

We arrived back in South Africa in December 2013 when our daughter was just over 2, I had to start my job in early January and I frantically started trying to find a school to send her to. It was the Christmas holidays and all the schools were closed, which caused some hassles. I rang Settlers' Park in early January and spoke to Lyn who arranged a meeting with Mary (the then headmistress). We met with Mary even though the school was still closed and she welcomed us to Settlers' Park. We were so lucky that this all happened like it did.

Peyton joined the Fireflies class with Mrs T and Mrs T was (and is) the most fantastic teacher. She is so loving and thoughtful and understanding of how different kids can be. Peyton spent four years at Settlers' Park with Mrs T, Mrs Erikson, Ms Von and finally Mrs Valentine. The school provided her with some much needed independence and taught her to be a strong, confident young lady.

Ellen took over as headmistress of the school in 2015 and what she has done for the school is just amazing. Looking at the exterior and what has been done inside the school is testament to that. The school looks like a welcoming place for young children and it is filled with happiness.

Whilst in Peyton's second to last year at Settlers' I fell pregnant with Gary. He was born seven weeks early which caused lots of worry and heartache for our family. Luckily all turned out well.

Gary joined Settlers 'Park when he was two years old, again with Mrs T. Gary is very different to Peyton and he took some time to talk and develop. I remember Mrs T saying to me that he has said 'please' which he had never done at home as he hardly spoke. She had that special touch with him and understood that he needed a little more time to find his place. He then went on to Mrs Erikson in the Crickets and he started speech therapy which saw him come along in bounds.

In 2020 Covid hit whilst Gary was in Mrs Von's class and we decided to keep him home for the year because he has some serious lung issues. The school organised work for home and Gary enjoyed the Zoom meetings with Mrs Von and his classmates. When he went back to school in 2021 we decided to keep him back a year and he joined Mrs Van Heerden's class. She is an amazing teacher and Gary really blossomed with her. He has now just finished in the Bees with Mrs Erikson again and I cannot tell you how my heart breaks that we are leaving this amazing school. You have been through everything with us as a family and have supported us and made us feel like part of the family.

I just want to thank you Ellen and all the teachers who have played a part in our stay at Settlers'. You are all just amazing and you have definitely created a strong foundation for both our kids. I can't recommend this school any more - I will always fly the flag and I want to thank each one of you for everything that you have done in supporting our children. As you know my heart lies firmly with Settlers Park Primary and I will always sing your praises.

We love you all very much.

Michelle, Andrew, Peyton and Gary
The Bennett family.