

Parent & Guardian Testimonials

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you to all the staff at Eaton for everything they have done to look after R over the last 2 years.

I can remember dropping him off on the back of my bike on his first day and crying all the way to university because I was so worried about leaving him on his own for the first time. I really should not have worried at all because I now know that he was surrounded by people that genuinely cared about him and went out of their way to make him feel at home.

R has grown up to become such a happy, confident, caring boy and a large part of the credit for this has to go to Freya and the staff at Eaton. He has learnt so much during his time at Dandelion including stuff that he may not have learnt elsewhere such as an understanding of his own emotions which has ensured that he is more than ready to start school in September. I'm sure you have all learnt a thing or two about obscure superheroes from R too!

We will miss hearing about all the amazing things that R has gotten up to that day at Dandelion and will also miss all the wonderful creations that he brings home. I know he will miss all the staff at Dandelion. I know he is grateful for all your help with making numerous Spider-man web shooters!

We are so happy about our decision to send R to Dandelion. It has helped to make him the wonderful boy that we love so much. Thank you all so much.

And thanks so much for all that you've done this last year that R has been part of the Dandelion family. We are so grateful that we have had the opportunity to allow him to be a part of it, and we are very sad that he has now left. What you have created is something so special and we will shout from the rooftops how amazing it is. All your staff have been just incredible. So warm and welcoming, and above all, respectful and understanding of the children, which was always an important factor for us. The teaching of emotional intelligence, and the natural support of growth and learning is so magical. I'm sure you're very proud of what you've achieved and continue to achieve at Dandelions, and we are so, so proud to have been a part of it.

We do hope that one day R will return to The Den. My fingers are crossed."

"T came home today with heart warmingly wonderful new knowledge - I just love the focus you all have on emotional intelligence...it's SO important and I can't describe the pride and joy I felt when T independently, aged 3, told me about meta-cognition!"

"Since being at Dandelion, R has developed his self-esteem and beginning to see more independent from his brother."

"We're having another baby just so they can join Dandelion!"

"We love Dandelion and think the whole concept and environment is amazing! J is full of excitement when going and when I pick him up."

"The settings have produced a brilliant supplementary education alongside home-ed/ B's phonics' skills have improved. It is really important that B has fun while learning and discovering new things and making brilliant childhood memories. I believe he gets all that and more from Dandelion!"

"We are so pleased we chose Dandelion. We've been impressed by the level of care and the range of activities on offer. We have the themes you have, it makes us feel involved and it seems fantastic in stimulating imaginary play. Interactions are warm and caring with lots of individual attention."

"T is a much happier, more engaged than he ever was in his other setting. It is a joy to see!"

"Staff are amazing; It is clear that the child is at the centre of all that they do."

"We are delighted with the education Dandelion provides. He has become a much more confident child and his problem solving has really developed."

"One word - Amazing! You are all amazing!"

"Thank you for everything you've done for J, a year ago she wouldn't speak to or interact with other children or adults apart from close family. Now she's changed beyond all recognition! The respectful way Dandelion have nurtured her has allowed her to trust other people.

I also wanted to tell you that I had a (literal!) nightmare that Dandelion closed as you hadn't got enough children at Eaton! I was devastated! This time last year I was struggling, and this year is so different, I'm coping and coping far better than I ever expected the support you and your staff give both the parents and children is something I will forever be grateful for."

"It is so lovely to see the progress that X has made in such a short amount of time."

"C talks a lot about Dandelion when he's not there!"

"I have seen improvements in her development, language and understanding."

"Dandelion is a consistent and much-loved part of our family set-up. We never want to leave!"

"G settled straight away and comes away reluctantly, having had her imagination fired up for creative play."

"I can't put into words how incredibly Dandelion is. R has flourished and is almost unrecognisable from the shy anxious child he was when he started. I can't thank you enough, you are just so wonderful. I am amazed at how much he has learnt in such a short time. Phonics is one of his favourite things at Dandelion."

"Dandelion is the only childcare provider we would trust. RESPECTFUL! We've never met a calmer, kinder and more respectful group of people. We wish more were like you!"

"R has come along amazingly at Dandelion. I feel happy that he come home with fantastic new skills and a big smile on his face. He often talks about Dandelion and how great it is. It is super safe and an amazing environment for him. Dandelion is perfect."

