

WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 17th March 2017 - ISSUE NO: 107



Dear Parents and Carers

Spring is on the way and our orchard, which had fallen quiet for the winter has started to grow again. Our Urban Orchard colleagues have been in school this week to prune our trees ready for the warmer seasons.

This newsletter comes at the end of a Willow Dene's first STEM week. STEM is a focus on the areas science, technology, engineering and mathematics in an integrated way. By having a focus on STEM we hope to encourage children to develop a passion for investigating, exploring and working things out. Our theme for STEM week is 'Out of This World' and activities have included The Bubble Show, Science Dome and lots of sessions being run by our talented staff using our specialist learning environments. These have included a closer look at Andy's Toy Story toy box with Mandy and building mud volcanoes with Cath at forest school. Look out for photographs on the website and Twitter coming soon.

Our new soft play at Oakmere Road is now complete and open. We are excited by our 'grown up ball pool without the balls' and all the new opportunities for climbing and balancing it will offer our older children. The Mobile Magic Carpet has been installed in the sensory room, allowing us to cover the whole floor area with interactive projection. We hosted an open afternoon for parents of children in year 4 and year 5 at Oakmere Road on Wednesday. They had the chance to look around the school and to hear about the curriculum and learning environment that we offer our secondary aged children. If you missed out on the visit but would still like a tour you can contact Rachel or Jude to arrange this.

Last Friday we attended the National Apprenticeship Week Celebration and Awards event held by Royal Greenwich. We were excited to see one of our apprentices, Jack gain an award. Jack has now successfully completed his apprenticeship and is working full time in school as a teaching assistant.

Last Monday we celebrated European Swallowing Awareness Day by greeting everyone with an information booth on their arrival in school. People could try grading different textures of foods and try thickening fluids. We were able to see what the recommended daily fluid intake of a child should look like and to speak to our Speech and Language Therapy team.

Last week we also held Cerebral Visual Impairment Awareness training for staff. Everyone tried out glasses which replicate different types of CVI and then tried a range of daily tasks such as eating a meal or pouring a drink whilst wearing them. You can see some of our pictures in our Twitter feed @willowdene-sch

Thank you to Greenwich Parent Voice who attended our Friday Speakeasy, teaching parents to knit. It is hoped that 'Knit and Stitch' sessions will become a regular event at Willow Dene. Look out for details of our up and coming Big Easter Coffee Morning being held on Wednesday March 29th.

John Camp
Executive Headteacher
of the Compass Partnership

**Carolyn Vagg &
Rachel Harrison**
Co-Headteachers

GOVERNOR NEWS

March 15th was our full Governors meeting. At this meeting we receive the Termly Leadership report. This report covers all areas of school life including updates on Therapies, Primary and Secondary Curriculum and School Priorities. The report consists of contributions from a range of members of the School Community and it includes both data and photographs, which provide extra context. Governors have the opportunity to ask questions about the report or ask for further detail.

We are delighted that there was such a good response to our recent request for candidates to take the vacant Parent Governor place. We have three candidates and ballot papers have been circulated this week. We look forward to introducing you to our new Parent Governor very soon.

SALT NEWS

This year we have been supporting the SCERTS trial project which is following the SCERTS training which happened in the Spring Term. Our role is to support selected class teachers to explore how the SCERTS model can be used and applied within the context of Willow Dene School. We will then support the school team to broaden the way in which the SCERTS model is applied to a wider range of children.

For any queries please contact Sarah Gelli at 020 8854 9841

CLASS FOCUS – Woodlark

Welcome to Woodlark class. Here is a description of the way we approached our topic 'Gadgets and Gizmos' this half term. These activities give us a chance to have lots of different sensory and concrete experiences which help us learn. You will see that we use books a lot to support our curriculum. Keep your eye on our topic descriptors on display in class to see what we are learning about with every topic.

Our story is 'Top, Top Secret' by Claire Freedman. We are becoming secret agents using all sorts of spy gadgets on a mission to save The Queen's jewellery. Our poem is 'Filbert's Flossie Floss' by Andrea Perry. Is it time to floss between your toes? Pick up some of Filbert's Flossie Floss and they'll be clean in no time! In Science we are using experiments to sparkle and flash our way through the science of light. Our Art focus is 'Collage'. We are discovering collage's playful side as we gather our paint, favourite materials, and funky embellishments and unleash our wild side with some new techniques. In Music we are reading the books 'Music Class Today' by David Weinstone and 'Snow Music' by Lynne Rae Perkins. Both books encourage us to explore and create sounds. In Play and Leisure we have gone gadget crazy! From finding out how to make a 'friendship tube work' to exploring perpetual motion toys. Look out for our creepy mechanical hand. In Technology our focus is 'Cooking & Nutrition'. The book 'Spork' by Kyo Maclear is our introduction into the weird and wonderful world of kitchen utensils. Our People, Time, Place and Culture has a History focus this half term as we find out more about significant people and events from the past. The book 'Three Cheers for Inventors!' by Marcia Williams is helping us find out more. In Tuesday PE we are stretching to improve our range of movement. On Friday some of us are learning yoga poses from the book 'I am Yoga' by Susan Verde and some of us are developing our sitting skills using the book 'There's a Bear on my Chair' by Ros Collins.



Elsewhere in Woodlark class there has been amazing progress happening. You can see a picture of Ryan's first ever cycle using the special bikes in the gym. He managed 6 active minutes with his right leg doing all the work. Dhillon, Aryan and Rafa have had their own music therapy group this term where they have needed to play an active role in their group 'band'! Xenia is getting used to coming to school and enjoyed her first birthday party with her friends. Her Mum made us an amazing cake. Hedia is moving her head, arms and legs and has managed her first independent stretches. Jamal has shown us how he can walk backwards in his standing sling! Ali Abbas is making excellent progress with his eye gaze skills and is looking all around the screen. We can't wait for Gabriella to leave hospital and rejoin her friends.

MOVE NEWS

Children have all been working hard to achieve their Move targets this term. As the general Move focus is on how and where children sit, we have been looking at opportunities across different areas of the school for them to practice their independent sitting skills.

Look at these pictures to see children from Hedgehog class sitting in the living space to make pancakes, Skylark class sitting with adult support ready for a lesson, Woodlark class stretching and standing to greet their friends, and Nightingale class exploring the use of different sitting positions in their chairs whilst they have a sensory story.

Look out for news about Move day coming soon, the theme this year is Move On Holiday.

