FALKNER HOUSE
LONDON

Falkner House Academic Guide

2026 - 2027





Boys

20 Penywern Road, London SW5 9SU

Girls

19 Brechin Place, London SW7 4QB

Academic Guide

We believe that the most successful Falkner House children (in all senses):

- Have the most sleep;
- Do the fewest external structured activities;
- Have the least 'screen time';
- Do not have tutors;
- Experience play at home: building Lego spaceships, cutting, glueing and sticking, baking etc.;
- Are encouraged always to think for themselves;
- Are not waited on hand and foot; and
- Enjoy time with their parents.

Bedtime

The earlier the better! Experience shows that the children who have the most sleep are the most ready to learn and are the most cheerful.

Welcome Meetings

Each class has a meeting for parents in September.

Exams/Assessments

We do not put much emphasis on internal school assessments as, in themselves, they have no importance. The results do not go to the secondary schools and should give rise to no teacher surprises. If relevant then results might be included in reports; they are always available to parents. Assessments start in Reception and build in length, formality and frequency as the years go by. Reasoning tests come in from approx. Year 3. Children need to practise taking assessments / exams to familiarise themselves with the process, but exams in themselves do not make a child cleverer.

Minimal revision is needed or indeed beneficial for Falkner House assessments. High marks are not achieved by revision but by listening and being engaged in class and by reading the questions carefully. Children are anyway not generally able to "revise" until they are aged at least nine and the revisable content is but a tiny part of both Falkner House exams and the vast majority of external exams taken by the children. We feel very strongly that all exams (internal or external) should be taken as part of day-to-day life –normal activities e.g. sport should thus continue regardless in the run up to or during exams. Rain should not stop play!

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) - Nursery and Reception

Falkner House is exempted from the learning and development aspects of the 2025 EYFS, but the EYFS is still used as a guide by the school to help ensure that children learn and develop as well as possible. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS still apply.

Grading/Marking

Work is marked as quickly as possible. Marking is developmental and appropriate to age and subject material. Grades are kept to a minimum and are used mainly for tests. All staff always give constant and immediate oral feedback to the children which is the best way of promoting progress. The Headteacher awards Falkner House 'Well Done' stickers to pupils on staff recommendations.

Handwriting



Falkner House has a school handwriting method with a common approved formation of letters. Joined up script is started as appropriate with ink (roller ball) used by each child in the upper school once that child is ready. Try and encourage your child to hold pens/ pencils with a tripod grip which is not only correct but also the most comfortable. The pencil is held between the index finger and thumb with the other fingers.

Holiday Work

Some holiday work may be set for your child to keep them 'ticking over'. This should never be or feel burdensome to a child or parent. If it ever seems burdensome; pull back, as work done under protest will have, at best, no value! Any recommended holiday work should be done little and often. As the years progress and external exams loom there will be more formal and examination preparation work set for the holidays. This work is never intended to be arduous and again should be spread out so that the children are ready to move forward at the start of the new term. They need time to have a well-earned rest over these holidays– they will gain greatly intellectually as well as emotionally by having time to recuperate, to do "nothing" , to spend time with their family, relax and play!

Homework

Falkner House is a "homework light" school. We see the role of homework as a reinforcement of schoolwork and a link between school and home. It is also part of an important routine for a child remembering to organise themselves for the day ahead, to complete set tasks as independently as possible and to bring in books, etc. as required. In the younger years homework is virtually all oral - reading and learning poems by heart. Reading at school and at home is of extreme importance at Falkner House - please see the Falkner House Go To Guide - Reading. Poetry has an important role throughout the school: children recite poems on an individual basis which boosts self-confidence. Homework increases in importance and volume as the children move up the school and parents will be given information at the start of the academic year as to what homework will be set. When parents ask what they can do to assist their child, we would suggest: taking an interest in all aspects of their child's school educational experiences - reading, sport, music, art, drama as well as the academics. Please try not to be judgemental.

Maths

The true and fundamental understanding of basic mathematical concepts such as counting, place value and number bonds is the critical step to becoming a competent mathematician. In time, children also need to have a secure knowledge of mental maths including times tables. Regular exposure to, and manipulation of, numbers in all contexts both in school and at home (e.g. when walking to school or in the car) is very helpful to strengthen and consolidate knowledge as well as to boost confidence. These facts and skills are the building blocks for mathematical development; daily practice will ensure that your child has the strongest possible foundations. We believe that the most beneficial way for children to consolidate the maths learnt at school is by regular and repeated mental maths practice at home; use of Numicon (practical maths equipment) can be very helpful. There are also some good times table apps which can be useful in Year 3 e.g Squeebles, Ten Minutes a Day and Monty's Quest.

Music

All children have class music lessons and from Year 1, children may also take individual music lessons. Please see the parents' Music notes guide for further information.



PHSE - Personal, Health, Social and Emotional, and RSE Relationships and Sex Education

The broad and balanced PHSE and RSE curriculum (please see Policies on the website) which includes sex and relationship education, is delivered in an honest, unbiased and sensible way throughout the school and is intended to complement and support what parents teach in the home.

Reports and Parent Meetings

Written reports are sent to parents at the end of the Summer Term. These reports are designed to be read by the parent and should not be shown directly to the child. Exam marks (older children only) may be included on the written reports. Parent teacher meetings are held regularly. If, however, there are any concerns or anxieties or indeed if parents would just like to 'catch up', please feel free to make an appointment to see your child's form or relevant subject teacher or headteacher. There are scheduled parents' evenings throughout the year.

Sport



There are selected school squads in football, rugby, netball, rounders, cricket, swimming and athletics from Year 3 onwards (in some cases Year 2 for the boys) with frequent matches, galas, meets and tournaments against other schools. Every attempt is made to include as many children as possible. Where applicable, children selected for squads should attend the weekly squad training sessions regularly. A variety of venues are used including Kensington Gardens, Battersea Park, Latchmere Leisure Centre, Holland Park, Kings House Sport's Ground, Chelsea or Fulham Pools.

Technology

Technology is an integral part of our lives and will, undoubtedly, be a huge part of the lives of the next generation in ways that we can't yet imagine. At Falkner House we aim to develop independent learning and problem-solving skills, preparing pupils for this ever-adapting technological world. All children follow the computing syllabus using MacBooks. In Years 4, 5 and 6 parents are asked to purchase through the school an iPad for use in the classroom and at home. The curriculum for these years is tailored for the iPads as are many of the school resources for Year 4 and

the majority of resources for Years 5 and 6.

We are very proud to have developed the use of technology both within school and for homework to a very high level. We believe that Falkner House will teach your child what he or she needs to know about technology. Parents should thus be able to "leave the tech to us" without disadvantaging their child. Clearly, if for example, a child develops a passion for coding or loves researching a topic, then, like any other passion of value, this should be supported at school and at home. Please also see the Falkner House Go To Guide - Tech at Home.

Tutoring and Learning Support

The school believes that additional external tutoring does not benefit the vast majority of our children.

We do, however, believe that some children may need additional learning support from our own staff at points during their time at Falkner House. By giving support 'in-house' we are able to tailor the learning precisely to meet your child's needs at exactly the moment we feel it is necessary and also to have it given by the people who know how your child learns and how best to complement what they are doing in their classes. This can be in the form of support groups and 1:1 support to selected children. Additional tailored support and extension Reasoning, English and Maths groups are available for Years 5 and 6. One to one and two to one support is charged (please see fees list) retrospectively with the forthcoming term's fees.

