



What is it like working at Garden International, School Eastern Seaboard, Rayong?

Paula McDonald

After teaching in the UK for a number of years I decided to move abroad to teach and explore new countries and cultures. In my time working overseas I have worked in some vastly different countries, some bustling and vast, and some quieter and with fewer schools and amenities. Thailand had never really been on my “wish list” of places to work, as I pictured working in schools in central Bangkok or a smaller school with little support on an island – neither of which I felt was right for my career or my family. Then I was recommended GIS by some friends I had worked with at my first international school. They had spent three happy years here and were settled, and I trusted their judgement. I am glad I did!

Ban Chang is a small town, but it has everything we need for day-to-day living. It is easy to get around with a car, the beach is close, and there are many good restaurants and a variety of shops. Both Pattaya and Rayong are short drives away, and we have been able to have quite a few weekends away already! Bangkok is an easy 2-hour drive up the motorway for any larger shopping sprees (like Ikea!) or longer holidays. Thailand is by far the easiest country we have lived in so far, online shopping is possible in English, for groceries and anything else you could wish to buy.

Above all, we enjoy the sense of community we feel as part of the school. It is a welcoming and calm environment. Standards are high, teachers are very professional and knowledgeable, and well-being is good. There are links with schools in the local area, Bangkok and through FOBISIA. My daughter attends the school, and she is happy and making excellent progress. She made friends quickly, and as most children speak English fluently, there are no issues with her being one of a few who don't speak Thai. Outside of school, staff organise a wide range of social events that all are invited to join in with. I like to go on the hikes, and my husband enjoys the Wednesday rugby and social.

In short, we are loving being at GIS, and in Ban Chang, we feel at home, and we have hopes of staying here for the long term.

Paula McDonald, Primary Teacher who joined GIS in August 2022