



Zoe and Craig Vincent live in Broadstairs with their children Ryan, 10, Abigail, seven and Bethany, three.

Gifted children need as much support as any others, and Callis Grange Nursery and Infant School has done wonders for Zoe's three

Inspiration

If a child is struggling at school their parents will naturally expect support from the teaching staff, but when a child is particularly gifted just as much support is needed in a different way. Zoe and Craig moved house solely so they would be in the catchment of Callis Grange Nursery and Infant School and have never regretted the upheaval required.

"I had heard very good reports about Callis Grange and although at the time we had not realised quite how bright Ryan and Abigail were, we obviously wanted the best school available," Zoe explains. "As a Teaching Assistant, I know what to look for and Callis Grange has consistently provided that; it is a lovely environment, clean and bright, welcoming and with enthusiastic teachers who inspire the children to learn."

Stimulating a love of learning

Certainly, Ryan and Abigail have been greatly encouraged and both have benefitted from the extra work offered to all students, should they chose to do it. "All the children are expected to complete a given homework assignment but they are provided with additional tasks to do if they wish to. This prevents them from becoming bored with work which is too easy for them and helps to stimulate their interest; every day they come home wanting to tell us what they have been doing, and keen to follow it up at home by reading or research. It's the same with Bethany in Nursery – the teaching is made to be fun so the children are learning so much without realising it."

Praise + reward = result

Zoe believes that it is the praise and reward approach which makes such a difference, encouraging all the children to do their best and to please their teachers. "They get certificates and stickers, and can earn Golden Time for good effort or behaviour. This can be an hour or so where they chose for themselves what they want to do, whether it's drawing, reading or playing, and occasionally they will have a Movie Afternoon with cushions on the floor and popcorn! It is such a great way to engage children with school and produces the right results."

Recognition of ability

Early identification of talent in a particular area is something Callis Grange does well, and Ryan's aptitude was picked up soon after he started there. Abigail, too, has been gently challenged in order to maximise her potential. "The teachers don't push the children but stretch them when they know they can do that bit better," Zoe says. "It's not pressurised but they are given opportunities to expand their learning and generally children respond well to that. Ryan really enjoyed the chance to be a Librarian and Abigail just loves doing everything! Any extra-curricular activity which is offered, she's there!"

Early independence

A measure of choice and independence is given early at Callis Grange. At Nursery, Bethany is dropped off by Zoe and immediately looks for the Raindrop with her name on it

to stick on the Rainbow so her teacher knows she has arrived. "At three years old she recognises her name on the Raindrop, knows where it should go and that she is responsible for doing it - everything is a learning opportunity."

Pastoral and practical care

Zoe is fortunate that she has never had any major issues to address with the school but is aware of the fact that any bullying or inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated. "We had a small problem at one time, where Ryan had been targeted by another child, but this was picked up by his teacher and quietly sorted out." She also appreciates the second-hand uniform system where good-quality items are donated by parents and sold on inexpensively. "When you have several children in school it can get very expensive kitting them all out so this is a brilliant idea!"

A happy school makes a happy child

All in all, Zoe believes she could not have made a better decision than to move house in order to make sure of a place at Callis Grange for her children. "It has brought out the best in them, supported them in the way they most needed it and made them happy. They have never not wanted to go to school, and to me that speaks volumes."



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