

# WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2014 - ISSUE NO: 64



## Dear Parents and Carers

We can't believe that it is the end of the term already! It has been a tremendously busy but very positive beginning to the year for Willow Dene. During the last two weeks we have been celebrating the festive season in style.

Our Christmas Fair on 5<sup>th</sup> December took £1200 for Friends of Willow Dene. Thank you to all of you who supported us. There was a lovely atmosphere in school on the day of the Fair and it was so nice to see parents, children, staff and friends enjoying the morning together.

This week we have had fun at Christmas Parties. We know how much our children love books and put thought and care into the selection of the books that Santa gave to each child. We also enjoyed the atmosphere and taste of Christmas dinner which was ably cooked and served by an angel and several elves! Many thanks to those of you who came to Festive Sharing Time in foundation stage, the key stage one musical performance and the high volume 'Jingle and Mingle' sing-along in key stage two. It was lovely to see you there. We have been particularly proud of our confident and very well behaved and friendly children during the busy performances.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of our parents and families for joining our events, training and invitations. You have no idea how much we value your support. We are looking forward to more exciting opportunities for parent partnership next term.

This week our full playground area has been opened and we have seen some of our exciting new equipment for the first time. We love the idea of the ropes that we can use to pull ourselves up the hill and the slide to slide down. There is a giant tunnel and a fallen tree for climbing on, exciting playground markings and new swings and spinners. Look out for tyre trails and trampolines in the floor coming soon. We are already planning a quiet 'wild garden' and a go-cart track!

It is with much gratitude and a little sadness that we have watched Graham Construction begin to withdraw from Willow Dene. Although they will be returning regularly to put the finishing touches to grounds and building, they will no longer be based on site. Over the last eighteen months we have watched them work incredibly hard to give us a beautiful new school and have been lucky to have worked with contractors who have really wanted to do their best for us. We have made some firm friends who will be invited back for our official opening events during spring term.

All of the children and staff at Willow Dene would like to wish you a very happy, safe and healthy winter holiday and a happy new year.

John Camp  
Executive Head Teacher

Carolyn Vagg &  
Rachel Harrison  
Co-Heads of School

## Swimming News

The themes for swimming this term have been Lets Count, Going on a Bear Hunt and Its Winter. All the children have enjoyed taking part in the fun game based learning while developing their swimming skills. Going on a Bear Hunt was the most popular with some children still hoping to see the bear. Next term we will be introducing Breast-stroke with the theme of Going to the Pond.

Swimming Team

Merry  
Christmas  
&  
Happy  
New Year!

## STARR circus

If you applied for tickets for STARR Circus in January and have not yet received any I am sorry to say that there are none available at present.

However I will keep your names, as I will be contacting them in January to see if they have had any returns that we can use.

Many thanks

Jude McPartlan

## REMINDER

**CHILDREN RETURN TO SCHOOL ON  
WEDNESDAY 7TH JANUARY 2015**

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**AMENDED TERM DATES ARE ATTACHED**

## CLASS FOCUS – Lapwing Class

It has been an exciting term for Lapwing class not only because Vinnie, Sam and Ahmad have been joined by four new pupils, Karl, Khalid, Yahya and Ryan but because in September we moved back into the Foundation building after a term in the now demolished KS2 building. The new Lapwing classroom, like the nursery itself is bright and airy, it feels more spacious and it has a wonderful outlook onto the garden and playground area. The children have been having great fun this week exploring the new apparatus outside, making the most of the sunshine during playtimes, climbing, sliding, spinning, jumping and swinging on the equipment.

The autumn term has seen the children settling into their new class, spending time getting to know each other, the staff, their environment and involving themselves in a range of stimulating activities. During a focus on 'Hands' we explored a range of materials with our fingers, making prints in talc and paint and pushing our hands into salt dough to leave a print. We enjoyed hand massage and investigated various textures; corn flour mixed with water, play-dough, spaghetti, jelly and foam. We used our hands to build with a range of bricks, to thread reels, place pegs, to play in the sand and in the water. We made ice shaped coloured hands by filling plastic gloves with water and freezing them.

