

# WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 1ST MAY 2015 - ISSUE NO: 71



## Dear Parents and Carers

We have had a very busy and very positive two weeks at Willow Dene.

We are pleased to report the huge success of our first family swims. It has been lovely to see children swimming in our pool with their whole family. Initial feedback is very positive and we look forward to more.

We are delighted to report that Julie Arnold, Senior Teaching Assistant in Swan class successfully completed the London Marathon on Sunday. Julie was running to raise funds for Friends of Willow Dene and has managed to raise over £3000. We are so proud!

Last week we welcomed the Mayor of Royal Greenwich and the Mayoress along with Councillor Denise Hyland. They stayed for the whole morning, joining a range of classes throughout the school. Councillor Hyland tweeted after the visit to say 'Great visit with the Mayor to Willow Dene. Impressed not only with the rebuild but with the innovative approach. Superb facilities and great commitment to the pupils with complex needs. School which embraces its community. So proud!' They all thoroughly enjoyed the school and were impressed with the children, staff and learning environment.

In an eventful week we made time to visit The James McCartney Art Exhibition at The Greenwich Gallery. James was a pupil at Willow Dene between the ages of 3 and 11. He now attends Charlton Park Academy. James is an eye-gaze artist, using eye gaze technology to create art work. After the exhibition his art work was auctioned and we are pleased to report that Willow Dene made a successful bid for a piece of art to display in school. This will act as inspiration for our own budding eye gaze artists.

Our Forest school site is being prepared as we write. The area is now fenced off and this week the Tree Surgeon has visited to clear any unsafe branches. Watch this space for more news about our outdoor learning environment.

Unfortunately we are closed to children on May 7<sup>th</sup> as the school will be used as a polling station in the general election. The election authorities have very strict rules about who we can allow on site and where which means that we cannot use the building with children on the day. Instead our adults will be undergoing a range of professional development training which ranges from dental hygiene to safeguarding and specialist technology. These are all areas which we anticipate will have positive benefits for children and families. Have an enjoyable bank holiday.

John Camp  
Executive of the Compass  
Partnership

Carolyn Vagg &  
Rachel Harrison  
Co-Headteachers

## Governor News

Governors have visited the school a number of times in the past few weeks. Linda and David saw the specialist learning environments and I have been in to learn more about medical health and safety and to see how the premises team keep everyone safe in the Car Park when the minibuses come in. All the visits were very different but what they had in common was the warm welcome and the expertise of the staff who are always happy to answer our questions.

For more about who we are and what we do look on the school website.

Have a good weekend,  
Anne-Marie

## Spotlight On Ivy

Hello, my name is Ivy. I started in Skylark Class this year and have had a wonderful time so far. I have made so many new friends and I really enjoy playing with them every day. This year I have been working to develop a variety of skills, including working on my trunk strength through the MOVE program, using eye gaze to focus on objects on a screen and requesting more using my voice, a switch or tapping my tray. I love music, especially 'Let it Go' from Frozen - I get really excited and vocal whenever it plays! I also love to get my hands messy and have been developing my grasp and grip skills in art. My anticipation skills have really improved and I flutter my eyes whenever I know that something is going to try to surprise me - Goopy Louie was one of my favourites even though it was a bit disgusting!

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May - Bank Holiday**

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May - Polling Day**

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**Children break-up half term**

**On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

**Return on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June**

## CLASS FOCUS – Skylark Class

Skylark Class have had a busy term already! We have been enjoying the sunshine and making the most of all our lovely outside spaces!

This term we have been learning about Greenwich in a variety of exciting ways. We have really enjoyed our story called 'The Tickle Book' which was illustrated by Axel Scheffler who now lives in Greenwich. As you can imagine there has been a great deal of laughter!

In play and leisure we have had fun with a sea/ pirate theme. We have been searching for treasure in a sea of jelly, playing with gold play dough and exploring a foamy sensory sea. The pirate theme has continued into PE where we have been learning about over, under and through. We have really enjoyed using our new wall apparatus and pretending to be pirates trying not to fall into the sea...

In art we have been making decoupage scenes of Greenwich Park and the Thames. We have each made a background then swapped with a friend in the other group to add on things you might find in that environment. We had fun getting our fingers very sticky!

Finally in technology we have been making fabric goods to sell around the school and the local area. So far we have printed canvas bags, made pin on flowers and fabric covered storage boxes – we have done a roaring trade and have almost completely sold out of goods each week! All proceeds are going to the Friends of Willow Dene.



## Fun Food Group



Amy from Woodlark class is back enjoying her fun food group, Amy still loves strong flavours i.e. "butterscotch whip, peach or fig yoghurt, blackcurrant and strawberry jelly," Amy enjoys exploring the bowl and spoon independently, bringing the bowl up to her face so she can smell and look inside, Amy is starting to discover the spoon and likes to hold it in her hand and sometimes brings the spoon up to her mouth to taste, Amy also likes to make her own choices from a selection of her preferred flavours, well done Amy!