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To whom it concerns

I am writing this testimonial in support of Maria Kasmirli's application for QTLS status. Maria has been teaching my daughter, Serena, in the 3rd grade class of the English section of the European School, Heraklion, since October. She also taught her last year in a mixed ability voluntary after school Greek class.

The Greek classes which Serena participated in last year were attended by children of mixed ages and abilities. The youngest, including Serena, were only 6 years old, the eldest was 10. Some were almost complete beginners and others were mother-tongue speakers. It is a big challenge for a teacher to cater for the individual needs of all the students in a situation such as this, to keep the interest of the more advanced students whilst not overwhelming the beginners. Maria showed sensitivity to the individual needs of all the students whilst helping them to learn songs where they could all participate on an equal level. These songs were performed at several school events and made a deep impression on the listeners. Every child added their own unique voice whilst contributing to the performance as a whole.


Entering the 3rd grade class this year has been challenging for Serena as she completed the 1st grade only last year. Although she covered some 2nd grade work last year there were quite a lot of gaps which needed to be filled. Again Maria has had to deal with a mixed ability class, with one total beginner in English, as well as Serena coming from the 1st grade into a class with children who completed the 2nd grade last year. Maria is unflinching in her belief that children can and will fulfill their potential if they are given the support and encouragement they need. This has certainly been the case with Serena. Although she has been stretched a lot this year, particularly in Maths, Maria has given her the support she needs to feel on an equal level with the other students. She is always encouraging, and where there is room for improvement she focuses on the achievements which have already been made as a basis for giving confidence to make further progress.

One aspect of class work which Serena has particularly enjoyed has been studying the human body. Part of this work has involved the children researching on the internet. The children were given a choice as to which part of the body they wished to research, then having found out about it they fed their findings back into the group. This took the form of individual presentations which were also recorded on video. This has given Serena, who is not normally keen to speak out in public, a new sense of confidence. Because the assumption is that everyone has something valuable to contribute, everybody does. The children learn mutual respect for one another whilst

developing their own sense of self worth.

The best indication of Maria Kasmirli's teaching success can be found in Serena's own words :  
'I love Miss Maria; she's the best teacher I've ever had'.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Susan Hogben', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Susan Hogben