

The language barrier is no barrier to success, as Patricia has discovered about King's Hedges Educational Federation



Patricia and Francisco Reis have recently moved to the UK from Brazil with their children Mariana, eight and Gabriel, six.

Researching options

Prior to their move to Cambridge from Sao Paulo, Patricia undertook extensive research in order to find a suitable school for the children. Bearing in mind that neither Mariana nor Gabriel spoke any English, Patricia wanted to ensure that the school they chose had the facility to support them not only in their language acquisition but which could also help them to integrate in what would be a completely different educational system and, after consideration, they chose King's Hedges Educational Federation.

"We had three realistic options in the area, of which King's Hedges was one," says Patricia. "Now that the children are happily enrolled there we believe is not likely that any other school could have been more supportive in every way and we are very, very happy with our choice."



Excellence achieved through care, creativity and challenge

Considerable challenges

Unsurprisingly, with a doctor and an academic as parents, both Mariana and Gabriel are high-achieving children but for any child, moving to a new country where they are unable to speak the language, the challenges are bound to be considerable. "What we have been impressed with at King's Hedges is how well the school has addressed our children's needs," says Patricia. "The teachers have gone out of their way to make sure that both Mariana and Gabriel have been given all the help they need not only to learn English from scratch but to ensure that their general education should not suffer in the meantime."

Sensitivity to individual need

Whilst Mariana has made significant progress - to the extent that she is near the top of her class in reading and literacy - Gabriel, being a more shy and reserved child, has needed more assistance. "The school has been very sensitive to their individual needs and has been quick to make sure neither of them falls behind," Patricia says. "Mariana and Gabriel were given extra work to do at home, reinforcing mainly the vocabulary and handwriting used in school. They have risen to the challenge and done very well through this approach."

As far as Gabriel was concerned, being a less outgoing child than his sister he was not in such a strong position to pick up the language through making friends amongst the other children. "Gabriel is more inclined to keep to himself, so he wasn't picking up English as children will do if they are mixing with English-speaking friends. His teachers soon recognised that he may need more specialized help and referred him for assessment by a Speech and Language therapist, who will be able to find out what more can be done for him. The school has also made arrangements for a further first-language assessment with a Portuguese Speech and Language therapist.

We have been impressed by the level of intervention from the school; the teachers have been very proactive, not only responding to our questions very effectively but also making their own suggestions as to what we can do as parents to help the children."

Helping parents to help their children

One very useful resource is the Family Learning initiative and Patricia is currently taking a course at King's Hedges in Keeping Up With Literacy, designed to help parents support their children's learning. Although Patricia is an able English-speaker she recognises that the English literacy curriculum is very different to that of Brazil, and that if she is to make the most of it then she must herself familiarise herself. "The school and its teachers

are very skilled in their approach and by offering this course to people who wish to make a contribution to their children's education they are showing an awareness of what is needed, and what works."

A positive approach

Aside from encouraging children's academic achievement, King's Hedges overall approach is, believes Patricia, a very positive one. "I really like the way the children are respected for their efforts rather than just for their successes," she says. "They are praised and rewarded for trying and are motivated to do their best. Both Mariana and Gabriel actively enjoy school, and that is a reflection of the way that King's Hedges Educational Foundation knows how to treat its pupils."



Children say

Mariana likes everything about King's Hedges but several things stand out for her: "The way we are taught is fun. I like being challenged and that we are rewarded for our work and behaviour. It's nice when we know that our teachers are happy with what we are doing."

Gabriel's comprehension of English is not yet perfect but he is starting to understand more and more. "The teachers helped me by using photographs, pictures and demonstrations so that I knew what was going on in class. I am making friends and I enjoy my lessons and the Drama after-school club."

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If you are interested in enrolling or, would like to look around, please feel free to call us on 01223 518330 and arrange an appointment.

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