



FRIDAY 5th October 2018

## Dear Parents and Carers

We are all enjoying the hustle and bustle in the school as the year gets into full swing. We have seen a change in the weather and you should all have received information about the nasal flu vaccinations taking place in school on October 10th. We are busy planning a workshop for parents of children with complex needs to discuss winter health and to give useful information, advice and tips to help keep your child healthy this winter. We are well supported in school by the CAMHS service who work with children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing. We were excited to hold our first CAMHS workshop for parents this week. The workshop had a focus on children experiencing anxiety and introduced a range of strategies to support parents to develop their understanding and learn ways to support their anxious child. We are looking forward to holding more workshops like this as the year progresses.

The last few weeks have seen us engage with a number of exciting projects with organisations outside the school. Rehearsals for our Shakespeare for Schools Festival performance of Romeo and Juliet are well underway with children from across the school participating. Last week the cast went to visit The Albany Theatre in Deptford where they will be performing their play to a live audience in November. Watch this space for details of how to purchase tickets coming soon! We are also looking forward to welcoming The London Philharmonic Orchestra to Willow Dene. We are embarking on a yearlong project with them which will see our children both perform and experience performing. Following a suggestion from a parent, we are now officially part of The Tate Year 3 Project. The Project, created by Turner Prize and Oscar-winning artist, Steve McQueen, is a major new artwork, which will culminate in one of the most ambitious schools projects that London has ever seen. The Project aims to feature photographs of Year 3 pupils across London to make the largest group portrait ever made. Our Tate photographer visit will be in March 2019 and we are excited that Willow Dene will be represented in the final work. Look out for details of our upcoming collaboration with The London Ballet Company.

As part of our whole school focus on Exercise and Healthy Living, we are excited to welcome Martin Tanner to Willow Dene. Martin is an experienced personal fitness trainer who will be working at Willow dene for two days a week this year. Martin will work with children at Swingate Lane and Oakmere Road to introduce opportunities for exercise which include gym work and personal fitness programs. We look forward to reporting on the impact of this project.

The swimming pool has been very busy during the last few weeks. We have had a successful staff family swim where staff, their children and grandchildren were able to enjoy a relaxing session in our pool. Our swim team have been providing swimming lessons for our non-swimming staff and we have been really pleased to hear about the personal successes of the staff in this group who are committed to

learning new skills. We have also received all of the training and equipment that we need to run our own underwater listening therapeutic 'Liquid Vibrations' sessions for children and some children have now started a block of weekly sessions where we will closely monitor the benefits of this approach for them.

As usual we have welcomed a range of visitors through our doors in the last few weeks. At Oakmere Road our friends from Plumstead Police visited us last week. They had a surprise planned for the children and arrived with a police van. The children were able to try out the sirens and go for a drive! You can see by the photographs on Twitter how much enjoyment the children are getting from this community relationship! Last week we also welcomed Julie Taylor, the Head of Inclusion for Greenwich. Julie has a longstanding relationship with Willow Dene and has seen our journey from the beginning to now. This was the first time she has visited the school in over a year so we were delighted that she could spend the whole day touring both sites and talking to adults and children. Julie gave us a lot of positive feedback which we value greatly.

This week we have held our first Governors Monitoring Morning of the year where Governors looked closely at our plans for the whole school focus on preparing for adolescence. During the year to come we will be exploring the challenges faced by our children and families during adolescence and identifying support mechanisms to help overcome these. Governors were very interested in this area which will ultimately affect all of our children. They had a lot of good questions.

We are very excited to have been contacted about arranging visits to the school from two people who will be amazing role models for our children. Scott Watkin first visited Willow Dene as part of his work with SeeAbility and was awarded an MBE in the New Year 2018 Honour's list for this. Scott himself has a visual impairment and went to a special school. He is now keen to spend time in classes at Willow Dene and to talk to our children more about his journey. We were also delighted to be contacted by an ex- Willow Dene student who is now 19 years old. She is embarking on further education and is keen to complete her placement at Willow Dene. In her email to us she wrote:-

'Willow Dene School was a pivotal journey of my childhood. It taught me confidence, self-worth, obviously the educational aspect too but more so helped me gain independence in order for me to transition from a special needs school to a mainstream. I am forever grateful for the experience Willow Dene School has given me and I truly feel it's time for me to give back not only to the school but the students too.'

