

[EDUCATION]

EYE ON THE BALL

It's a case of putting the best foot forward at Parsons Green Prep School

Parsons Green Prep School recently teamed up with the Chelsea FC Foundation, with the aim of providing high-quality football coaching to boys and girls across all year groups at the school. The partnership, which is a first among prep schools in Fulham, has turned out to be a massive hit with children and parents alike.

The Chelsea FC Foundation was formed in 2010 and brings together the Football in the Community and the Education department, along with the club's other charitable and community activities, including environment and anti-discrimination projects. It provides outstanding coaches who are experienced, highly qualified, passionate, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about football, the most played and most watched sport worldwide.

The children have sessions with the coaches twice a week at Hurlingham Park, as well as after-school clubs three days a week for all age groups on the school's own AstroTurf pitch. The children are learning various ball skills, including passing and dribbling, and playing small-sided games. The coaches



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also attend curriculum games lessons for Key Stage 2 and a few children were invited to train with the Chelsea FC Foundation squad at one of its coaching centres. These children were then coached and checked on regularly to monitor their progress, with a view to advancing to academy level.

Through its relationship with the Foundation, Parsons Green Prep has also been invited to two tournaments at Cranleigh Preparatory School with ex-Chelsea and England international Graeme Le Saux, where they had fantastic days out and picked up silver medals in 2017. The school also fielded a girls' Under-11 squad at a recent ISA tournament at LVS Ascot. Despite this being the girls' first-ever competition, they ended up winning the U11 category.

The school's head of sport, Mr Will, is now busy building on this big improvement in the children's

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footballing ability and interest in the sport. "This is fast-track learning in how to approach the mental, physical and emotional side of the sport," he says. "Operating as a team, communicating clearly, being responsible, increasing assertiveness, improving fitness and learning a good attitude about how to win and how to lose together – these are all life skills that do not just apply to football." The future of the scheme is looking very exciting, with plans to run a tournament supported by the Chelsea FC Foundation on the cards. ❶

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