



**FARNEY CLOSE**  
INDEPENDENT SPECIAL SCHOOL



## **PARENTS AND CARERS NEWSLETTER**

### **Summer 2026**

I would like to start by thanking you all for your support surrounding the recent heatwave which saw us sitting in a Red weather warning. It feels like this will be our new norm, so we have started consideration on bringing in air-conditioning units to ensure that the children and staff working environment temperature is kept at a level appropriate for all. This period of time also clashed with our transition day which did go ahead. Those in school enjoyed a day of getting to know their new teachers and for those moving into the main school (rising year 7) they were able to get a feel about what their new school day would be like.

#### **Happy Birthday Farney Close School**

Throughout 2026, we are celebrating that Farney Close having been in existence for 80 years. Farney Close was founded in 1946 years ago by Rev. Percy and Vera Wallbridge. Originally it was based on the Isle of Wight, then Dorset before moving to its current 32-acre site in Bolney, West Sussex, in the early 1960s. The school has always specialised in supporting children with special educational needs.

Our 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday is a huge milestone for which we are very proud. We are planning to host an array of events at various points of the year with our present pupils, parents and carers being invited to celebrate with us in December when we bring the celebrations to a close with an even better Disco, BBQ and Firework display. In September we will be holding a "Birthday party" for the children so they can celebrate being part of Farney as we reach our 80<sup>th</sup> year.



## Inspection and awards

It has been a very busy year with one thing and another. Ofsted Social Care arrived for their annual inspection in January. We are once again hugely proud of their findings. Please follow this link to read our report:

[https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/10/SC014513?utm\\_source&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=report](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/10/SC014513?utm_source&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=report)

Many thanks to those of you that spoke with the inspectors and for all of the wonderful comments so many of you made.



We are also hugely proud to have been awarded both our Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) award and then awarded the IQM Centre of Excellence.



## Staffing

We have seen some staff members come and go this term. Most notably; Steve, who was our Head of Care. Jason Maynard has taken up the position of Head of Residential, a slight name change to identify his focus of being on our residential offer.

Our School Nurse has also left us and made way for our newly appointed Medical and Mental Health Lead, Dawn Morgan. Dawn has worked at Farney for many years within the care team but came to us from a Nursing background and is also trained as a Senior Mental Health worker, so is well qualified for the job at hand. One of our TAs on Primary left us in May, and a member of our maintenance team has all moved onto a new position.

We have filled the majority of our vacancies and welcome Julian, James and Mary to our TA team and Jaqs back to our care team. Jaqs has worked for us previously on the care team and as a TA. As Becky Clements has now moved in our new position of Head of Behaviour and Attitude, Jayne has been appointed as our new school Social Worker. Jayne comes to us with vast amounts of experience as a Social Worker and is quickly learning how to put this into practice in our school. Wendy joined us in May as our Drama Therapist and has quickly become an invaluable part of our offer. After the Easter break, Jake moved from being our Deputy Catering Manager to leading the team. In June, Adam joined our catering team as our Deputy Catering Manager.



Our School Business Manager, Alexia, joined us back in February. She comes with experience of working for a charity as well as being extremely knowledgeable with regards to finance management.

The Leadership team now comprises of myself (Sara) as Principal, Ray as Vice Principal, Alexia as Business Manager, James as Head of Education, Jason as Head of Residential and Becky as our Head of Behaviour and Attitude.

Our school's Safeguarding team is now me (Sara) as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Becky (Head of Behaviour and Attitude and previously the School Social Worker) and Dawn (Medical and Mental Health Lead) as the Deputy DSLs. Ray (VP), James (Head of Education), Austin (Referrals and Inclusion Officer) Sharon (SENCo) and Jayne (School Social Worker). We are all trained to DSL Level 3. Zillah Webb is our Governor responsible for overseeing Safeguarding.

At the end of this term we say "Goodbye" to Will Roberson who is retiring from teaching. His position of one of our two Science teachers will be taken over by Jack who is actually a science teacher but has been teaching Maths this year. We are looking for Jack's replacement for the maths department.

In September, our year 6 teacher (Emmett) is off on his travels so has been replaced with a newly qualified, but not new to Farney, teacher. Abi has previously worked at the school as a member of the care team and also did a term's placement in our year 6 class over the spring term.

### **The Oaks**

Following the Spring Break we opened our Oaks unit. This is where most of our Therapy team work from. Our Occupational Therapist (OT) and also our Speech and language Therapist (SALT) are based here, as is our Drama Therapist and the Therapy Assistants. It has also meant we can now have a room dedicated to Lego and for both Therapy, regulation and fun activities. See towards the end of this Newsletter about changes to this unit occurring over the summer break.

Our Art Therapist and our School counsellor remain in their usual rooms in our Archway cottage as they are so well established in these rooms.

### **Unique Experiences**

Our year 9 and 10s have been sampling scuba diving this term with 4 children having the opportunity to undertake an award in diving over the coming academic year. This will see them move from being beginners to qualified PADI Junior Dive masters at the end of the



year. They will spend a half day each week doing both practical and theory skills to evidence their learning. We have run it as a short course over the last few months, and it has been extremely successful.

