

WILLOW DENE NEWS

FRIDAY 9th February 2018 - ISSUE NO: 123



Dear Parents and Carers

This is our last newsletter before February half term. We are looking forward to the warmer and drier months ahead! Don't forget that school re-opens for children on Tuesday February 20th. Staff will be returning for an exciting Inset day the day before which will include rebound training and the start of a week of a hydrotherapy project called Liquid Vibrations. Liquid Vibrations uses an innovative approach to listening by providing underwater listening sessions to special needs children in hydrotherapy pools. They combine a thorough and relaxing listening programme with Aquatic Body Therapy (Watsu) training and practice to enhance the listening experience. Liquid Vibrations will be working with children from across the school.

We are very excited to have received our Autism Accreditation report after the accreditation visit in November. We are very pleased to confirm that we have been re-accredited at both Swingate Lane and Oakmere Road. The report is very positive and the conclusion is included below for you to read: *'The awarding panel congratulates Willow Dene School upon maintaining the high standards required of Autism Accreditation. The school has demonstrated a strong and continuing commitment to the Autism Accreditation process, this being the second time they have been accredited. The Accreditation review team were clearly very impressed with the multi-professional approach taken to providing individualised support'*.

We have also been invited to nominate ourselves for a commendation in one of our identified areas of strength. We will keep you updated of our progress. More details from the report will be on our website soon.

Last week we also submitted an application for the 'Shine a Light Awards' which is an initiative run by The Communication Trust which calls on all schools, teams, young people and individuals who champion innovative work and excellent practice in supporting children and young people's communication development. We have submitted evidence showing how we support our children to communicate and how we prioritise this area in the school. Watch this space to see how we get on!

As usual, the last two weeks have been busy with visits and visitors. We have hosted the Forest School Learning Initiative (FSLI) training day for delegates to experience our Forest School first hand. FSLI trains Forest School students all over England and we are very pleased to have forged such a valuable partnership with them. We also held our first Compass Partnership of Schools Recruitment Morning at Willow Dene. The morning was designed to encourage potential teachers to come and find out more about us. It was really well attended with

about 15 teachers meeting to hear from staff from across the partnership before choosing a school tour.

We have been out and about supporting Goldsmiths University of London Primary PGCE program by delivering some lectures focused on specialist teaching. This will be further supported later in the term when students will visit Willow Dene and spend some time in classes. Last year the University kindly collated comments from the students about their experiences. The Programme Leader told us: *'The comments clearly show that the visits were valued not only because it improved their understanding of specialist teaching but also because it has already impacted their practice'*.

Don't forget Safer Internet Day on Tuesday 6th February... watch our Twitter feed @willowdenesch for information for families to support children to stay safer online. Have a happy and safe half term holiday.

John Camp
Executive Headteacher
of the Compass Partnership

Carolyn Vagg &
Rachel Harrison
Co-Headteachers

GOVERNOR NEWS

It seems a little late to be wishing everyone a Happy New Year, but please accept very best wishes from the school governors for the coming year.

Things are settling down now following setting up of the Multi Academy Trust. Governors agreed the structure for the school governing body - now known as the Local Governing Body (LGB) - at our November meeting. We're trying to keep things as similar to pre-MAT arrangements as possible, so we're keeping a governing body of 13 which will include a minimum of 3 parent governors, 2 staff and co-optees from the local community.

Governors have an important role to play in supporting staff in the running of the school and trying to ensure parent views and concerns are addressed, and the more parents, staff and local people are involved the better. A number of governors have carried over from the previous arrangements for continuity, but we have several vacancies in all categories - so if any of you are interested in becoming a governor for Willow Dene we'd love to hear from you. Please ask at the school or contact me directly and I'll be happy to explain what's involved.

The LGB meets twice a term in the early evening. This month we'll be electing our officers, and the incoming Chair will advise you of who these are in our next article - or look on the school website. Governors try to keep in touch with pupils, parents and staff but most of us work too, so it's possible we haven't met you yet.

If you'd like to get in touch with any of us just ask at the school office or email me at leperks@outlook.com

With very best wishes, Linda Perks, Chair of Governors

DORMOUSE CLASS

Another half-term has flown by here in Dormouse class! We have had a wonderful half-term of learning, creativity and more importantly, fun. Our topic has been 'A Stitch in Time', so we have been exploring all things fabric and textiles related.

In DT, we have designed and created our own fabric items, including beautiful new swimming bags and some bunting for our classroom.

In TPPC, we have explored fashion and textiles through history. We have created our own pre-historic fur, dyed our own fabric using vegetables for a toga with the Romans, made our own Victorian lace and super groovy 70s tie-dye.

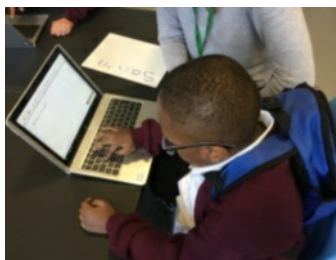
In Art, we have explored fabrics from around the world and recreated textiles such as Scottish tartans, Japanese silks and Ghanaian Kente Cloth.

You may have seen on twitter that some of our children built a fantastic den in play and leisure. We have been focusing our play skills on construction this half-term and we have seen some wonderful creations.

Our story for this half-term has been 'Coat of Many Colours' written by Dolly Parton. We have enjoyed exploring different fabrics and learning how they are attached together. We now all know the Dolly Parton song too!

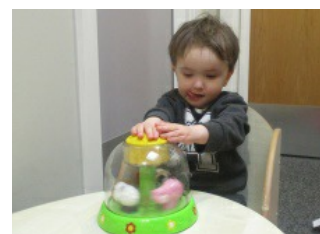
We have continued to work on our physical skills and Move targets too. Some of us are now back in equipment that we haven't been able to use for a while. You can see some of our P.E work on the KS3 Blog on the school website.

Next term our topic is W.O.M.A.D and we will be focusing on all things based around the creative arts, music, art and drama. So lots to look forward to!



TOUCAN NEWS

Toucan have welcomed two new children and their families this term. They are both settling well and we are enjoying getting to know them and sharing this with their parents. We have been enjoying farm animal stories and toys. This started because one of our children really likes a farm carousel toy and started to sing 'eieioh' when he was playing with it. We have now made some lovely bright duck mobiles to hang in class. They remind us that Spring is coming soon!



MOVE NEWS

There has been lots of wonderful Move work going on throughout the school this term. This is demonstrated in some of our displays around the school which illustrate how Move can be diverse and adapted to individual children.

Both Woodlark and Skylark classes have been working hard on their Move targets in new and exciting ways and across the curriculum.

In other news, later in the month we are holding a Move Open Day. Schools are invited to visit and learn about Move and how we implement it into everyday life.

Look out for more information about this and other Move events coming soon.



KESTREL CLASS

We have been very busy learning about different periods in history and animal and plant growth.

We have immersed ourselves in Ancient Egypt by making pyramids using various materials, making reed boats, creating Pharaoh masks and trying mummification! We have also learned about the Normans, creating Norman costumes for our characters and practicing braiding threads.

We have been planting flowers in Science, and thinking about how to keep healthy, this work included doing a blind-folded food tasting to try and identify healthy and unhealthy foods!