"I just wanted to say such a huge thank you to all the staff at Eaton for looking after R these past two years. He has enjoyed Dandelions so much. He is very ready for the next step and that is because of the confidence that has been instilled in him by all the staff. We always wanted R to feel like he could walk in anywhere and know that he was meant to be there and have confidence in his own convictions. He has ownership over his own body, thoughts and actions which will last him a lifetime. The staff care so deeply about the children, and we are so grateful R was able to attend Dandelion. Please send our love and thanks to all the staff at Eaton."

"I just wanted to say that I absolutely love the way your staff talk to the children. I watched Katie try and encourage a slightly weary T into nursery this morning and she managed to be gentle, persuasive, respectful and encouraging all the once- it was a bit of a masterclass in how to talk to toddlers to be honest."

"Dear Dandelion team, and especially the Eaton team,

We would like to thank you all, for the great times L has spent with you during these past few months, which have been challenging for all of us due to the pandemic. We couldn't appreciate more the great influence you have been for her. We felt happy knowing that our little one is in safe and caring hands. We wish you all a great summer and we will see you in September, for L's new dandelion adventures!"

"Dandelion has transformed the lives of our children for the better. M, E and T, have been attending Dandelion for five years, first at the nursery and then, weekly, via a flexi-school arrangement. Dandelion has enabled them to create imaginatively, name their feelings, set boundaries, work independently and in groups, and find joy in the natural world. It has given them an inner confidence, resilience and freedom. It has been a safe haven and a safe space – under the trees and in all weathers, a liberation from screens, anxiety and testing. We know many other parents feel the same. We wouldn't hesitate to recommend Dandelion to parents and children of all backgrounds and abilities."

"Just wanted to let you know how amazing Maddy was with S today! Incredible! So much perseverance and kindness! I'm so grateful!! I'm sure you will hear about it all but S finally went inside the gate and happily off with Maddy to the swing! So pleased and so grateful."

"E has been doing flex-Ed this term one day a week at dandelion and school four days a week. E has now said she's confident and ready for school five days a week. I'd like to take this chance to say a massive thank you to the Dandelion team and for the opportunity to continue at Dandelion this term until E felt ready for school. I think you all do such wonderful work in raising Dandelions as confident and resilient children, who can think and voice their own ideas. Forever grateful."

"Flexi-schooling has helped relieve the pressure of a five-day school week for E: Dandelion provides her with self-confidence and resilience that is sometimes knocked in the wider world. It gives her space to run and create, and a freedom she cherishes."

"After deferring, when F entered school they were quite surprised by how much he already knew! He did not have to catch up academically. He misses using his body for learning, but I wouldn't ask you to help him practice sitting still! F found that the rules of the playground were different and that other children didn't have the same skill set. But, he was able to continue to apply what he had learnt. At Dandelion and the teachers have noted that."

"The skills that J developed at Dandelion help him to be confident and resilient to deal with such a bug change. J is ready to tackle anything!"

"Thank you so much for giving J such a wonderful time at Dandelion. It's been noticeable how he has grown in independence and developed his own ideas. He is certainly very aware of health and safety!"

"You have provided J with the best start anyone could hope for. You have nurtured, loved, engaged, laughed, cuddled, danced, shared, celebrated which will enable J to soar high and free."

"I knew J was going to benefit incredibly from joining Dandelion, but both John and I have too. As a family we try and live as much the 'dandelion way' as we can with J. You aren't just teaching children, you are also helping, teaching, encouraging families too."

"We are delighted with R's education at Dandelion, as is he! We are continuously amazed at what he has learned and relays to us, his confidence and development is growing and improving with each session."

"We think you provide an amazing environment and experience for the children. We love that they can use their imagination and be active for a lot of time during the session but that there are also routines to follow and times where they can need to focus more. Incorporating learning numbers into play is great as we feel that J is preparing for school but in a fun way which will encourage his love of learning. All his teachers are so welcoming and encouraging, he loves interacting with all adults. We can't thank them enough for what amazing job they do."

"A truly superb start to I's education journey. He is so happy here, and his socialisation skills have come on leaps and bounds since starting here. Everything is so engaging and fun. The perfect environment to encourage a real love of learning. A well rounded, comprehensive education is being provided, while allowing the kids to just 'be kids'. Ticks all the boxes of conventional education as well as all those that conventional methods consistently fail to! We love it! Thank you Dandelion!"

