toilet-trained when she started school and this was naturally a concern for Natalie. "I explained the situation to the school and that although Annabelle was nearly there she wasn't absolutely reliable. It was very reassuring that her teachers did not see this as anything to worry about and that they would deal with any accidents if they occurred. What I found almost unbelievable was that there never was an accident – Annabelle was completely trained virtually overnight! This was so brilliantly handled by the staff and their kind and understanding approach meant a great deal."

Something for all the family

It's not only the children who have benefitted from what Parkside has to offer as Natalie, too, has made some good friends amongst the other parents at the school. "Although Paul grew up in the area I knew few people when we moved back so it was lovely for me to find a new set of friends here. Everyone is friendly and approachable and it is largely because of my children's school that we have integrated so easily into our new home town."

Reassurance

With all three children doing so well at Parkside Academy, Natalie is getting used to having a little more time to herself. "Because I know that they are happy and safe at school I can relax and make the most of the peace and quiet! It's rather strange when your youngest child starts school but because that school is Parkside, I have nothing to worry about."

Children say

Annabelle: "I like playing outside and the toilet with the yellow door!"

Amelia: "I like learning."

William: "I like getting stickers and certificates when I've done good things."



Learning With Pride

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