



# WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

## Head Teacher's Message

Just like that we find ourselves at the end of the autumn term. The autumn term always seems so long and so exciting when we set out on it, but it goes by so quickly! In this most unique of times and in keeping with the first part of the term, a lot has happened in the last two weeks!

Last week we were visited by the Ashley School. We first met them during our challenge partners review in the summer term, when their head teacher was one of our reviewers. This visit was for some of their staff to come and look at our swimming pool, how we teach swimming and some of our specialist areas including forest schools, personal fitness and sensory processing. After the visit they wrote to us to say:

*'We've taken away with us some brilliant things that we can mould into our 'Ashley way' in Lowestoft and would*



*love to keep the communication flowing between yourselves and us, especially with some of the changes we will be facing in the future. You have a wonderful school and truly inspirational staff'.*

We are looking forward to working with the Ashley school more in the future.

We have done our best to pack absolutely everything into the last few days so that nobody misses out on anything. A huge thank you for supporting the rearranged concerts on Wednesday at Swingate Lane. We hope you agree that with less rehearsal time than planned, these were joyous and fun events for all! Similarly, on Thursday it will be the turn of Oakmere Road and EYFS and we are looking forward to these. Christmas dinner, parties and visits from Santa have also been rearranged to fit in with everybody's busy schedule and much fun has been had by us being together and enjoying the time of year.

As always, over the holiday, the school emergency phone line will be available if you need to talk to anybody or tell us anything. You can text or phone the number in your child's home school contact book and a senior leader will call you back.

A massive thank you for your support throughout the year. We really couldn't do it without you! We know that we are very lucky to have such a supportive, positive group of parents and families. We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and happy new year. Have a safe and enjoyable holiday and we will see you in 2023.

*Rachel*

### IMPORTANT DATES

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023**

**and**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**Inset Days**

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023 – Pupils  
return to school**



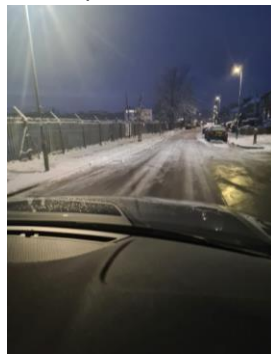
The first thing to happen this term was the arrival of our Ofsted report, with the final and official grading for Willow Dene School of 'Outstanding' in all areas. These areas are; the 'Quality of Education', 'Behaviour and Attitudes', 'Personal Development', 'Leadership and Management', 'Early Years Provision and 'Overall Effectiveness'. We were very excited to receive the report and we are a very happy and proud school community. This has been a long journey for Willow Dene; we waited a long time for our Section 8 inspection and then a further three years before our Section 5 inspection because of COVID. We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support along the way and for sharing our joy at this outcome. Your lovely messages of support will be shared with staff in a briefing on the last day of term.

## SNOW.....

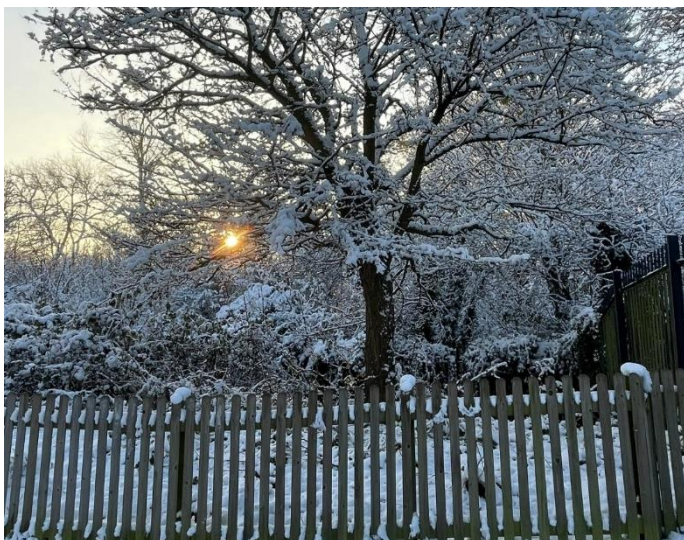


This week began with unexpected snowfall on Sunday evening which led to impassable roads and car park, with the only alternative being school closure on

Monday and Tuesday. This is never a decision that we take lightly, especially not in the last week of term. However, on this occasion it was not possible to safely access the schools at all. Hopefully you've had the chance to look at the photographs on the website, which show a beautiful but dangerous side to Willow Dene.