We think both of these amazing young people will provide inspiration to our children and demonstrate that they too can achieve so much.

**Rachel Harrison**  
Head Teacher

## GREENFINCH CLASS

We are enjoying the topic 'Mould and Make' so far this term and we have been really busy!

We have been busy building out in the forest and have used lots of different resources to create all sorts of exciting structures. Our favourite structure so far has to be our waterfall which we constructed as a class using tin foil. We received a certificate in assembly for being joint winners of the most creative waterfall which we are very proud of!



We have become sculptors in our art sessions, using playdough to complete tasks given to us by a builder from our sensory story.

We have had to construct a range of unusual items, including a wall for Humpty Dumpty to sit on, windows for a house and a kite to send flying.

DT has been lots of fun this term too. We are using the story 'Egg Drop' by Mini Grey, a story about an egg who wants and tries to fly. Unfortunately this doesn't end well for the egg, so we are looking at ways to package our eggs so that they can practice flying without cracking!

## NURSING TEAM

The school nursing team continue to support all the children in both sites of the school.

As we move into the winter months, we would like to remind all parents that we are unable to administer any medication which has been brought in a shop or pharmacy. All medications which need to be given in school must have been prescribed by a doctor. Medications must come into school in the original box / packaging, which is correctly labelled with the dose required. All medication that needs to be given in school must be in date. We are only able to administer in school, if your child requires medication to be given at least 4 times a day. Otherwise, medication can be given around the school day. An appropriate medication schedule should be in the morning before school, after school and at night.

If your child is asthmatic, please ensure that an up to date inhaler is in school, as we often see an increase in symptoms due to the cold weather, and increased viral illnesses.

In order for any medication to be given in school, the nurse is required to obtain evidence of the prescription. This can come from a clinic letter or prescription from the hospital doctor, or the GP summary care record, which details your child's medication which has been prescribed. If you do not wish the nursing team to access your child's (SCR) from the GP, you must let us know in writing. If we are not able to access a copy of the prescription, we will not be able to give any medication in school. If you are able to send into school a copy of the prescription, clinic letter or discharge summary, this will speed up the process.

Parents are welcome to contact us directly to discuss their child's health and any medical concerns that you may have. Our direct number is 0208 316 1516. We can also be contacted by email: [oxl-tr.cypinclusionsteam@nhs.net](mailto:oxl-tr.cypinclusionsteam@nhs.net)

## TWEET IN SPOTLIGHT



Lots of yummy fun during communication group! To see more 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.co.uk](http://www.twitter.co.uk), click 'Sign Up' and follow the prompts on screen.

## OT NEWS

It is so lovely to see the children back at school ready to experience, explore, and engage in play and sensory activities. Some children are enjoying their therapeutic listening sessions. Others are using the Sensory Circuit as part of their daily routines to help them regulate and become ready to learn.

Natalie Ari (OT) and Susan Collier (OT assistant) are providing the OT provision for students on the PMLD caseload. Nutan Jathar (OT) is working with children with sensory needs; together with Mandy Baines (sensory coordinator).

The OT team continues to support the Wheelchair clinic in school which is run by the Greenwich Wheelchair Services. The OT service also assesses for, orders and maintains specialist seating which helps children with physical disabilities to achieve the best seating position possible. This specialist seating helps to protect their hips, spines and other joints, and also allows them to use their vision and upper limbs to the best of their abilities, and supports safe eating and drinking for those that are orally fed.

OT supports the school team to broaden the way in which the SCERTS model is applied to a wider range of children.

Please do feel free to contact our team if you would like to talk about your child on 020 8317 8596, or you could write to us through the home contact book.