

Rebecca's doubts about an inner-city school have been completely dispelled by what she has found at St Luke's Primary School



Rebecca and her husband, Martin, live in Newham with their children Caleb, eleven and Faeren, nine.

An unexpected treasure

Faeren and Caleb were only toddlers when the family moved to England from America because of a change in circumstances. Coming as they did from a sunny climate and a small rural community, Rebecca suffered something of a culture shock when they ended up in London, somewhere she had no knowledge of and, she admits, she did not at first expect to feel at home.

"I was used to open, green spaces and lots of sunshine, familiar and friendly faces on the street and a gentle way of life," she says. "To begin with London felt alien in contrast; it seemed dark, built-up and over-developed, and where I was surrounded by strangers



St. Luke's
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who didn't seem to want to stop and chat as I was used to doing. It was only because we were offered accommodation in Newham that we came to live here; now I have grown to love where we are, and that is largely because of the treasure trove we have found in St Luke's School."

A different way of life

Knowing little or nothing about the area, Rebecca chose St Luke's for her children partly for its status as a Faith school and partly because it was close by. "Before we moved to London I had planned to home-school my children, something that is not at all unusual in rural areas of the US," she explains. "Home-schooling is much less common in England and in a city in particular I felt that Faeren and Caleb would miss out on the interaction with other children as we knew so few people here and the way of living is so different. I wanted to make sure that they wouldn't be isolated from their peers, that they would make friends locally and that they made a good start in their learning. St Luke's has been the perfect school for them, addressing all the issues which I had had reservations about."

Family values

Rebecca's reservations had included not only the quality of the education provision but also the safety of her children in an environment which was so unfamiliar to her. On both counts, she has been impressed. "I honestly don't think I could ask for anything more than St Luke's has been able to offer. It is obvious that the teachers have the best interests of the children at heart and that they uphold very similar values to those of Martin and myself. I like the emphasis on good behaviour, the Christian principles on which the school is run, and I certainly admire the high standard of the teaching."

Constant and consistent support

Faeren and Caleb are very different personalities, with Caleb being rather less motivated than his sister but with talents of his own, talents which have been recognised and encouraged by his teachers. "I love the fact that the teaching staff take the trouble to understand each child



and to help them make the most of their particular abilities," Rebecca says. "Caleb has received constant and consistent support which has paid off in many ways, and he is now a confident and thriving member of his secondary school. With Faeren, although she is quite a high achiever, her teachers realised that she needed to put a bit more effort into some aspects of her written work if she were to reach the potential they saw in her, and again, she has risen to, and enjoyed, the challenges she has been set. I don't doubt that every child at St Luke's is given the same attention and opportunities."

Embracing the challenge

Coming to live in a very different culture and environment can certainly be a challenge, particularly when children are involved but Rebecca and her family have embraced it with open arms. "Any concerns I may have had are long gone," she says. "I feel part of a whole new community, as do my children, and St Luke's has been instrumental in making us feel so much at home."



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