Thanks to volunteers from JB Riney, who volunteered time, people and salt to make the car parks safer and the superhuman efforts of our very own Dave, Colin and Mark, we were able to open on Wednesday ready to enjoy the end of term. Thank you so much for your support and understanding.



A huge thank you to one of our lovely grandparents and to her generous company, NLP Financial Management. They raised a whopping £710 for Friends of Willow Dene through their

Christmas Raffle and a company donation. Their fantastic fundraising will make a real difference to children at Willow Dene

## Message from the Chair of Governors

I have been on the governing body since 2018 and as some of you probably know I now have the privilege of being the new Chair of Governors at Willow Dene. As a governing body we are very proud of the school, the staff and all the children and families.

It's always lovely to be able to come into school to see it in action and to meet the children. At this time of year leading up to the Christmas holiday there are lots of special activities going on, such as the Winter Wonderland which happened on the evening of 1st December. The event was really well attended, many of the children had made things to sell on the stalls and there were some amazing cakes! A highlight for me was the sibling project exhibition which I had the hard job of judging – the prize went to Anna and Arky but all of the entries were amazing! I hope that everyone enjoys the various parties and performances in the last weeks of term.

To those of you who celebrate I wish you all a very happy Christmas and to those who do not I hope that you will have a fun and restful holiday.

Lynne Wainwright

Chair of Governors

## Redwing Class

Redwing class welcomed two new children back in September and we have had lots of fun getting to know each other. It has been a busy term, and everyone has been working really hard, but we have also had lots of fun along the way.

In play and leisure, we have been exploring using our senses through a sensory story and developing our play skills by creating our own potions. In music we have been learning about tempo through call and response songs. Our class favourite was 'My aunt came back from Timbuktu'. Everyone enjoyed learning about street art and creating our own art in the style of Banksy. We have also found time for lots of festive fun.



## Pupil Voice Skylark Class

This term Skylark class have been learning about community in TPPC, discovering the different people, religions and cultures that make up our wonderful school community. We really enjoyed using our senses to explore the special belongings that each of the children and staff brought in to share with one another. We tasted Vietnamese snacks, Pesto and panettone from Italy, danced along to music from Turkey, Syria and Somalia, and tried on some beautiful clothing from Tunisia and Nigeria.

Here is what we thought:

Toby – I loved the cold smooth Jade bangle, it was fun twirling it between my fingers and trying to put it on my wrist.

Daniel – I had a little smell and lick of the Vietnamese sweets, it had a strong taste and made me pull a funny face.

Irem – I really enjoyed wearing the African Ankara dress, I then got up to dance with my friends to Mohamed's favourite song from Somalia by Suldaan Seeraar. His voice was lovely, and the song had a nice beat. I recognised the mat which we use for Salah (Prayer) and began to pray myself.

Ahmed - I really liked the smell of the Italian pesto and even gave it a lick, or two or three...

Georgina - I liked the feel of the Jewish Manora. It was cold and had an interesting shape. I liked rubbing my fingers across the mosaic tiles.

Elena – I enjoyed listening to the sound the Jade bangle made when I dropped it on my tray.

Olivia – I really liked dancing with my friends.

Marah – I liked the feeling of the Ankara cloth against my skin.

Mohamed – My favourite part was feeling the smooth, cold Jade bangle against my cheeks.

