

# WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2015 - ISSUE NO: 77



## Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to the new school year which will take us into 2016. We hope you all had a happy and safe holiday. We are delighted to be back and to see the school full of children. This newsletter should update you on some of the exciting plans and developments which are happening at Willow Dene.

Staff came back to school on September 1<sup>st</sup> and had a busy day preparing classrooms. They also completed mandatory training in safeguarding, first aid and medical competencies. There was also training which focused on the 'essential skills' part of our curriculum which included training in eating and drinking, dental hygiene and continence.

During the holiday we have been very busy implementing plans to improve Willow Dene further. If you have visited the school you will have seen that we now have the name of the school clearly displayed on the outside of the building. We are proud of our school and wanted to make sure that our identity is clear to visitors and the local community. The reception area has been transformed by the beautiful wall painting which was designed after consultation with our children last term and which uses colours, shapes and ideas chosen by them. This wall painting also echoes our school vision which sets high aspirations for all of our children. The school vision is now visible in wall art all around the school. See if you can spot all six pieces of art if you are visiting. Our MOVE corridor was designed to encourage children to learn key mobility skills such as navigating slopes or using hand-rails. This area is now decorated with wall art which depicts some of those movements in bright colours. During the holiday a resin pathway was put into our Forest Schools site which means that the area can now safely be used by wheelchair users and children who are learning to walk. We now have two overhead hoists in several of our classrooms which means that transitions between positions can take place more frequently and also allows two children to stand and play together supported by standing slings. Plans for Willow Dene's very own gym are well underway and will allow us to use the latest technology to encourage children to exercise. Look out for our next ventures coming soon.

As you know, this September has been particularly special for us as we have registered our first group of year seven children. These children will remain at Willow Dene this year and will move to our new secondary school building in September 2016. Last week we launched our key stage 3 curriculum with staff and we are very excited about our curriculum model which will allow our older children to develop areas of strength and interest and try new things. Parents of our year 7 children will soon be receiving details about what we have planned this term and we are happy to share this with anyone who would like to learn more. You will recognise our year 7 children by their smart new school uniform. There is an interview with one of our year 7 children in this newsletter which shows already that our older children have their own views and opinions to share!

This year our school priorities fall into seven key areas. These include the teaching of creative arts, development of our total communication approach and further expanding our extended day provision. These form the basis of our school development plan which will measure our progress against our priorities as the year continues.

You should have received letters which tell you how to participate in our family swim sessions and Parents of children year 4,5,6 and 7 have received letters about after school club. Our 'Speakeasy' group for parents is on Wednesday mornings this term and we hope to see you there.

We have opened three new classes this year and these are called Greenfinch, Wren and Osprey. A number of new staff have joined our team. This term we are welcoming more than thirty new children and their families to Willow Dene. We would like to welcome you all to our learning community and look forward to getting to know you and your children. You are always welcome at school and we hope you are as excited as we are about the journey ahead.

John Camp  
Executive Headteacher  
of the Compass Partnership

Carolyn Vagg &  
Rachel Harrison  
Co-Headteachers

## Pupil Voice

So what has made pupil voice news this week? Our new Year 7 cohort of course!

We caught up with one year 7 to find out how he felt about being one of the first Willow Dene Year 7 pupils. "I like it! I want to come to school every day, I love it here!"

When asked about his new uniform, he stated: "I wear this one because I am year 7 now. I like it; it's the same colour as my sisters. But, I did like the grey one."

He certainly looks very smart in his new sweatshirt, as do the rest of our Year 7 group!

*Keep an eye on the website for our new Year 7 blog, coming soon!*



It is great to see the children back at school and ready to engage in lots of fun Sensory Processing activities. In providing children with these Sensory Processing resource and activities we are giving them opportunities to explore and develop their own sensory systems.

**Music and Movement**, **Sensory Circuits** and the **Trampoline** all help the children to develop their body awareness, position, balance, strength and coordination.

During our **Food Fun Group** the children are encouraged to explore different smells, textures and sensations, helping them to desensitise and feel more relaxed around foods.

Children enjoying just a few of our Sensory Processing activities

## Admin News

**School Uniform** - If you wish to purchase school sweatshirts, cardigans or swim nappies please request an order form from the school office.

**Term Dates** - Please find amended 2015/2016 term dates attached. The INSET Day scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> January has been cancelled and you will be notified of the new date in due course.

## CLASS FOCUS – Sparrow Class

We are very excited to be back at school and beginning a new academic year together in Sparrow class. There have been a few changes to our class as we said goodbye to Taiwo at the end of last term, he has gone on to start a new adventure at his new secondary school. We have welcomed two new children to Sparrow class who are both settling extremely well into new routines and forming great new friendships. We are also very happy to welcome Sarah into our classroom; she is our new learning support assistant.

This half term our topic is 'Explore it!' we have already had a busy start to the term, learning lots of new skills. We will be exploring a range of topics within our main topic. In science, we are exploring the human body and the way our body works. We will also be exploring our senses and how our body is designed to see, hear, smell, feel and taste. This links with this terms role play corner which has now been transformed into a doctors surgery! We are also linking our work around the senses to our art sessions, exploring different materials to create amazing art pieces!

In TPPC, we are focusing on history. We are exploring history through archaeology. Already this week we have found a letter in a dinosaur book which told of rumours of dinosaur bones in our sand trays! Sparrow's archaeology team are already at work trying to excavate – keep an eye on twitter for the results!

We have lots to look forward to this year in Sparrow class. We have all returned to school well rested and ready to learn lots of new and exciting things whilst having fun!

## Wall Art and Willow Dene Lettering

