

WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 16TH JANUARY 2015 - ISSUE NO: 65



Dear Parents and Carers

We would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and welcome you back to Spring term 2015 at Willow Dene. We are looking forward to an exciting term ahead filled with new opportunities and remarkable progress for our children and the school.

The school begins the year at maximum capacity, having just welcomed our very newest children and their families to Willow Dene. We have been excited to meet our newest arrivals and are very much looking forward to celebrating their progress with us. Last term we welcomed several new teachers to Willow Dene. Our new teachers are Tina who is teaching in Heron class with Matt, Chriselle who is teaching Magpie class, Carline who is working with Minna in Brambling class and Line who is teaching Kestrel class. If you would like to meet any of our new teachers in person, let us know and we will be happy to arrange this.

We began the term with two days of staff training provided by DiscoverME. So that our staff could experience and understand that sense of empowerment so enjoyed by our parents who have attended the course, we asked Anna to amend the programme to meet the needs of our staff team. Participating in the programme were class teachers, teaching assistants, premises staff, members of the ICT and admin teams and therapists. The immediate impact of the INSET was clear. It will have a lasting impact on the quality of our engagement with our families and improve our day-to-day relationships with each other. Both of these essential elements will impact on our day-to-day work with the children.

On Wednesday we will begin DiscoverME 2 for parents who attended the first course. This will continue to build on the work our participating parents have already done. We are expecting approximately fifteen enthusiastic and motivated participants and look forward to hearing how they get on in the coming weeks.

We are sure you will be pleased to know that our very spacious new car park is open which means that you will be able to park on site when you visit the school. You are welcome to park in front of the school unless it is at the beginning or end of the day when the space is required by school buses. If you are not sure where to park, ask at reception and we will be happy to help.

We can now use our huge new playground space, although we are still waiting for some exciting pieces of

equipment and some final landscaping. The new additions include a crawl tunnel, lots of swings, a hill with ropes to climb up and a slide to come down, some exciting playground markings and a wobbly bridge. The children love the variety and the wide open space. Look at our twitter posts @willowdenesch to see photographs.

All of the Graham construction buildings and vehicles have now left Willow Dene and Teviot's field is beginning to look like a football field again! The Graham's team will still be visiting us regularly to put the finishing touches to the school.

This week we have sent you a survey which will help us gather information about your interest in after school provision. We would be grateful if you could complete it and return it so that we have as much useful information as possible.

Have a lovely weekend

John Camp
Executive of the Compass
Partnership

Carolyn Vagg &
Rachel Harrison
Co-Headteachers

Message from John

I am pleased to inform you that Governors appointed Carolyn Vagg and Rachel Harrison as permanent Co-Headteachers of Willow Dene this week. They were both exceptional at interview and the panel, comprising of Governors and the Assistant Director of Children's Services, was unanimous in its decision to appoint. I am incredibly proud of everything that Carolyn, Rachel and their team have achieved at Willow Dene and know that they will ensure the school continues to grow and develop in the coming years. I am sure you will wish to join me in congratulating them both on their appointment.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Polling Day

Willow Dene School will be closed to pupils on Thursday 7th May

CLASS FOCUS – Woodlark

Woodlark class had a remarkable autumn term, are very excited (and happy) to be back from our holidays and looking forward to whole new term ahead.

On Tuesday Hedia was 10 years old. She sent us a photograph from the hospital of her 'Frozen' birthday cake and and we can't wait for her to return to school so that we can celebrate.

Our topic this term is 'Recycling and Being Green'. Our story is called 'Green' and has lots of different smells for us to try. Our poem is called 'The Magic Box' and we can't wait to see what will be inside our box each week. We are building a milk carton igloo this half term so send us your plastic milk carton and we will write your name on it and include it in our building. Amy and Liam are in-training using the 'medi-motion' exercise bike and will be taking part in a cycle ride for Sports Relief.

Last week we had our first swim in the new pool. We were all fascinated by the frog display on the poolside. Elona and Perea surprised us all by being really active in the water and not getting tired.

Selin and Aryan are doing brilliant things with eye gaze technology. They are using their visual skills to control what happens on the screen. Ryan has been using the i-pad in the dark and he has been able to notice it and to focus on the screen. Lyla and Ali Abbas have been our PE stars this week. Ali Abbas has been practising lying on his side so that he can use both hands together and see what he is doing. He especially enjoyed holding Aryan's hands! Lyla has been practicing pushing through her hands and has become much stronger at this. This week she also pushed herself back into her wheelchair all on her own for the first time. We are planning to go to a 'composting' class at Mudchute farm and then to make our own compost for our balcony garden.

Come and visit us if you would like to meet us or find out more about us. Woodlark class is very close to the main reception area.

Governor News

Just before Christmas we appointed link governors. These are existing governors who have agreed to take on an additional role. We already have Mary Hill as our SEN Governor, and I am the Nominated Governor for Health & Safety, Safeguarding and for Looked After Children, but we now also have Natalie Turpin as our MOVE Governor and Michele Foster as our Expansion Link Governor. Michele will monitor progress towards and provision for both the two year olds in Toucan and the older children as we develop Willow Dene Secondary, reporting back to the Governing Body, and Natalie will meet with our MOVE co-ordinator to learn about any significant developments/research and MOVE data, and will also attend some meetings of the Therapy Steering Group. She will also report back to the Governing Body.

These two roles are specific to Willow Dene and enable us as a group to keep track of developments and to do our job as a Governing Body - to both support and challenge the school.

We are still looking for a parent governor, so I will be dropping in to Speakeasy on Friday 30th January to explain more about the role and to answer any questions you have about what governors do. I hope to see many of you there.

Best Wishes, Anne-Marie

Spotlight on Aryan

My name is Aryan and I am in Woodlark class. I am seven years old.

I am a very happy boy in school and I have an infectious smile which makes everyone around me happy too. I work very hard and I am always so pleased when I achieve something. I know all my routines and will even remind my adults if they have forgotten something.

I love all my school activities and I am at my happiest when I am busy doing something. I particularly love stories and music. I know familiar songs so well that I know when the exciting bits are coming and I get excited too!

I have a brilliant sense of humour and I especially enjoy physical activities. I have practised and practised my rolling skills so that I can roll over on my own. Now my adults have to say 'Don't roll away' because I'm so clever at doing this. I like to be out and about and work in lots of different rooms in the school. I love swimming and I start practising my kicking legs before I get into the water.

My adults say I am a 'techno-boy'. I love the i-pad and I can turn the pages on i-pad stories faster than my adults can read. I know that the i-pad controls our music in class and I will stare at it if I can't hear any. I am doing amazing things with eye gaze technology. My favourite program has musical instruments on it and I can turn each in turn on and then off again by looking at them.

I am a good friend and this year I have been a good role model for Ali Abbas. I have showed him what to do because everything is new to him. I love sharing my homework in school and taking my videos and news home to Mum and Dad. I think they will be proud to see me in the newsletter!



Fun Food Group

During **fun food group** Calvin enjoyed exploring soft and smooth foods through touch, smell and taste, Calvin liked the taste of chocolate and tomato sauce but not the marmite, "too hot" he said, Calvin had lots of fun expressing his preferences and making choices through fun activities, **well done!**