

WILLOW DENE NEWS



Willow Dene
SCHOOL

FRIDAY 19th October 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

The first half term of the year is already over, and we are approaching our first holiday. The beginning of the year has flown by and autumn is well and truly here! Thank you to all of you who consented for your child to have their nasal flu immunisations in school. The first round of these took place on October 10th and the second round will take place later in the term.

Last week it was our pleasure to host visitors from The Department of Education as part of the review of exclusions that is currently being led by Edward Timpson. During the visit we were given the opportunity to talk about our experiences of meeting the needs of children with SEN in the area and the local context, as the review is digging deeper into the national trend of children with SEN being disproportionately more likely to be excluded. We were very pleased to be able to relay the experiences that some of our families have had when they arrive at Willow Dene and to talk about our own ethos of enabling all children to succeed. Our visitors emailed after their visit to say 'We wanted to say thank you for allowing us to visit you yesterday - we were blown away with the fantastic facilities you have at your school and we really appreciate you and your staff taking the time to sit down and speak with us'.

In the last newsletter we told you about our visit to both Willow Dene sites from Julie Taylor, Head of School Improvement, Inclusion, Learning and Achievement for the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Last week we welcomed Diane Osbourne, Head of SEND Assessment and Review Service in Greenwich for her first visit to Willow Dene, Oakmere Road. Diane was able to look round the whole school and meet some of the children which she really enjoyed.

We have welcomed governors to both schools in the last few weeks. Firstly, for a monitoring morning at Willow Dene, Oakmere Road where progress towards the Core Priority about understanding the challenges facing children and families during adolescence was discussed. Governors had the chance to see a presentation and discuss this crucial area. Governors were also at Willow Dene, Swingate Lane for our half termly governors meeting which was well attended and focussed on a range of important areas including finance and our annual Pupil Premium review and development plan. You can read our Pupil Premium report on the school website.

We enjoyed attending a Speakeasy to talk about school Core Priorities and get your views about our two Core Priorities focusing on parents and families. Thank you to everyone who came for your honesty, engagement and lively discussion.

If you follow us on Twitter you will have noticed our Key Stage 4 Twitter Takeover which is happening now. This takeover will share some elements of the Key Stage 4 curriculum and what our oldest children are achieving and experiencing.

We would like to congratulate Joshua Garrett Smith and Lisa Parascandolo (teachers in Dormouse and Heron) for completing their Master's Degree in Leadership and Innovation. This two-year course has resulted in some ground-breaking school based research which will continue to benefit Willow Dene in the future.

If you haven't already booked your ticket to Willow Dene's performance of Romeo and Juliet at the Shakespeare Schools

Festival at The Albany Theatre on 15th November, then hurry because the stage is set! Contact the box office on 02086924446 to book your seats for an unmissable performance!

We are also embarking on ambitious planning for a Compass Dance Event in the spring term! Every Compass school will be able to showcase the dance skills of their children and we are looking forward to sharing some of our creative talent. Watch this space for more details.

We would like to wish you a happy and safe half term. We will see you all in a week. We are looking forward to our new topic and seeing our new corridor displays change to reflect the learning from this half term.

Rachel Harrison
Head Teacher

GOVERNOR NEWS

Already five weeks into the autumn term, but it doesn't seem like five minutes since we broke up for the summer holidays! I hope everyone has had a good break and has settled in to the new term and new school year.

I'm pleased to advise we now have our full compliment of three parent governors sitting on the governing body. They are Neil Dawson, Kafayat Eletu and Toyah Holness. We also have two staff governors - Sara Courtney and Jude McParlan, along with currently three co-opted governors - Ann-Marie Organ, Natalie Palmer, Keith Simson and myself.

You can contact any of us at any time by looking up our details on the school website or just leaving a note at school. We've had quite a bit of change recently, and I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome Neil, Toyah and Keith, all of whom have joined us in the past twelve months or so.

We will be also welcoming another co-opted governor shortly. She is Lynne Wainwright, who works for the Department of Child and Family Health at Kings College and who has had a long association with us in placing students at the school. We still have one vacancy for a co-opted governor, and will have a second in the New Year when one of us steps down - so if anyone is interested in taking up the role please don't hesitate to contact me or ask at the school to find out what is involved.

We celebrated the first anniversary of Compass Multi Academy Trust on 1 July, and I'm pleased to say that the Trust has come through the first year of operation with flying colours.

Although we are now part of a family of seven schools in the Greenwich area, an important founding principle of the Trust is that each school should retain its own identity and manage its own affairs as far as possible. To this end, each school is encouraged to have its own Local Governing Body as part of ensuring each school has a strong voice within the Trust.

So do contact us if you have any queries, concerns, ideas - or just want to say thank you!

With best wishes,
Linda Perks, Chair of Governors
leperks@outlook.com

KESTREL CLASS

Kestrel Class have been having lots of fun exploring our topic focus 'Make and Mould'. We have enjoyed having lessons based around construction and building.

In our Reading sessions, we have been on an exciting journey around the world to visit famous landmarks whilst practising our poses taking selfies! We have become professionals when in front of a camera.



Also in Science we have been busy making reactions using cause and effect food products. We are always excited to hear and see lots of fizzing, popping and bursting!



MUSIC THERAPY NEWS

In order to be ready to target where we need to, we work with the staff and Head Teacher at the end of the Summer to identify the students who could most benefit from music therapy sessions in the Autumn term. These students will include those who we already know, but in addition, new students who have been prioritised for input. Hearing our new music-makers as well as those who have often benefited from the summer break, is always an exciting prospect for the music therapy team.

We have expanded the Jammin' group at Oakmere road, as well as broadening the intake to be inclusive of students from all the classes, showing a wide range of skills and abilities. The existing group have been generous in their welcome of new members, singing to them with great enthusiasm. This fits with Willow Dene's philosophy of inclusion and openness.

A main area which we have been asked to target is those students transitioning from one class to another. The Head Teacher and staff have been very proactive in identifying these students at the end of the Summer term, so that we don't waste time in being ready to support them.

Some quotes from students and staff :

*I am the aeroplane
and you Nicky, are the
pilot*

11-year-old Student

*Thank you for being so
flexible. We really
appreciate it*

Teacher

TWEET IN SPOTLIGHT



Watch this space as our KS4 pupils take over our Twitter account for the next two weeks, filling us in on what they have been up to so far this term! [#KS4TwitterTakeover](#)

3:32 AM - 8 Oct 2018

8 Likes



Our KS4 students are taking over our Twitter account for two weeks! To see their tweets, 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, click 'Sign Up' and follow the prompts on screen.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Half Term Holidays

Monday 22nd October - Friday 26th October