

# Heidi wanted a school where her daughters would be recognised for the people they are, not just how they look, and Summerfields Primary Academy has answered all her wishes

Heidi and Lee Riley live in Royston and have two daughters, Evie and Ella, who are identical six-year-old twins.



## First day nerves

The first day at school can be an emotional occasion not just for a young child but for a parent, too, and Heidi freely admits she felt rather tearful herself. "The girls had hardly ever been looked after by anyone but me and Lee and of course I was worried that they would find it very difficult to be away from me all day," she says "but because I'd had a really good feeling about Summerfields when we first went to look around I knew they would be looked after. The teachers were attentive and very welcoming, the classrooms were bright and cheerful and everyone seemed happy and in fact the girls hardly gave me a backward glance!"





### The child behind the face

From the outset, Heidi had expressed a wish that Ella and Evie should wherever possible be seated separately in class to minimise the risk that they might stick too closely together as they were used to doing. She was reassured to be told that this was something the school completely agreed upon. "I wanted to make sure they had the chance to make their own friends and be independent and it's worked well," she says. "What I love about Summerfields is the way the girls' teachers recognise their differences and see beyond their physical similarity – which is not always easy! Their personalities are very different and they are treated as such."

### More than just education

Whilst Heidi has never had cause to worry unduly about any aspect of Evie's or Ella's welfare, she is confident that any concerns she may have will be addressed. "All their teachers are lovely, I really mean that! If I ever need to talk to them they are happy to take the time to listen and take what I have to say on board. It's obvious how much they care about the children and want the best for them, and not just in an academic sense, although I am more than happy with how well the girls are doing. Their emotional wellbeing and pastoral care are taken seriously, too."

### Enrichment opportunities

Now the girls are in Year 2 they can start to look forward to taking part in the After-School clubs and have already signed up for Street Dance but it's not only the extra-curricular provision that makes life at Summerfields fun. "As part of their school topics they have been to an owl sanctuary, Butterfly World and to the seaside, and getting there by coach was an exciting bonus! There always seems to be something to look forward to, like the Halloween event, fetes or Harvest Festival, or just the lovely outside space at playtime. Evie even had afternoon tea with the Headteacher, which was very exciting!"

### Rewarding effort

Good work or good behaviour is regularly acknowledged by the presentation of the Jubilee Crystal Award at assembly, and Heidi likes the fact that it is not given only in recognition of academic achievement. "The Award is offered to a child who has made a particular effort in some way and so everyone has a chance. Being presented with the Award in front of the whole school is a real confidence-booster and shows the children they all have something to offer."

### Flexible hours

As she works three days a week, Heidi does not have as much opportunity as she would wish to help with organising events or fundraising but she is arranging to run the upcoming second-hand uniform sale. Demands on her time also mean she appreciates the accommodating support school offers the family.

### Something for the whole family

Heidi is delighted with everything about her daughters' school and how it has helped Evie and Ella to develop in confidence and independence. "They still have each other but they have a lovely circle of friends as well and that is an important part of school life. Lee and I have also made some good friends who we often socialise with so Summerfields Primary Academy has been a great asset to us all."

### Children say

Ella: "The best thing is school assembly where all the children get together and you may get a special mention. It could be recognised for hardworking or helping others."

Evie: "The best part of Summerfields for me is the teachers, because they are all very kind & helpful."



## Smile and Learn

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