

WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 17TH JULY 2015 - ISSUE NO: 76



Dear Parents and Carers

Unbelievably this will be the final newsletter of the school year 2014-2015. We would like to thank all of you for your support, kind words and positivity about the school. It is a pleasure to work with your remarkable children and without your input; Willow Dene would be a very different school.

We were delighted with the attendance at our Open Day on July 4th. We estimate that about five hundred visitors came through our gates to celebrate the opening of the school with a day of family fun. We welcomed back some of Willow Dene's past children and staff alongside current children, their families, our staff and their families and local residents and friends. The weather was beautiful and there was such an atmosphere and sense of community throughout the day. It has inspired us to think about our next venture.

This was closely followed by our Summer Celebration for parents on 8th July. This gave parents the opportunity to catch up with teachers for informal celebrations of the children's achievements this year as well as the chance to meet new staff and to talk to each other. It was lovely to see so many of you enjoying the refreshments in the 'meeting point' at reception and admiring the new photographs on the television screen.

Our staff team also held an achievement celebration this week with every class choosing a video or photograph of an achievement this year of which they are particularly proud. It was lovely to share the fantastic things happening in every class.

In our last newsletter we mentioned that Mandy Watson, our improvement partner was visiting the school to look at our development during the last term. Her visit was extremely positive and she was excited about the changes she had seen since her last visit. We will be able to share some quotes from her report after the summer holiday.

In September we will begin the year with a full school and so have many new families visiting us at the moment. This week we held two welcome events for new families where they could find out more about their child's new class and about the school. We were very pleased to have such good attendance and to be able to say 'Welcome' in person.

This week we are celebrating the learning journeys of our year 6 children. Some of them will leave us in July to start their secondary school at Charlton Park

Academy or other schools. Some are staying at Willow Dene and will become our first year group of secondary age children. Our 'Graduation Event' on Thursday celebrated the achievements of our year 6 children with a presentation full of photographs charting their Willow Dene career. Each child was also presented with a Willow Dene Yearbook featuring 'The Class of 2015'.

The last few weeks have seen two more successful School Journeys for our key stage 2 children. These School Journeys were shorter so that children with complex medical needs or children who might find it difficult to be away from home could also have a 'holiday' experience. Many of these children had not been away from their families overnight before and we are extremely proud of our confident and happy children who did just that.

Last Friday was the annual 'Do the Right Thing Awards' at Eltham Palace. These awards celebrate children who are outstanding citizens. We are extremely proud of Hedia, Gabriella and Selin who all received their award certificates from the Mayor of Greenwich. All three were nominated successfully in the category of bravery and are excellent role models for other children who face challenges in their daily lives.

All that remains is for us to wish you a happy and safe summer holiday. We will see you in September and we are already looking forward to the new school year.

John Camp
Executive Headteacher
of the Compass Partnership

Carolyn Vagg &
Rachel Harrison
Co-Headteachers

REMINDER

**PUPILS RETURN TO SCHOOL
ON FRIDAY**

4TH SEPTEMBER 2015

2015/2016 TERM DATES ATTACHED

CLASS FOCUS – Woodpecker Class

We've had an exciting year in Woodpecker class and are sad it's coming to an end. Tarique is moving on to secondary school and the other children and two members of our staff team are moving on to different classes here at Willow Dene. We'll miss them so much but wish them well in their new classes.

Over the last term, we've had great fun getting out and about, visiting some amazing Greenwich landmarks, including the Thames Barrier, the Cutty Sark and the National Maritime Museum.

Back at school, we've enjoyed making our own boats which are now on display outside our classroom. In our play and leisure sessions, we've been dressing up and playing at pirates and in our maths work, we made some unfortunate toy pirates walk the plank to help us understand subtraction!

Our class books have been fun. We enjoyed the story of Baby Bear's trip to the moon in 'Whatever Next!' and made ourselves a rocket too. You can see Tarique and Jordan painting it in the photo. We read 'Yum! Yuck!' recently and used topic boards to help us talk about the story. We shopped for ingredients and made pizzas, deciding whether they were Yum! or Yuck! when we tasted the finished product. Even better than that, we visited Pizza Hut and made our own pizzas there before eating too much pizza and ice-cream!

One of the highlights of this term has been working with Mandy on Music and Movement. We have become so good at it we can do most of it on our own. We have all become more independent in lots of other ways too – at our self-care and hygiene routines, at managing our own behaviour and at communicating with others. This will be of great benefit to us as we move on to our new classes next year and we're all looking forward to meeting new friends and starting new adventures.

Spotlight on

Hi, I'm Tarique and I've been working hard in Woodpecker class for the last 2 years. I'm in Year 6 and leaving Willow Dene this year. Everyone at Willow Dene will really miss me. I've been on some transition visits to Charlton Park Academy and I'm really looking forward to joining them and making new friends in September.

I really enjoy going out with Woodpecker class on weekly community visits. Recently we've visited local parks to look at and take photos of graffiti and we've been to various Greenwich landmarks such as the Thames Barrier. We often go shopping to buy ingredients for our cooking and this half term I've enjoyed making (and eating) pizzas.

In Woodpecker class, I follow a visual timetable and a work system. These help me understand what I should be doing throughout the day and keep me on track at my work station. Working with an adult, I can focus well when I know what's expected of me and I'm hoping to be able to show off my amazing skills at my new school.

Friends of



Willow Dene

Registered Charity No: 1139499

Sponsored Splash

A special thank you to all parents/carers who have supported our Sponsored Splash event by returning sponsor forms and sponsor money. So far we have raised £322.94

MOVE News

A group of children have been working on the Medi-Motion bikes. These are static bikes that can be used on passive, assisted or fully active settings to help students build up muscle tone, strength and coordination. After a series of sessions, some children's walking has improved by stepping in their gait trainers rather than 'bunny hopping', other children have been able to transfer these skills to riding a tricycle. In the future we are hoping to have a Willow Dene Gym running in the undercroft of the school, the plan is to have Medi-motion bikes, an iJoy (to develop balance and trunk control) and parallel bars (to aid stepping and walking independently). We are very excited about these plans, so watch this space for more news!

Nursing Team News

The nursing team would like to wish all of our families a lovely summer break.

We will be returning to school at the beginning of September to prepare for the new year. We have already sent out information packs which contain medication forms, which we would like you to complete and return with your child in September.

We will continue to offer clinics with the community paediatrician, dietician, ophthalmologist, continence and dental services next year.

A big thank you to all parents who recently returned completed questionnaires regarding the nursing & medical services in the school.



We wish you a
happy and safe
summer

