

# WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017 - ISSUE NO: 103



## Dear Parents and Carers

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy new year. We are starting 2017 with lots of exciting plans for the year ahead. It has been lovely to see the children so happy to return to school.

If you completed our parent survey last term we would like to take the opportunity to thank you all very much for your valuable feedback and support. It is really helpful for us to know what you think we are doing well and where we can improve. This feedback forms the basis for a range of actions throughout the year. Later on this term you will be able to view a summary of responses on the website and be able to look at the actions we have planned as a result. Please don't hesitate to ask if you missed the survey and would like to complete one or if you would like to talk to us more in person.

If you attended our winter disco and had a family photograph taken and you haven't already received your photograph then you should be getting your copy soon! There were some beautiful photographs taken on the night and we look forward to your responses.

This term our topic is 'Force of Nature'. This topic will encourage children to find out more about natural materials, the world around them and living things. Look out for the topic descriptor in class which shows how your child's class will be approaching this topic.

This half term we will also be celebrating Book Week with a school wide focus on reading and the opportunity for children to experience books through a range of media including storytelling and theatre. Look out for more details coming soon.

This week has been very busy with a range of things happening in school. We hosted representatives from Greenwich SEN who talked to parents of children in year four about the process of secondary transitions and how this will work for their child. The aim of this meeting was to ensure that parents are as well informed as possible as early as possible. We hope that this was useful to you. We also held our first parent training event of 2017 which was an ASD awareness workshop. Many thanks to those of you who attended. If you would like to find out more about parent training for you then please contact Katy Dooley who will be happy to tell you more.

As you may know we are a MOVE accredited school and a Centre of Excellence for MOVE. The MOVE Programme aims to increase functional mobility and independence through personalised care and support, positively enhancing the lives of disabled children and disabled people with complex needs. On Tuesday we had a visit from The MOVE Partnership to make sure that we are still delivering MOVE across the school at a high standard.

These visits are carried out every three years and involve a tour of the school as well as looking at evidence that we are meeting the 10 standards of MOVE good practice. We are looking forward to receiving the report and sharing it with you in our next newsletter.

Look out for details about our new 'Make, Do and Sell' course for parents coming soon.

John Camp  
Executive Headteacher  
of the Compass Partnership

Carolyn Vagg &  
Rachel Harrison  
Co-Headteachers

## GOVERNOR NEWS

Another year, and a new Governor Team to support staff in leading the school.

Well, not so much new as revamped.

Unfortunately Anne-Marie Organ, our longstanding Chair of Governors, has stood down due to work commitments, and I was elected in her place at the Governing Body AGM last November. I have sat on the Governing Body for two years as the Local Authority representative, and feel very proud and privileged to represent the school as your Chair of Governors.

I will have met a number of you in my termly Health and Safety inspections as Health and Safety Governor, and with others perhaps on training courses such as the Safeguarding training run last September. In my day job I work for UNISON, the public service trade union, through which I have considerable contact with schools staff and experience of working in education and with local authorities. I live locally in Charlton.

I'm very lucky to have a strong team of Governors supporting me in this role: fortunately Anne-Marie Organ has agreed to take up the role of co-vice chair along with Natalie Turpin, David Mbatha continues as chair of the School Business Committee, and Kafayat Eletu has become chair of the Learning and Achievement Committee. We are also lucky to have Donna Addison and Michele Foster on the Governing Body and are hoping for a new parent governor to join us soon.

It's going to be a busy year for Willow Dene - as always. But I know you'll all rise to the occasion to support the children and the school in delivering great support and education to our children. I look forward to meeting more of you as I visit the school more frequently.

**Linda Perks, Chair of Governors**

## CLASS FOCUS – Woodpecker Class

We really enjoyed our Autumn term in Woodpecker class!

The second half of last term was amazing. We really enjoyed preparing for Christmas and singing our new song for everyone at the Christmas Performance. We loved the Christmas party and disco and it was a great surprise when Father Christmas visited our classroom!

Our topic was 'Design and Make' and we were learning about which materials were best for different purposes in Science and using this to design and make Christmas cards and the packaging for some of the Christmas treats we made in our Food Technology lessons. Our maths work on pattern gave us opportunities to design and make wrapping paper by printing repeating patterns.

On our community visits, we went to explore a variety of shops at Bluewater. We looked at all the wrapping paper, gift bags and boxes and Christmas cards we could find and then took our ideas back to school to use in our Art and Design and Technology lessons. Our Play and Leisure sessions were great fun. We played 'Pass the Parcel' and really got used to unwrapping packages. We wonder if our families thought we were better at opening our Christmas presents this year!

This term our topic is 'Force of Nature' and we're looking forward to learning about seasonal changes. We'll be listening to 'Vivaldi's Four Seasons' and making sounds to represent different elements of each season in Music. In our Food Technology lessons, we'll be making food to match the seasons, e.g. 'Fondant Flowers' for Spring. We're hoping to taste some new foods too!



### MUSIC THERAPY SERVICE

We are delighted to welcome this term two trainee music therapists from one of the three London training courses : Roehampton University. They will be with us for a six month placement, under Richard's supervision. The trainees will be working across the Oakmere and Swingate lane site.

Within the music therapy world, Willow Dene is a sought after placement for trainees. There are many reasons for this, but one of the main ones is its reputation for excellence within multi-disciplinary working.

Within KS1 and 2, alongside individual sessions, we are also running five different groups for students covering a wide range of age groups and needs.

### Swim Team News

This term we have been on a Bear Hunt in the swimming pool. Looking for the Bear in the grass, river, mud, forest, snow and finding him in the cave.

We have been working on front crawl using our arms in a stretched position to make our propulsion through the water more effective.

Children have made lots of improvements which range from swimming independently, having reduced flotation aids, improving their strokes and techniques.