The last 2 weeks have been very busy in Lapwing class and indeed in the whole nursery: Christmas festivities began with the 'Foundation Christmas Wreath Making Competition'. Last year saw Lapwing class win the prize in 'The Great Foundation bake off', with a mouth-watering Christmas cake, unfortunately this year our wreath making skills were not recognised and the winner's trophy was not to be ours! A recent activity morning enabled all the children in the Early Years department to join together to explore a range of creative activities as they made Christmas cards, reindeer hats, glitter stars and snowflakes. Last week the children performed to family and friends in the Christmas concert, how wonderfully well they coped with the change in routine, elf costumes, dancing together and an audience. I was very proud of Santa's little helpers!

Happy Christmas to you all from everyone in Lapwing class.



### Spotlight on Danny

Hello. My name is Danny and I am five years old. This is my second year in Swan class and I've seen a lot of changes as we have had to move classroom twice. I don't always like changes and new places, like when we started using the school swimming pool this term, but if you give me time I get used to new things. Swimming is actually one of my favourite activities.

I am learning new play skills, such as building with bricks and how to make things happen on the magic carpet in the high-tech sensory room, which is a place in school I love. I like seeing how things change on the floor when I move. Sometimes I'll stay still and then move suddenly to see what happens. It can sometimes take a lot to get my attention, so adults like it when I get excited and interested in things like this.

My biggest achievement so far this year has been learning how to use PECS. I didn't like using it last year, but now I am beginning to use it to get my message across. I will ask for things I want such as ribbons, which I love to wave, very fast, in the air

### Spotlight on Vinnie

Hello I am Vinnie and I am five years old. I am a very happy little boy and I love coming to school, this is my second year in Lapwing class, in the Foundation Stage. I have lots of energy and I like to run, jump and climb. I like playing outside but I am always ready to come into class for the next activity as soon as I hear Hilary ring the bells. When I am a little anxious I walk in a circuit around the classroom or the outside area, but I am doing it far less often now. There are lots of activities that I really enjoy, swimming is probably my favourite, I am very confident in the water and I love jumping in from the side. I am also good at mark-making, using my hands and fingers to make patterns in paint and foam and corn flour. I find it calming and fun. I am using my voice more to communicate and often join in during song-time and counting activities. I use PECS to make choices and I am always the first to request my favourite song during drama games, usually the pirate song which involves the water spray! I have made lots of progress since I started at Willow Dene and all the adults in my class are very proud of my achievements.

## Christmas Fair

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December we had our Christmas Fair at Willow Dene and it truly was a whole school initiative with people from all sectors of our community rallying round to help.

As always we had a fantastic response to appeals for help both with the preparation and on the day of the fair. In the week leading up to it we had a party of volunteers who spent a whole day wrapping presents, putting mistletoe into bunches and sorting through donated items, other parents hit the streets of Greenwich going round some of the shops asking for donations for our raffle. As always people were very generous, not only with raffle prizes but also with donations of cakes for our cake stall, toiletries, toys, mistletoe and much more.

Sparrow class shopped for our tombola stall, they wrapped the prizes and then did a brilliant job of selling tickets and helping punters to see if their cards matched and to find their prizes. This was so successful that the stall had to close early when they ran out of prizes.

Woodlark and Skylark classes had their own stall, having spent lots of time leading up to the fair making cards, soap, candles and ornaments to sell. They too helped on the stall and did a great job of selling their handmade gifts.



Balloon prizes for hook a duck

Hand made gifts



Hook a duck

Sparrow class on the tombola stall



Cakes and sweets



Keeping tea and coffee flowing

All in all the day was a huge success and we took an amazing total of £1,200.00, we are all very happy with that figure....

## CLASS FOCUS – Swan Class

The seven boys in Swan class have had a fun term. We have been on a bear hunt around the school, finding bears hidden amongst the displays in the corridors. All the children enjoyed reading this story, especially getting to press the switch to say 'Uh-oh!' David even started saying it himself. We also learned about language such as 'over', 'under' and 'through'. As an added bonus, the children were amazed to find themselves going on a watery bear hunt in our new swimming pool.

We also had a topic on hats, where the children tried on different hats in the story, and were particularly fascinated by the plasma ball which came out when we wore the wizard's hat. The children also made and decorated their own hats.

As Christmas approached we said goodbye to the diggers which had been a source of much intrigue as they knocked down the old building, and began to see our playground take shape, which we can't wait to start using in the new year.

Some things the Swan boys have learned this term: how to ask for something using PECS; how to use their voices expressively; new play skills and social skills such as taking turns in games; identifying numbers; cooking skills; self-care skills such as brushing teeth; and how to be a good friend.

