

# WILLOW DENE NEWS



Willow Dene  
SCHOOL

FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to school year 2019 – 2020! We are delighted to be back in school and excited about the year ahead.

We began the holiday with a fun filled, enjoyable holiday playscheme. During our two weeks we enjoyed swimming and Forest School on site and ventured out into Greenwich and beyond. We enjoyed a private screening at Greenwich Picture House, a trip to the Sega virtual arcade at Bluewater, local parks and a day at Mudchute City Farm. We are really pleased to be working with RBG Children's Services to extend our tender to provide future holiday schemes. We have also agreed to extend our temporary Saturday Short Breaks Club indefinitely which means that we can make plans for the future! We also hosted the London Philharmonic Orchestra's Open Sound Ensemble for secondary aged children and families. We were lucky enough to be involved in a year long project with LPO at Swingate lane last year and it was good to extend this opportunity to our Oakmere Road families.

During the holidays we were busy making some changes to our environment. Toucan and EYFS were decorated with Airlite paint, which is an environmentally friendly paint and which should improve our air quality. The car park walls at Oakmere Road have been cleaned and re-pointed and we have had new internal doors installed. Most exciting has been the installation of our rain garden at Swingate Lane. The area outside reception has been landscaped and replanted with marsh and aquatic plants. The rain channels collect rainwater from the bus canopies and funnel them to the rain chains which feed the water to the ground. The rain garden was part of our Environment Core Priority last year and it will be complete early next week. Look out for photographs on Twitter @willowdenesch

Our start of term Inset days began with the annual Compass Conference. We heard from speaker Muffi Patel about transforming futures and transforming communities and from Olympic hockey players Kate Walsh and Helen Richardson about creating a culture of success. During the Inset days all our mandatory training was completed including safeguarding, medical competencies, positive handling and training from our therapy team. We also delivered Move training at Beatrice Tate School.

We are starting the year with seven new Core Priorities which will drive improvement across the school. This year our Core Priorities focus on Sensory Processing, procurement of resources, Learning Technology, healthy living, curriculum development, culture and assessment. You can see the Core Priorities on display in every classroom and on our website. They form the basis of our School Development Plan which is also on our website. We will be talking about them more at a Speakeasy later in the term and welcome your thoughts.

We were very happy to see so many smiley children arrive back in school and to begin welcoming our new children and families starting across the school. It was lovely to see so many new faces at our first Speakeasy session, we are looking forward to many more to come. This year we have our first cohort of year 11 children at Oakmere Road. They are due to leave us at the end of this year at the age of 16. It doesn't seem possible that our journey into secondary provision began almost 5 years ago. We are very proud of our year 11 group and are looking forward to seeing what this year has in store for them.

This half term our topics focus around a central theme of Relationships. Lots of fun & exciting learning opportunities are planned in appropriate class topics and explained in a Topic Descriptor for each class. You can see these on display in every class in school.

Watch this space for news about our upcoming projects which include our new fish-tanks, plans for a swim spa at Oakmere Road and our next stage in deciding whether to get a school dog.

**Rachel Harrison**  
Head Teacher

## TWEET OF THE WEEK

What an amazing experience for one of our students to meet a rather special Duchess! We love to share, celebrate and support the wonderful experiences our children have at School and in the community! 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

**Willow Dene School** @WillowDeneSch · 14 Sep

Earlier this week one of our children represented @EvelinaLondon at the opening of the Back to Nature Play Garden at @RHSWisley and may have been spotted chatting to someone rather special! @KensingtonRoyal



2

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33



To join Twitter, simply go to [www.twitter.co.uk](http://www.twitter.co.uk), click 'Sign Up' and follow the prompts on screen.

## ROBIN CLASS

We are very excited about the start of this new academic year and we are enjoying spending some time getting to know each other through fun games and stories.

The topic for this half term will be **This is me!** With the help of the story **Only One You** by **Linda Kranz** we will be exploring our likes and dislikes, developing a sense of self-identity and understanding of what makes us unique, and will be sharing it with others, creating new relationships and friendships.

There will be plenty of opportunities to make choices and communicate, but look at us, settling in our new class, exploring resources and sharing activities!



## SWIM NEWS

We are pleased to announce we have had underwater speakers installed in the pool. These enhance Liquid Vibration sessions by offering a completely relaxing and sensory experience, listening to music under and above water. Music alongside massage and movement relaxes both the mind and body. We are now extending our Liquid Vibration sessions to allow more of our children to experience this type of therapy by extending out to Secondary as well as Primary pupils.

## COMPASS NEWS

We had a fantastic start to the new academic year at our Annual Compass Conference on Monday 2nd September. Staff, trustees and governors from across our seven schools, attended the event, kindly hosted again by Halley Academy. Our theme this year was 'Stronger Together' and this was brought out powerfully by our keynote speakers. We heard from Helen Richardson-Walsh MBE and Kate Richardson-Walsh OBE, Team GB Gold Winning Olympic Hockey Players, about creating a culture of success, Muffi Hamid Patel CBE, Chief Executive of Star Academies, spoke passionately about the responsibility of all adults to bring children hope, and Professor Sam Twisleton OBE, talked of the importance of a curriculum design that is purposeful, developmental and relevant, in order to enable effective learning. We are looking forward to taking the messages from today with us into the year ahead, they certainly resonated with our Trust values of ambition, optimism, and resilience.



### Compass Events - open to all of our schools

School/Trust event	Date & Time	Event
Willow Dene	Every Wednesday 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 10 -10.30	EYFS Sharing Time: A chance to celebrate all the achievements in EYFS with family and friends
Deansfield	7 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Fayre

## DORMOUSE CLASS

We had a fantastic time in our first week back, diving straight in with lots of movement and massage for our Pilates sessions and dressing up during Play & Leisure with our friends in Pool Frog! We also absolutely love our new addition to the class - a teepee! It is our new favourite place to read and relax during playtimes. We are looking forward to this term's topic 'All About Me!'. From expressing our creativity in art, to make self portraits, to exploring our local area in Forest Schools, we can't wait to learn more about ourselves and each other!

