

# WILLOW DENE NEWS



FRIDAY 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018

## Dear Parents and Carers

This is the last newsletter before half term. It has been a very busy few weeks with lots of exciting things happening as you will see from this edition of the newsletter.

Last week we started the week at the O2 supporting some of our children in Key Stage 3 who were nominated for and received awards from the Jack Petchey Award Scheme. The Jack Petchey Award recognises outstanding young people between the ages of 11-25 throughout London and Essex. The scheme supports our Key Stage 3 curriculum and links to our specialist interest afternoons which celebrate individual strengths and areas of interest. Willow Dene was very proud of the four children who received awards for reasons ranging from interest in music, to peer support and bravery in the face of change. Congratulations to Ovie, Louise, Sofia and Aaron. We are very proud of you!

It was lovely to see so many of you joining us at our Sensory Processing Speakeasy last week where Mandy Baines our Sensory processing Co-ordinator was able to give advice and listen to you talking about your child's sensory needs over a cup of coffee. We hope it was a useful session.

Last week was also the week of our very successful school journey to Kingswood with children in Y5-Y9. Everyone achieved so much and had lots of fun along the way. There are lots of photographs of school journey on twitter @willowdenesch Watch this space for details of the upcoming school journeys to Downe, Wrotham and our first Big School Sleepover at Oakmere Road.

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that as part of our Core Priority focus on mental health and well-being, we asked all staff to complete a questionnaire about their well-being and how we can improve this. We have been busy analysing the results and the survey showed overwhelmingly positive responses with a few pointers of areas we can act on to ensure staff are well-supported in their work. Last week, all classes marked Mental Health Awareness Week by taking part in activities to support the mental health and wellbeing of children. Activities ranged from listening to 'happy music' designed to stimulate dopamine and serotonin production in the brain to an afternoon of fun filled with favourite activities to turning classrooms into creative and expressive hotspots!

On Wednesday this week we are welcoming photographers into school to take photographs for some of our new upcoming presentations. These will include our Key Stage 4 brochure and new school prospectus.

Children in year 6 from Alderwood School, one of our Compass Partnership schools, visited Willow Dene on Thursday. They visited us to share some of our specialist learning environments and equipment with Kestrel class. They had a packed day enjoying a swim session in our pool, cookery, forest school and the virtual reality headsets.

We couldn't let last weekend pass without marking the Royal Wedding celebrations and our Early Years & Foundation Stage classes had a mini-topic about the Royal Wedding last Friday. Activities included the making of the most beautiful

cakes which were iced with red, white and blue icing by Lapwing class.

We were pleased to contribute to the Greenwich Parent Voice embracing diversity event on May 12<sup>th</sup> with a beautiful banner and we are looking forward to hosting the Greenwich Parent Voice and Royal Greenwich family information and fun day later in the term. Some of our eye gaze artists have been creating amazing eye gaze art to decorate tote bags at the event.

On Tuesday we celebrated Move day along with other schools in the national and international Move community. The theme this year was 'Move at the Circus' and on Tuesday our school was transformed with a host of exciting activities to encourage children to move and use their physical skills. Highlights included making comedy sound effects with our music therapists by rolling a ball down a ramp, hoola hooping with rings of fire, driving a clown car and creating a party train! Look out for pictures on Twitter and on our website.

If you follow us on Twitter you will know that School Council recently gave the public some options to help make Willow Dene more environmentally friendly. Options included banning plastic bottles and introducing scrap paper trays amongst others. The winning vote after a week-long poll went to introducing class plants. We have researched some plants recommended by NASA which produce oxygen and help our environment. Classes will get to choose their plant and school council will give some tips on how to look after them. Watch this space to see how we get on!

We would like to thank you all for your ongoing support and to wish you a happy and safe half term holiday.

**John Camp**  
Executive Headteacher  
of the Compass Partnership

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

## TWEET IN SPOTLIGHT

The results of our poll are in! To see more tweets like this, stay up to date with what is happening as it happens and get useful information and links, follow us on twitter @willowdenesch To join, simply go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com), click 'Sign Up' and follow the prompts on screen.



## BADGER CLASS

Badger class have had lots of fun embracing Mental Health Awareness week and engaging in lots of creative activities in order to develop mental well-being. We have particularly enjoyed sensory based creative art sessions; these have been fantastic for developing attention and collaborative work skills whilst exploring our creativity. We began the sessions by watching an adult model a piece of artwork and then took turns to contribute to a shared piece of work in the group circle. We then transitioned to the group table to create our own unique works of art! We have made some beautiful artwork and are very proud of our achievements!



## PUPIL VOICE

You may be aware through twitter and our school website that this year Willow Dene have begun working with ACE - a board made up of a group of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, who meet regularly to share views on council services, in order to improve quality and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We have had two ACE meetings so far and these have been lots of fun!

Our first session was focused around a Greenwich fun day. This is something Greenwich are planning and they wanted our views on what should be on offer on the day. One of the ACE groups from a different setting had suggested we sell paintings, so during our first session we got creative, designing canvas' based on the theme 'Growing up in Greenwich'. We also had a vote on where the money raised should go, and our vote will be added together with the vote of all the other young people within ACE groups.

For our second session, Greenwich wanted to ensure that the activities we enjoy are fully accessible for us, and for other children and young people with SEND. We had lots of photos and symbols of a range of different activities to do in Greenwich and we each sorted these symbols into activities we enjoy, activities we don't enjoy and activities that we don't mind. This created lots of discussion amongst us and we were really interested to see how our opinions compared to others within our group. We then narrowed our results down, with each of us choosing the top three activities that we enjoyed and presenting these to the group. Our results were collated by ACE and these will be shared with Greenwich once all of the ACE groups have had their say. As a result of this we should see more of our favourite activities become fully accessible!

We cannot wait to see what important decisions we will be making in our next meeting! Don't forget to follow our twitter account for photographs and up to date news! Twitter - @willowdenesch

## SALT TEAM NEWS

It's the Summer Term - how did that happen!

We have had a very busy school year so far. Here is a snapshot of what we have been up to:

- ASD parent training 14 March 2018: SaLT teamed up with Claire Bayfield (Deputy Head) to deliver training to parents on ASD and Communication. It was a great day and feedback from parents was they found the training very useful.
- Intensive Interaction Training for Staff: SaLT delivered an intensive interaction training session with teachers and assistants. Intensive interaction is a therapy approach which can be used with children with ASD or complex needs to help encourage social interaction, attention and communication.
- Talking button at reception: SaLT collaborated with Matthew Reay (assistant head) to install a talking button at reception for non-verbal children to use when they deliver the register.
- Language Group: SaLT and Sparrow class teacher, Charlie, have set up a language group for some students in the class.
- Lego Therapy Group: Students from Goldcrest class have been involved in small group therapy the past two terms.
- Music & Communication Group: Otter class has been working jointly with SaLT to incorporate communication and interaction into their weekly music session.

If you would like to contact us about your child's communication and feeding, please feel free to phone us on 0208 317 8596 or leave a note in your child's home-school book and we will get in touch.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Half Term Holidays	28 <sup>th</sup> May - 1 <sup>st</sup> June
Last day of summer term	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2018