

## Woodland Pre-Schools: Nurture your child's potential



This August, Woodland Pre-Schools is opening two new campuses. Tracey Cuthbertson, Head of School at Beachside Pre-school in Repulse Bay, and Kitty Ho, Head of School at Kennedy Town, give us the rundown on what the kids can expect on their first day.

Tell us about the themes that have been incorporated into the new school designs.

**TC:** I'm really excited about Beachside opening, and we are using our fabulous location to highlight a "Sun, Sea and Sand" theme throughout the school. As they enter, the children will walk into a wonderful British seaside scene that uses both modern and nostalgic design; it won't only delight the children but the parents too!

**KH:** Woodland Kennedy Town is specially designed to cater to the needs of children from six months to six years of age. This school is decorated with an "Old Hong Kong" theme, where you can find old shops, trams and other items displayed in the school. The idea is to attract not only children but parents as well, by evoking memories of the city's history.

How do you expect the students to respond when they see the

classrooms for the first time?

**TC:** Oh, goodness me; I actually think they might be silent as they take everything in, but only for a few seconds, I'm sure – then their active minds, voices and legs will take over!

What are some of the features of the schools?

**TC:** Beachside is one of the larger Woodland Schools; we have six preschool classrooms and two dedicated Under 3 classrooms. Our equipment is all new and shipped in from overseas, and all chosen with age appropriation in mind. Our indoor play area is designed to encourage role-play, which is a wonderful way for the children to use their fantastic imaginations and expand their vocabulary. We can't wait to see the children's reactions to our brand new outdoor playground, which will have a tricycle track, water-play area, tunnels and a large ship climbing-frame complete with slides – I don't

imagine there will be any silence when they first see that!

**KH:** We have two beautiful classrooms on the ground floor for playgroup children, as it will be easier for pushchair access. Up on the first and second floors of the building, there are eight spacious classrooms and a fun play area for preschool children. A child-sized washroom with changing table will be included on each floor.

How important is classroom design to creating an effective learning environment?

**TC:** Very important; among the main things we need to address are ensuring the well-being of the children, creating different zoning areas which are clear to the children – this includes areas to play in a group, with teacher-led activities or alone (sometimes we all need a little quiet time!) – and, of course, ensuring the children feel safe and comfortable. The layout should be adaptable in order to facilitate one-on-one time with the teacher, circle time and whole class activities.

**KH:** A well-equipped classroom can definitely enhance children's learning. The school uses light and neutral colours, which provide a welcoming and satisfying environment the minute they walk into the school. All classrooms are well stocked with imported educational books and toys, which will allow children to indulge themselves in the excitement of learning and reading. Overall, it will be a fun educational environment we strive to provide at Woodland Kennedy Town Pre-School.

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