Equally successful has been two 10 week courses this year that have been undertaken by 5 pupils for half a day a week studying Hair and Beauty at a local salon. Our hope is that one of these children will go on to continue her studies in this area, over the Autumn term, and qualify to be a nail technician prior to leaving school next Summer. Four other children will get the opportunity to undertake the 10-week general course over the next academic year.

More generally our residential children have enjoyed Geocaching, paddle boarding, beach trips, mountain biking, BBQs and many other options available to us given this fantastic dry weather we have had.

Our school day focus has been on supporting our year 11s in completing their exams and moving on to the next stage of their education. Most enjoyed a day out to Thorpe Park in celebration of their time at Farney and how well they managed themselves in exams; something that many would have been unable to do when first with us. The staff at FCS wish them the very best with their journey into adulthood. We will be in touch to check in further down the line but until then please make sure that they know we are on the end of the phone if they need any support or guidance.

Prior to leaving several of them completed their expedition for their bronze Duke of Edinburgh award and since the year 11s have left our year 10s have also undertaken their expedition so their award will be completed prior to them leaving next year.

Our year 10s have been having weekly input from a team we have brought into the school called "Mentivity". This is a group of males who have worked with our year 10s over 10 weeks with their contentment program:

*"CONTENTMENT IS A FORWARD-THINKING, DUAL-FOCUSED MENTORING PROGRAMME THAT IS DRIVEN BY THE NEED TO CAPTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH RELEVANT METHODS, ALL WHILST INSTILLING ESSENTIAL LIFE LESSONS AND SKILLS WITHIN THEM. SIMPLY PUT, CONTENTMENT IS THE MARRIAGE OF CONTENT-CREATION AND EXPERT MENTORING; THE PROGRAMME AIMS TO EDUCATE, INSPIRE AND BIRTH CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS"*



Trips have also taken place for other year groups. A group of year 9s visited Sussex University to experience what a degree course would look like. A larger group of year 9s also went to a careers fair to support them in considering their options as they move towards the world of work.

Some of our younger pupils enjoyed a trip to Wakehurst and also a STEM trip to Gatwick. A trip to the Amex stadium in Brighton was also a very popular trip. Our years 5 and 6 have a trip to Knock-Hatch activity centre, planned prior to the end of term.

The school came together to wear yellow and make a donation for Cystic Fibrosis which the daughter of an ex-pupil, and niece of a present pupil, suffers from. £100 was raised which brought much joy to this little girl's mother. Thank you to all that supported their child in participating.

### **Children's voice**

We have had fantastic input from our school council this year which has brought about several changes. We would like to publicly thank them for being such a great, motivated, sensible council. For the next academic year we will look for new school council members to provide this valuable experience to others.

### **Fundraising**

Should anyone be interested in supporting the school's fundraising team, with fundraising events or applications moving forward, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Fundraising enables us to obtain those extra special bits! Beyond this any donations for raffles, tombola's etc are always welcomed.

### **Moving forward**

We are just starting to be able to use our lake area again. The fencing is in the process of being taken down and access to the lakes for walks and fishing is happening. The lakes are looking great following the dredging that has taken place and we also have new pontoons for children and staff to fish from.

Over the Summer break we have three large refurbishment projects taking place. The bathrooms on Edward House are changing from being one room to single bathrooms leading off of the corridor. The Bathrooms on the Oaks are also being altered into single toilets and a sensory room is also being created. The Sports Hall toilets and changing facilities are



also being completely renovated and will mirror something similar to a swimming pool changing area.

The main drive into the school will have speed bumps laid to ensure that drivers keep to the expected speed limit.

**Dates for your diary:**

- **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July** – Children break up for summer
- **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July** – Inset day
- **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September** – Children return to school from the Summer break. Staff have three inset days on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> so will be in touch on one of those days to see how your Summer has been.
- **26<sup>th</sup> October until 30<sup>th</sup> October** - Half term break
- **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November** - Inset day
- **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November** – Children return to school
- **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec** – Christmas Disco, BBQ and Fireworks.
- **Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December** – Children's last day of term and our Christmas show (details closer to the time)
- **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December** - Inset day
- **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January** – Inset day
- **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January** – Children return to school from the Christmas break. Staff will be in-touch on the inset day to see how your Christmas has been.

**A gentle reminder to please ensure that you do not book any holidays during term time so that your child does not suffer any lost learning. Thank you.**

**Thank you:**

I hope that you will join me in thanking all the staff that work at Farney Close for their commitment and hard work. Without every member of our team we could not provide the service that we do.

Thank you for the support you have offered the school and for the dedication that you show your child that makes our job that much easier.

Wishing you a wonderful break. We look forward to seeing your child back with us after the Summer.

**Kindest of Regards**

*Sara* (Principal and DSL)



**If you wish to contact us about a Safeguarding issue, please email [dsl@farneyclose.co.uk](mailto:dsl@farneyclose.co.uk) Sara & Becky will be accessing this email on a regular basis.**

The Senior Leadership Team (Sara, Alexia, Ray, James, Becky and Jason) will also be accessing their school emails periodically over the break. The education and care staff emails will not be checked over the break to enable these workers to have a well-deserved rest.

If you require further support, please log on to our school website [www.farneyclose.co.uk](http://www.farneyclose.co.uk) and click on the **Stay Safe** link at the very top of the front page. Here you will find information to help you in accessing the required support.