

Willow Dene News

Friday 31st January 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you have been managing to stay warm in the recent cold spell! The schools both look beautiful on frosty mornings, but the temperatures have caused us a few operational problems with frozen water at Oakmere Road and frozen playgrounds at Swingate Lane.

In the last few weeks we have enjoyed sharing our Ofsted report with everybody. We have had some lovely comments and feedback from parents and families, the Local Authority and other professionals and we wanted to share just a few of these with you. Julie Taylor, Head of School Improvement, Inclusion, Learning and Achievement for Royal Borough of Greenwich emailed us to say, 'What an amazing read and I really recognise the school in the text of the letter'. Mary Whitehead our Chair of Trustees and John Camp sent a letter which said 'The Ofsted Inspection report that was published this week recognises the strength and dedication of the whole team at Willow Dene. We have long known that Willow Dene is an exceptional place to thrive and it is wonderful that this has been externally recognised by Ofsted'. These comments, along with those on Twitter, in home-school contact books and via email are lovely feedback for our team and very much appreciated. In the last three weeks both Southrise and Wingfield have had their Ofsted inspections and so we have been well placed to share the learning and knowledge from our experience to support them.

We are now in the middle of preparing for our next external validation. We will have our MOVE re-accreditation visit in the last week of the February half term. The MOVE Programme helps disabled children and young adults gain independent movement. It uses the combined approach of education, therapy and family knowledge to teach the skills of sitting, standing, walking and transitioning. We currently hold the MOVE Quality Mark and Centre of Excellence status, which together recognise us as an example of best practice which provides continuity for the programme on a local, regional, and even national level; opening our doors to other interested parties to showcase our achievements and encourage participation in

The MOVE Programme. Our accreditation visit will involve a two-day review by external assessors where they will look at all aspects of school life.

Last week we held our first Parent Wellbeing Week as part of our work on our Core Priority about encouraging healthier lifestyle choices for families. During the week parents had the opportunity to join yoga, cooking, stressbusting workshops and more. It was great for us to make links with providers who we can work with in the future and we hope, for the parents involved that participating in the week itself contributed to your well-being as well as giving some ideas for the future. We would love to hear from you if you have ideas about what other events or initiatives might support this Core Priority and you can contact Matt, Vicky or Michele to talk more.

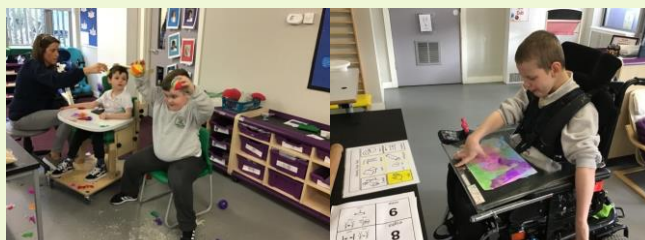
In other news, we are excitedly planning our next set of new projects. Following our fish tank disaster last year which resulted in the removal of our Swingate Lane tank, we are now ready to have a new Marine tank put in place. At the same time, we will be installing a fish tank at Oakmere Road but this one, in accordance with the wishes of School Council will hold coral and crustaceans. We are looking forward to the children becoming experts on shrimps, crabs and coral! We expect the installations to begin before Easter. We are researching an exciting 3D 'wrap' learning wall for the long wall outside the halls at Swingate Lane. This will transform the wall space into another environment and can even include scenes from a favourite book! Look out for a public vote coming to help decide what the display should be about. We are also moving full steam ahead with our plans for a 'swim spa' at Oakmere Road following governor approval last term. Situated in our playground at Oakmere Road in a purpose-built building, we believe that the water resistance opportunities that the swim spa will provide will enable our older children to have regular swims without needing to travel across sites. Watch out for a preview of the plans coming soon.

Rachel Harrison
Executive Head Teacher of
Willow Dene School

Greenfinch Class

Greenfinch class are enjoying our topic 'What Happens If...?' so far this term and we have already been really busy experimenting! In art we have been experimenting with techniques we can use to create our artwork. This week we looked at 'bleeding', using colourful crepe paper and watching the colours run into our card to leave us with some beautiful designs. Pop in and take a look at our 'Wow Work' board where you will see our latest artwork displayed!

In Science, we have been learning about scientists and conducting experiments around their theories, discoveries and findings. So far, we have tested gravity after discovering Albert Einstein and this week we looked into Zewail Ahmed and his use of laser chemistry. Also this term, we have been delving into the world of role play during our play and leisure sessions, and are looking forward to taking a trip to the Discover Centre later this term to use our role play skills in new imaginative worlds, who knows where our imagination will take us!



Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) Team News

We are straight back into the swing of things after the Christmas break! Here is a little update on what has been happening in SaLT:

The Universal & Targeted Service

This is the service we provide to the whole school and whole class groups. No child needs a referral to Speech and Language Therapy to benefit from this service. Some examples of universal & targeted activities we have completed this academic year include:

- PECS Staff Training Refresher
- Staff AAC Training
- Joint School-SaLT project to update visual support around the school
- Parent AAC Training for communication device users
- PECS group in Goldcrest Class
- Joint SaLT-Music Therapy group in Magpie class

The Specialist Service

We continue to manage a large number of children on the specialist SaLT caseload. Children may require an episode of care from SaLT if their needs cannot be met by the universal & targeted service alone. Our specialist caseload is needs-based, therefore, we try to discharge children following an episode of care so that we remain accessible to all children in the school.

The Speech and Language Therapy team are based on the Willow Dene School site and a member of the team is here Monday – Friday.

If you would like to contact a member of the therapy team at any point to discuss your child's communication or their feeding safety then please do feel free to call us on 020 8317 8596 or write a note in your child's home contact book for your child's class team to pass on.

Twitter News



At Willow Dene we strive to support the well-being of all our parents and carers. Our recent parent well-being week was a great success! Lots of fun activities to try included yoga, cooking, wellbeing and making and meeting supportive friends and staff.

To hear about all the exciting opportunities we are planning and to share more of what is going on at Willow Dene, and to stay up to date with what is happening as it happens, with useful information and links, follow us on twitter @willowdenesch

To join, simply go to www.twitter.co.uk, click 'Sign Up' and follow the prompts on screen

Sensory Service News

Lizzie writes:

I visit the children that wear hearing aids at both the Swingate and Oakmere sites. Depending on the child's needs, I visit each child either weekly, half termly or termly.

One child I visit each week is Toby, Greenfinch Class. We go off together to find a quiet room to work in. He likes to carry my bag of activities for me on his chair table. Once settled in our quiet place, I lay out all our toys that we are going to use. Unless I am introducing a new activity, Toby knows what each toy will be used for and he is ready to go.

One of our favourite warm up activities uses a big silk scarf. Toby chooses whose turn it will be to go under the scarf - it's always my turn because, well, I tend to fall asleep whilst I am covered by a scarf and he likes to wake me up! Whilst we have developed this game over the past months, Toby has learned to show me that he wants to start with the scarf game by pointing specifically; telling me it's my turn by pointing at me; then asking to do it again by signing 'more'. This may sound easy for some but for Toby and I it has meant that he can join in fully with the activity and control it too. He laughs and laughs when he finds me asleep as he pulls off the scarf! He then copies me wagging my finger at him and putting my hands on my hips because I'm 'cross' that he woke me up...

Not all our activities are quite this raucous, but they do all have a purpose for communication and fun is usually the name of the game. Sometimes the simplest of activities can bring big rewards. Everything learned in a session with Lizzie should ultimately be something the child can use in class and at home if the opportunity arises.

Here is the 2020 team structure for Sensory Service.

Team Leader: Rory McDonnell

VI team staff currently working at Willow Dene:

Alison Hollands – Teacher of Visually Impaired

Catherine Davies – Teacher of Visually Impaired – going on Maternity Leave at February Half Term

Tiffanie Wood-Heath – Habilitation Officer

Denise Dean – Outreach Support Worker

HI team staff currently working at Willow Dene:

Lizzie Bourne – Teacher of the Deaf

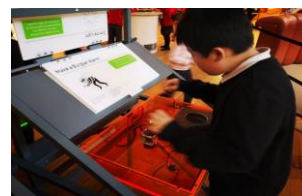
Tina Dhunday – Deaf Instructor

Compass News – South Rise School Focus

Last week was a very busy week for school visits at South Rise. To support this term's science learning, focused on electricity, Year 4 visited the Science Museum. They took part in a workshop in the Equinor Gallery: Wonder Lab. This part of the museum is about children using their skills, experimenting and thinking as a scientist – being curious, looking closely and thinking creatively. They were given the opportunity to get hands on, completing broken circuits, detecting face moving electrons and observing bolts of static electricity. The children were full of excitement about their visit and were particularly enthusiastic about the giant slides!

As part of their literacy learning, our Reception children visited Under One Roof to see the production of The Three Little Pigs. The children laughed lots and enjoyed joining in with key phrases from the story. There was also an opportunity for the children to build a house for one of the pigs. This was a really memorable visit for the children.

Finally, Year 3 took part in a London Bubble Theatre trip to the banks of the River Thames. This experience involved talking part in an archaeological dig for Stone Age relics. This trip allowed the children to consolidate their learning about this period in history.



Compass Events – open to all of our schools

School/Trust event	Date & Time	Event
Willow Dene	Every Tuesday at 10:30 – 11:30	Speakeasy: Coffee morning with the chance to chat to other parents and listen to key speakers on a range of topics
Willow Dene	Every Friday at 10:00 - 10:30	EYFS Sharing Time: A chance to celebrate all the achievements in EYFS with family and friends
Wingfield	13th February	Parent & Carer workshop: E-Safety
Wingfield	5th March	Parent & Carer workshop: Healthy Eating
Wingfield	2nd April	Parent & Carer workshop: Anti-bullying