

WILLOW DENE NEWS



Willow Dene
SCHOOL

FRIDAY 22nd March 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

This newsletter has lots of information about just some of the charities, organisations and causes we are currently supporting and some information about those who support us. These links are chosen and nurtured with care to reflect our school ethos and values.

We are starting off with a summary of just some of the things that happened during our exciting Book Week which takes place annually and revolves around World Book Day. World Book Day celebrates stories and promotes a love of reading. Thank you to everyone who joined our Book Week dress up day and to Morrisons, Welling who visited us to give us a beautiful book hamper. The whole school was immersed in a world of fiction for the week. Mandy, our Sensory Processing coordinator told messy food stories about pizza and watermelon in the Food Technology room. Our Music Therapists took us on a musical storytelling journey. Willow Dene's immersive drama experts performed the story 'All Mixed Up', the story of a boy who is unhappy with his body. Some children visited The Unicorn Theatre to see a dramatic story about the seasons. Across the school classes experienced different books and stories with a whole range of narrators. Our next Specialist Week will be Healthy Living Week in the summer term.

A massive 'Congratulations and thank you' to Karen and Gayle, Mum and Aunty of Toby in Nightingale class. They ran the Big Half Marathon for Willow Dene on Sunday 10th March, raising more than £3000 for Friends of Willow Dene. Continuing the running theme, thank you to everyone who donated flour, food colouring for our Holi Festival of Happiness Celebration for our 'Colour Run' on 20th March to raise money for Friends of Willow Dene. Unfortunately, due to the field being too wet and muddy and to ensure everyone's safety, we had to cancel the Colour Run. Sponsor money will be kept safe and we will let you know when we reschedule it. Thank you for your continued support.

Last week our staff joined our Speech and Language Therapists in raising awareness of dysphagia on Swallowing Awareness Day. Staff across the school were encouraged to **#downfordysphagia** by trying a range of thickened drinks and guessing the consistency. See our Twitter Feed **@willowdenesch** to see how we got on!

We also supported Red Nose Day on March 15th. Comic Relief spends the money that is raised through Red Nose Day and Sport Relief on disadvantaged people living in the UK and around the world. We joined the jokers by dressing in red for the day and holding a bake sale.

As part of our Core Priority about Environmental Sustainability we have been re-thinking our approach to recycling. We have been supported by the Greenwich Waste and Street Advisor Services who have led training

for staff and have also been holding workshops in classes across the school.

Last week school council at Oakmere Road was talking about how to make our playground more environmentally friendly. They were discussing ideas such as a wormery, butterfly bushes and bird boxes; all of which support their interest in making us a 'greener' school.

It was really good to see so many at the Parent Consultation with RBG to talk about the revised Home to School Travel Assistance Policy. It was important that as many of you could attend, support each other and give your feedback. Hopefully this will help inform the planning of future developments for home to school travel.

Watch this space for an update on our fundraising amounts and updates from this week's news items. Thank you for joining in and encouraging our endeavours. We believe that all of our children should be valued and valuable members of society and being part of these events is a crucial aspect of this which would not be possible without your support.

Rachel Harrison

MUSIC THERAPY

We will be welcoming back to our staff team from April, Oonagh Jones, music therapist. She is a very experienced music therapist and part of the NHS Oxleas team for many years. She will re-join the existing staff team of 3: Ergina, Richard and Nicky. Oonagh plays the violin and viola, which brings a rich expansion of musical experience for our students, as well as her considerable experience, with all age ranges, but particularly the under fives.

Since September 2018 at Oakmere road, in addition to the Jammin' group, we have worked with the whole of Squirrel class for a whole term and have just started with the whole of Badger class. Both classes show musical and social responses which surprise and enthuse us all as a wider team.

Ergina and Richard led 2 sessions for 4 classes in total during book week. They used a multi-modal approach, which as the first quote below shows, was very well received. As music therapists we revel in such creative challenges from school and also value being fully included in a whole school project.

Some quotes from parents and staff :

'Thank-you so much for doing such a fantastic session for book week. I've heard such good things and we couldn't have done it without you!'

'His singing is so expressivemore than anything'

Parent

Teachers organising Book week

DORMOUSE CLASS

Dormouse class had a fantastic time during Book Week, from very messy stories about runaway pancakes to mystical space adventures in the dark room - we loved getting involved in the story telling! Each day was packed full of book inspired activities, one of our favourites was 'I Ain't Gonna Paint No More!' by Karen Beaumont, it was full of music and art and we were excited to paint our own faces, hands and feet afterwards. We also enjoyed exploring using our senses in the dark room for the story 'The Queen's Lift Off' by Steve Anthony. We had fun noticing all the different lights and sounds connected to the book and felt like we were in our own spaceship, looking at the stars and planets around us! We look forward to more sensory stories as part of this term's theme, Mix It Up, when we will be taking part in 'Green Eggs and Ham' by Dr Seus and 'Seasons Come, Seasons Go' by Britta Teckentrup.



COMPASS NEWS

We held the first meeting of our new **Parent Forum** near to the end of last term to establish how the Forum would work, what topics our parents wanted to explore, and how they would seek feedback and views from their individual school communities. Parents felt it would be a really good idea to provide schools with regular **Compass updates** via each school's weekly newsletter so that we are all aware of what is happening across our family of schools, and to help us promote events more prominently. Each week we will post a short update under the heading **Compass News** so that each school community is able to keep in touch with developments across the Trust. We also have the main Compass Partnership website that contains all the up to date information you may need, as well as news reports on key Trust-wide events: <http://compass-partnership.uk>

Our Parent Forum meets again near to the end of March and will be looking at the area of inclusion; receiving a presentation from our Trust Lead for SEND and Social Justice, which will detail our proposals for enhancing inclusive and specialised provision across our group of schools.



School Focus: Horn Park

Last week at Horn Park, we celebrated World Book Day in style! We kick started the week with a visit from the wonderful Karen McCombie who has written over 90 books! The children and staff were very excited to buy a signed copy of one of her books. As part of her visit, Year 5 and 6 took part in a suspense writing workshop where Karen shared her top tips for writing exciting stories whilst also inspiring the children to write their own short suspense stories in groups.



On Thursday, the school was filled with a wide variety of different book characters.



"World Book Day is amazing I love dressing up and reading because it's so interesting!" **Juno, Year 2**

Everyone made such a fantastic effort and it was wonderful to see so many of us sharing our favourite stories and talking about why we love reading so much.

Compass Events

Compass Concert @ Thomas Tallis, 6:30 - 8pm **Thursday 28th March**. Please contact your school office to purchase tickets.

OSPREY CLASS

We have been having lots of fun in Osprey class learning about colour mixing with the help of the book 'Mix it up' by Herve Tullet. We have been focusing on our primary colours and what colours we can create when these are mixed together. Osprey class benefit from learning in a very practical and sensory driven way and have enjoyed creating large scale pieces of art work to show off their colour mixing explorations!



TWEET OF THE WEEK

Our relationship with our parents is really important! Good to see the work we do on our Compass Parent Forum referenced by the Education Secretary in a recent TES Article!

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.



**TO ALL PARENTS AND CARERS
YOU ARE INVITED TO...**

FRIENDS OF WILLOW DENE PRESENTS

**THE BIG
SPRING
FLING**

29TH MARCH 6PM-8PM
TICKETS £3. LIVE BAND, PHOTO
BOOTH, REFRESHMENTS AND
EASTER RAFFLE.

WILLOW DENE SCHOOL, SWINGATE LANE