



Juliette and Sophia are making rapid progress in the supportive surroundings of St Paul's C of E Primary School

Wilmien and Erick live in Cambridge with their children, Juliette, aged 8, Sophia, aged 6, and Emma, aged 11 weeks.

Happy at school

Wilmien and Erick are thrilled with the way Juliette and Sophia are flourishing in the happy atmosphere of St Paul's C of E Primary School. "We have moved about a lot for work reasons in the past and Juliette has attended a school in the Netherlands, where she spoke Dutch, and a school in South Africa, where she spoke Afrikaans. Most of her learning had been through play, rather than formal education before that," Wilmien says.

New language

When the family moved from South Africa to Cambridge so that Wilmien could take up a post with Microsoft, they spoke Afrikaans at home. "When Juliette started in Year 1, she was among English speaking peers who could also read in English, so she had a lot of catching up to do educationally," her Mum says.

Kind staff

Wilmien and Erick were grateful that the teachers were very helpful and kind to Juliette and did not put a lot of pressure on her. "She caught up quickly and by the end of Year 2 she was speaking English fluently and reading well in English. Now she is in Year 3 she is doing well academically and particularly enjoys History. When Juliette's class did a Christmas play last year, she even taught the class a Christmas song in Afrikaans to perform, and she was perfectly confident teaching her peers."

Closing the gap

Wilmien says It was only when Sophia started in Reception at St Paul's that they realised how much learning Juliette had actually missed before she went into Year 1, and she thinks the staff have done well to bring her up to the level of the other children so quickly.

Good writer

Sophia had attended a nursery before she started in Reception at St Paul's and so she settled in at the school quickly. Wilmien says: "Sophia now enjoys writing and has started writing whole books in English at school. Someone who saw her work recently said that she is writing in English at the level you would expect to see if English was her first language."

Good friendships

Wilmien is very pleased with the way the family have been made to feel so welcome by everyone at the school. She says they like St Paul's so much that they have decided to stay in Cambridge now, rather than moving out to somewhere more rural, so that the children can stay at the school. "We don't want them to have to change schools again. Juliette really enjoys going to St Paul's and has some lovely friends and Sophia is very popular with her classmates. Sophia has two close friends at St Paul's now, but the teacher told me the rest of the class all want to be her friends as well," she says.

Mixing well

"Considering the school is in the centre of Cambridge you would expect it to be a typical city school, but we are glad that St Paul's has a very cosy feel to it. It is a very friendly place and everyone knows everyone. All the parents are friendly with each other and the teachers know all the children. St Paul's has a really nice, sociable atmosphere. The Year 6 children go to read with the Reception children and so they all got to know Sophia after she started, and became good friends with her and played with her at break time."

Children say

Juliette says: "I like my friends at school and have learned about kindness. I love activities like bikeability, and swimming."

Sophia says: "My favourite activity is the wiggle dance in the Fox Class, and I like writing in school!"