"We are very pleased that G is able to be part of what we feel is fantastic nursery. She settled straightaway and comes home from her session with lots of enthusiasm for learning and having had her imagination fired up for creative play. Thank you!"

"A loves his time in Dandelion. He has made some good friends that enjoys talking about. The outdoor setting is wonderful and allows so many different learning opportunities. A always some out filthy which is a sure sign he's had a wonderful time."

"Dandelion is a warm and friendly place where children can thrive. J has loved climbing, playing, digging + everything. His vocabulary and ability to express him self has really grown thanks to the stories, philosophy etc."

"We are delighted with Dandelion and positive benefit it has had on T. She has grown so much in confidence and independence. I can see that she feels very safe and happy. She is making lots of new friends, learning to play and work together. She likes responsibilities and challenges the environment and teachers provide."

"I don't think I can ever put into words how incredible Dandelion is. R has flourished and is almost unrecognisable from the shy, anxious child he was when he started. I can't ever thank you enough for what you all do. You are just so wonderful."

"R has come along amazingly at Dandelion. I am so pleased with wonderful things he is learning. I feel very happy knowing he comes home after nursery with fantastic new skills and always has a big smile on his face."

"We are 100% satisfied with the education our child receives. Emma, Hayley & all the staff are professional, compassionate, sensitive, approachable and friendly. We feel our child's personal needs, likes and dislikes, are constantly considered by everyone. Dandelion has helped our child grow into a strong-minded and confident person. Your ethos inspires us and we strive to be better parents. There is constant feedback about hoe I is developing and we are given lots of advice about how to extend that development at home. Whenever I has experienced any difficulties it has been taken seriously, acted upon quickly and we have been offered one-to-one consultation time. We will be incredibly sad when I has to finish the school year."

"G has had a wonderful time over the last year at the Eaton site. The staff have been dedicated, kind, helpful, fun and it is constantly reassuring to know he is in the care of such a loving and nurturing community. We're extremely grateful to everyone at Dandelion for making our experience of nursery such a positive one. The outdoor children centred, play-led education offered is everything we wanted for G."

"Overall we are thrilled with Dandelion. My daughter has acquired a wide range of new skills which a more traditional nursery simply couldn't offer her. She looks forward to attending Dandelion with great excitement each week and has grown in confidence significantly. She loves the outdoor setting and the wide range of activities on offer."

"He has really excelled there and his behaviour was so different, and he got a lovely night's sleep and this morning wasn't his usual jumping-off-the-walls self but all reflective."

"I've just got the home and wanted to let you know that my two boys (D, 7 and R, 3) had a fantastic time today! (First day of holiday club). They are ready to come back again! I wasn't sure what they would think or if they would like Dandelion. They are both very boisterous boys and D can lack confidence too but they thoroughly enjoyed themselves today. It's a brilliant environment and I can't believe I've only just recently heard about you through a friend. I will definitely be recommending you to all my friends!"

"A year ago, having only just turned 4, our daughter was in no way socially or emotionally ready to start school. With the support of Emma and Hayley, we were granted a deferred reception place at our chosen school, and our daughter was able to spend an extra year attending Dandelion three days per week. Spending her reception year at Dandelion was the best decision we could have made to help prepare her for school. At Dandelion our daughter was able to develop her social skills and grow in confidence at her own pace. She thrived in an environment where she felt secure and nurtured, whilst also having plenty of opportunities to learn and develop new skills through role play and creative exploration. In the last year our shy little girl, who used to find it difficult to speak to other children, has developed into a socially confident girl with many friends, who often initiates and leads role play games, and confidently expresses her ideas in the group. Thanks to the creative early years curriculum and excellent teaching skills of the Dandelion staff, our daughter's Maths and phonics skills are impressive for her age. She will be starting school already able to add up numbers and read and write simple words. Our daughter is now excited about starting school in September and we feel that she is ready to, even though we will all miss Dandelion a lot..."

"I am confident to say Dandelion is a dream come true for children. I have been going to Dandelion for nearly two years enjoying every single day she has spent there. Emma, Hayley and the Dandelion team, who are always positive and enthusiastic, have created a wonderful space and atmosphere where children are encouraged to grow, be curious and imaginative, face challenges and embrace the outdoors with great enjoyment. Every day is a magical experience for I. She enjoys using tools and creating things to bring home, climbing trees, baking her favourite cakes in the mud kitchen but ultimately the freedom to play and learn in her own way. Thank you."

