

# WILLOW DENE NEWS



Willow Dene  
SCHOOL

FRIDAY 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019

## Dear Parents and Carers

We hope you had an enjoyable half term break. It was lovely to see children so happy to arrive back in school after the holiday and we were excited to begin a new half term. This was even more exciting than usual because of our new class group. We were very sad to see Saplings close before half term. Our long-lasting partnership with them spanned over many years and we loved working with them. However, as you know, demand for places at Willow Dene is at an all-time high and at our summer term admissions panel there were a large number of children who met our admissions criteria who could not be placed because of lack of places. Therefore, eight extra spaces beginning in October, were commissioned by RBG and we agreed that Saplings would close so that the space could be used as a Willow Dene classroom. Merlin class opened last Wednesday and if you follow us on Twitter you will see that the room is looking lovely. We are very happy to welcome the children and families new to Willow Dene and look forward to getting to know you all better.

In our last newsletter we told you about the nasen awards nomination for SeeAbility and the schools working in partnership with SeeAbility, which includes Willow Dene. The nasen awards seek to recognise and share the best practice which, ultimately, really benefits children and young people with special and additional educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We were nominated in the category of Outstanding Provision where any education setting that has effectively promoted inclusion throughout the setting by providing outstanding provision that is above what's expected/average can be nominated. We attended the awards ceremony at the Waldorf Astoria with representatives from SeeAbility and the other schools. We were very excited and proud when the announcement was made that we had won! We hope that the award will help Publicise SeeAbility's Equal Right to Sight Campaign more widely.

Last week we had a busy start to the half term with our annual Support and Challenge meeting with John Camp and Jo Atkins. John and Jo read all of our school documents and then formed several lines of enquiry, which we then presented evidence about during the afternoon. These included reading, work with governors and physical development and well-being. We also had the chance to identify two areas that are a strength of the school and take John and Jo on a learning walk which focussed on these areas. We chose Sensory Processing and Behaviour and Pupil Voice. The afternoon was very rigorous but also useful and positive. We are looking forward to sharing the report soon. Last Friday we welcomed Trustees and Parent Forum representatives to Willow Dene for a full school tour at Swingate Lane and Oakmere Road. It was lovely to have representation for Willow Dene Parent Forum. These representatives added

their own unique contribution to the tour as they know the school well from a parent's perspective.

You will remember that earlier this half term we spoke at The Anchor Charity Cerebral Palsy Conference. While we were there we connected with The Parallel, a Virtual Reality Design Company who had designed some software that used VR to motivate children to complete hand and arm exercises, ultimately benefitting range, strength and stamina. Representatives from The Parallel visited us last week and we will be collaborating with them in coming months to trial their software with a group of children at Willow Dene. The project will be supported by our OT team and Move team. Watch this space to find out how we get on!

This week AHS has been our first specialist week of the year. Cultural Week has given us the opportunity to focus on the 'Time, People, Place and Culture' element of our curriculum as we have immersed ourselves in cultural experiences and activities from around the world. Each class will be focussing on one particular country during the week and we also encouraged classes to work with parents and celebrate aspects of the culture of families within the class group. We have had storytelling sessions from around the world and creative arts experiences with some of our specialist teachers. The highlight of the week was the Cultural Market today, with every class setting up a stall to share what they have been learning about.

Cultural Week supports our Core Priority about developing our cultural knowledge and understanding. We were at the Speakeasy last week talking to parents about how and why we chose our seven Core Priorities and particularly focussing on how we hope our parents and families will contribute towards them. We left the meeting feeling very positive and excited about some of the offers of support we had received.

All of our central displays have been changing in readiness for Parents Evening. If you visit school you will see reading, writing, communication and cognition as a focus for displays this term. We hope you enjoy looking at them during parents evening next week.

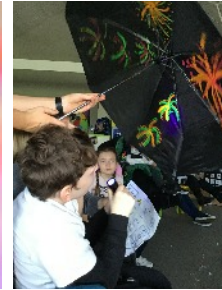
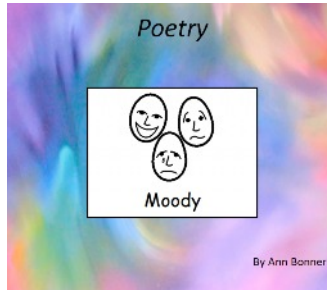
**Rachel Harrison**  
Head Teacher

### DATES TO REMEMBER

<b>Parents Evening</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> November 2019</b>
<b>Polling Day Closure</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> December 2019</b>

## SPARROW CLASS

In Sparrow class this term we are enjoying the topic 'This is me' by exploring emotion poems from the poetry book 'A First Poetry Book' by Pie Corbett and Gaby Morgan. We are currently exploring a sensory journey experience inspired by the poem 'Moody' by Ann Bonner who associates colours to emotions to help us express and learn to understand how we feel. We are also working hard on our performance skills rehearsing for our production of 'Hamlet' at the Albany theatre on November the 12<sup>th</sup>. In these drama workshops, we have been developing our sense of space, gross motor skills and have been focusing on feelings; our feelings and our characters feelings. We have also been having lots of fun building new friendships and working on our social interaction skills with new friends from other classes.



## TWEET OF THE WEEK

At Willow Dene we are always looking at innovative ways to support our children by exploring possibilities through collaborative working with new organisations and active research. 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 Twitter, simply go to [www.twitter.co.uk](http://www.twitter.co.uk), click 'Sign Up' and follow the prompts on screen.

**Willow Dene School** @WillowDene... · 30 Oct

We will be working with @TheParallelUK in the coming months... a new research partnership exploring the possibilities of using VR as a therapy simulator to improve upper limb movement. Check out the video here to find out more...



Cerebral Palsy | VR Therapy Simulator | The-Parallel Solution  
[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

## JACKDAW CLASS

We have enjoyed exploring the 'Mix it Up' book using the interactive whiteboard with the entire class during our reading lessons. However, Forest school was our favourite time as we continued to explore the forest, learning about animals and their natural habitat. During our exploration time at Forest School, the staff and pupils participated in a friendly competition down the mud slide and guess what the pupils ended up winning!



## COMPASS NEWS - Developing a coaching culture

***You're never too old to start learning, and you're never too young to aim high and achieve great things - Asa Hutchinson***

Our commitment to the power of life-long learning is one that resonates throughout the Compass Partnership of Schools. We are continually exploring opportunities to support our staff to develop their knowledge, skills and expertise. Leaders from across our schools are currently working with an external consultant to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of coaching. Coaching is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to fully develop to be effective in their commitment to themselves, the organisation, and their work. A good coach helps the individual identify and focus on what's important, which in turn accelerates success.

....Continued

Continued ...

We are committed to developing a coaching culture within our schools, making the most of staff potential, not only improving performance, but also strengthening staff commitment to the organisation. As part of this commitment, we have redefined our performance appraisal process to ensure staff at all levels have the opportunity to engage in professional development conversations that both empower and encourage their professional growth. Through developing their expertise, leaders will embed a coaching culture across our Trust. Further unlocking staff potential, will in turn ensure the continual development of the amazing provision already on offer across our schools.

### 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
Wingfield	14th November	Parent & Carer workshop: Our curriculum
Horn Park	19th November	Careers Day
Wingfield	21st November	Parent & Carer workshop: English Mastery
Horn Park	28th November	Christmas Fayre
Deansfield	5th December	Christmas Fayre
Wingfield	11th December	Christmas Fayre