

## Werry, Claudius

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**Von:** Dr N. Berend <nb213@hermes.cam.ac.uk> im Auftrag von Dr N. Berend <nb213@cam.ac.uk>  
**Gesendet:** Sonntag, 30. Juni 2013 21:54  
**An:** Welcome Centre Uni Mannheim  
**Betreff:** Johannes Kepler Schule

**Kennzeichnung:** Zur Nachverfolgung  
**Kennzeichnungsstatus:** Gekennzeichnet

Dear Claudius, Please use this as you like: post it on your website or send it to potential visitors, whatever's best. You can give my email to those who want to ask questions prior to going there. All my best Nora

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I'd like to share our experiences with other families who may be in the same situation. Our daughters, aged 6 and 9 at the time of our arrival to Mannheim, did not speak a word of German. Some of the schools, while willing to take the children, had no particular program to teach them the language; others expected us to teach them German before arrival. We were told about the Johannes Kepler Schule by the Welcome Centre, who had also arranged everything with the school. Subsequently, several people who knew Mannheim warned me not to send my children to a 'rough inner city school'.

We visited Mannheim briefly before moving, in order to see for ourselves.

The school secretary showed us the school, and explained their program. The visit made a very good impression on us, and we decided against the common preconceptions to send our daughters to the JKS. Now, an academic year later, moving back to England, I feel not only very glad that we had done so, but would like to contribute to dispelling common prejudices. The school may lie in the 'rough inner city' - though this is nothing compared to American rough inner cities of course, and is not only safe but a pleasant, lively area - in other words, its catchment area includes many children from underprivileged families, but the school itself is as good as a school can be. The teachers are fantastic, their program of teaching the German language outstanding. The children learnt the language without the stress of being thrown into an alien environment where they alone didn't know the language (a traumatic experience colleagues on sabbatical had complained about), in small groups, with the most advanced methods. They also have wonderful afternoon activities for those who want to stay, from gardening to music. My daughters now speak and read fluently. Nobody wants to believe we've only spent 10 months in Germany. Not only that, but they made many friends, who showered us with presents and invitations to return at the end of our stay. My older daughter's teacher said goodbye with tears in her eyes, and several teachers gave us their email addresses to keep in touch. Not only had we no negative experiences; we had a lot of positive ones. I am happy to answer any questions future visitors may have, and encourage anyone with primary-school age children who speak no German to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity. Nora Berend, University of Cambridge