"Dandelion are extremely passionate about emotional literacy and wellbeing and this is reflected in everything they do – from getting the children involved in fundraising for a local youth mental health charity to teaching the children to talk about and reflect on their emotions on a daily basis.

I remember one morning not long after our daughter first started Dandelion at age 2.5, she enthusiastically woke us up asking "how are you feeling daddy – are you content?". More recently we've experienced the benefit of Dandelion's emphasis on speaking up and expressing emotions as a way to resolve conflict between children. When our daughter told us about an incident at Dandelion involving two other children, the Dandelion staff facilitated a powerful session where all the children involved were invited to reflect on what had happened, express how it made them feel and discuss boundaries and treating each other with respect. Our daughter felt very good about being encouraged to make her voice heard and telling the other children how she felt, in a safe contained environment.

Dandelion's ethos is also reflected in how the staff communicate with the children, which is always extremely respectful, using positive language, and encouraging autonomy and critical thinking. I believe Dandelion's approach to emotional wellbeing has had a huge impact on our daughters development over the last 2 years and helped turn her from a very shy little girl into the confident and empathic person she is today."

"Our daughter loves Dandelion! Having been in a small indoor nursery for several months, she loves the space to run around and explore. As parents we have seen an enormous difference – she is more confident, happy, energetic and enthusiastic. Thank you Hayley, Emma and the other staff for all your efforts. If only there were more forest schools around!"

"I'm just beginning on the path to get an autism diagnosis for A and forwarded Dandelions report to the GP for a telephone appointment. When I described Dandelions the GP said it sounded 'amazing and perfect for Alex'. In addition

we've had the Local Authority visit for Home Educating and the officer was very happy with the education A receives in Dandelions and home combination.

Dandelions allows A to socialise and learn in an outdoor setting. He especially loves Heath days: often leading us on family walks there to show us where he goes with his friends. A struggles with noise and cannot concentrate in crowded or noisy indoor settings, he also was afraid of heights from a young age. At Dandelions he has flourished in confidence, has firm friends and with kind support and encouragement can climb really confidently now. After one Heath day last term A described a lava game he was playing where himself and a group of friendly climbed up on the fallen tree and jumped down: he said he felt a 'bit frightened but was brave and jumped' and was so proud of himself they kept climbing and jumping down."

"You're all amazing!"

"Our sensitive son took quite some time to settle in at nursery, it was the first time he'd ever been away from us, but I found that the supportive and inclusive ethos of dandelion made a challenging situation very smooth and almost painless! They allowed us to settle him in slowly, taking our time and were truly parent/child led, which worked really well for our family. There were no tears! (Not even ours!)"

"Like many parents, we're worried about the pressure placed on young children in conventional primary schools, but home-education wasn't for us. We've found flexi-education to be the perfect solution for our Year 1 daughter, E. She's attended Dandelion for two days a week and her usual primary school for three.

When we picked her up after her first day at Dandelion, we knew that flexi-education was the right choice. E looked like a weight had been taken off her shoulders. There was none of the stress we saw at the school gate.

Dandelion has given her new confidence, resilience and independence, and its Philosophy For Children (P4C) is a wonderful tool for children to make sense of the world. Dandelion has also been a release valve for some of that school pressure. Luckily, E going to three days a week at school hasn't disadvantaged her socially or academically; we think she stays more enthusiastic about school this way too.

Dandelion's Emma and Hayley came to meetings to help us make a case to our primary school. They have supported us, and E, all the way. We really hope more parents are able to flexi-educate their children!"

"Dandelions has been a breath of fresh air for our family and a real game changer. Here we have found a place where our child's self confidence, independence and awareness of others is being lovingly nurtured. Whilst at the same time, his desire to explore, experiment, create and question is supported and encouraged. The adults are very conscious and considered in their use of language to show the children that they are respected and in turn, they are guided to treat others with respect and compassion. Our son is treated as the individual human that he is and we couldn't be happier with this approach. Plus we LOVE seeing his gigantic grin shining through his muddy little face at the end of the day. We only wish there were a Dandelions for grown-ups...we'd be first in line!"

Comments from our adult training sessions:

"The trainers were very knowledgeable and gave lots of positive ideas to go forward."

"The trainers had a great dynamic and the role play was great!"

"It was good to giggle and not feeling awkward contributing!"

"The workshop was excellent. Exactly what I'd hoped for!"