



Matiej and Izabela are grateful to Tebay Primary School for their welcoming approach and the individual support given to help their daughter integrate into UK education

Maciej and Izabela Strzyzynski live in Tebay with their two children, Zuzanna, four in nursery and Alicja, two.

One big family

Living in Tebay, Maciej and Izabela didn't hesitate in choosing Tebay Primary School for their daughter, Zuzanna. "It was obviously very close to home so it's very convenient for us but when we looked around the school, it struck us how warm and friendly it felt. It's a very cosy school and somewhere we thought Zuzanna would enjoy being," explains Maciej.

The fact the school is small is a real strength for Maciej and Izabela. "Everyone seems to know each other well. When we first looked around we particularly noticed the atmosphere and how nice it felt - like everyone was a big family and cared about each other. That felt like the right environment for Zuzanna."



Welcoming and supportive

Maciej and Izabela are from Poland so English is not Zuzanna's first language. Unable to speak any English when she first started at Tebay Primary School, Zuzanna initially found the transition difficult. "Zuzanna struggled to settle because she found it very hard to understand what was being said and she wasn't able to talk to the other children," explains Maciej. "To help her settle in, the staff invited us to join Zuzanna and stay with her at nursery for the full duration of her sessions. For seven months we were able to attend with her on the days that she went so that we could work together to support her. I think this really helped it to feel like a safe place for her," explains Maciej.

No looking back

"Then one day, Zuzanna decided she no longer needed us to be there with her. She told me I could go home and leave her there and she hasn't looked back since! We are very grateful to the teachers for their support and their patience and for being so welcoming."

Flexible and adaptable

Whilst the flexibility to be able to stay at the nursery with Zuzanna helped greatly, Maciej is also thrilled with how the staff tried to learn some key words in Polish to help Zuzanna feel at home. "I was really impressed with how the staff taught themselves some Polish so that they could communicate better with Zuzanna. It shows how much they care and it was really nice of them to do that. And they also encouraged me to draw pictures and write the words alongside them, which was a good idea."

Excellent values

"We try and encourage Zuzanna to speak to us about her day at school and she's always happy to share her experiences. We know she's very happy there because if there's ever any suggestion that she's not going into school on one of her days, she won't hear of it!"

Maciej believes the school is teaching the children important values. "I remember my school days and they were definitely very different to what Zuzanna is experiencing. Everyone is so friendly to her and the staff and all of the children welcome her as she walks into the playground. They are teaching the children to be accepting of everyone. I think they are teaching the children excellent values which makes for a happy and inclusive atmosphere."

No hesitation

Maciej adds: "Tebay Primary School is a small friendly village school. The staff really care about the children at the school and they want them to be happy and to feel safe there. We have no hesitation in recommending it to others. They will do everything they can to help ensure your child feels welcomed and is happy and content in their environment."

Children say:

Zuzanna says: "I really like the teachers!"



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