

SOWING *future* SEEDS

The Early Years from ages three to four are some of the most formative. For our group of youngest children, the Farleigh Kindergarten is set up to ensure they benefit from a careful balance of structured learning and child-initiated activities. Teachers spend a lot of time getting to know the children so that they can cater to individual needs.

We want them to love learning and become confident and independent as they set off on their Farleigh journey.

And this approach certainly seems to work, writes
Sarah Hardy, Kindergarten Coordinator.

Holly, Santa and
Lucas get their
watering cans out
with the monkey tree



We plan activities that are based on the children's interests; this term we've circumnavigated space, spent time with the dinosaurs and concocted magic potions! They enjoy specifically devised learning through play, such as Dough Disco and Peg Dancing, to develop their fine motor skills. Early phonic games and songs teach rhyme and alliteration. They play games in small groups to develop concentration, sharing and turn-taking. They have quiet moments, curling up to read stories in our cosy reading den, and they look forward to becoming the 'helping hand' for the day, which includes helping prepare the snack and the very important job of being the line leader!



We integrate IT even at this early age, so the children learn to programme the Beebots and use the digital camera. Our 'role play' area fires up the imagination and can become a space station, doctors' surgery or school, to name just a few. We all love our outdoor learning, and every Wednesday morning, the Kindergarten don their all-in-ones and wellington boots, and head off into the woods to hunt bugs, climb trees and make dens.

Access to the prep school's fantastic facilities ensures an enriched learning experience; from Forest School in the Farleigh woods, swimming lessons in the indoor pool, delicious homemade, hot

lunches in the school dining room and all-inclusive extra lessons, such as ballet and dance, music and yoga bugs – all provided by specialist teachers. The children also take part in assemblies twice a week, the annual Pre-Prep play in the school theatre, the Christmas Nativity, Grandparents' Day and Sports Day. Put simply, these little ones are an integral part of the school community. Not only that, but the Farleigh Kindergarten offers completely flexible childcare, Monday to Friday.

With a big emphasis on the outdoors, the Kindergarten has its own bespoke playground with a sand pit, obstacle course, sheltered area and toys. Children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and learn through play, whether that is indoors or outdoors. This includes phonics and the 'Think Write' handwriting scheme. Children can start the day at 7.30am (Breakfast Club) or from 8.15am and can finish their session at 12.00pm or 1.00pm (which includes lunch at no

extra cost); stay for full days until 3.30pm, or join Late Club until 4.45pm (Monday to Friday) or even Twilight Club until 5.45pm (Monday to Thursday). Run by qualified and experienced teachers, the Kindergarten accepts children the year before they start Reception for as many morning or all day sessions as parents need, but for a minimum of





three sessions per week, each session being a half-day. Farleigh supports the government Early Years Vouchers scheme, which contributes to the cost of Early Years childcare.

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We know that parents really appreciate the flexibility we offer. You can, for example, start the year with your three year old child doing three mornings, then five mornings, adding one or two afternoon sessions and finally, full days, whenever it suits you. It is amazing, also, that so much is offered on site, such as swimming, yoga and ballet, all with specialist teaching included in the fees, and I am always so pleased to see how these additional activities make such a difference to the children's independence as they go through the year. With the Reception classes just down their corridor and our shared playtimes in the 'big' playground, the transition to school is both seamless and enjoyable for Farleigh's Kindergarten class.