



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 10th February 2023

Head Teacher's Message

As this newsletter reaches you we will be edging closer to half term, which will signpost us being half way through this school year. We hope you have had chance to watch the parents briefing, giving more information and context to the teacher strikes. We wanted to thank you very much for your understanding of the situation, which is complex, particularly at schools like Willow Dene. The next date for strike action in England is March 2nd and of course, we will update you about this closer to the time.

At the end of November many of you completed our annual parent survey as well as the parent questionnaire that Ofsted circulated when they visited us in the same month. We have now collated these responses and will be posting them on our website soon. They were overwhelmingly positive which is always very humbling and reassuring for us. These survey results are helpful for us because if there is something we could be doing better, we want to know about it so that we can try to improve and where we are doing things well, this is good to know too. If you answered the survey questions and have anything that you would like to share with us or talk about more, then you are welcome to contact me in school at any time.

In the last two weeks we have been happy to welcome visitors from other schools and many prospective parents for a tour of Willow Dene. After quite a long time during COVID, when we couldn't do real life tours, is a delight to be able to meet people in person and show them round. Last week, we were visited by leaders from The Warren Special School and Consortium Academy Trust in Lowestoft, who spent the day talking to children and staff at Swingate Lane and Oakmere Road. We received a lovely thank you card from them saying they felt 'enthused and focussed' from their visit.

As half term approaches, do not forget that we are contactable on the school emergency phone during half term. If you need help or advice or have something you need to tell us you can call or text the number and leave a message and one of our school leaders will call you back. We hope you have a happy and safe half term and we will see you on February 20th ready for a new term and some long overdue spring weather!

Rachel



Oakmere Road Consultation

We wanted to thank all of you who came to the planning consultation for 6th form at Willow Dene Oakmere Road to have a look at the planned build and to have your say. We are now waiting for news on our business case from the DFE and in the meantime completing the planning application stage 3. This included a public on-line session which took place on Thursday 9th February. We are hoping that there will be more news to share in the near future. Thank you for your support.



If you follow us on Twitter, you may have noticed some of our Tweets with #Parentandcarerwellbeing or #savethepennies. These Tweets are part of our core priority which is about the cost of living crisis and how we can make a difference for the school community. The Tweets are full of tips and opportunities that may be useful to you. You can see our Tweets on the school website or follow us @willowdenesch but we will also collate them into a paper booklet which we will send home with your child.



We have received exciting news that Arianna Ameyaw and Abdul-Haleem Nuur have successfully campaigned to

join Greenwich Young People's Council.

They confidently presented their messages and manifestos and will join the team of decision makers at GYPC.

IMPORTANT DATES

Half Term

Monday 13th February 2023

To

Friday 17th February 2023

Children return 20th February 2023

PUPIL VOICE – Pheasant Class

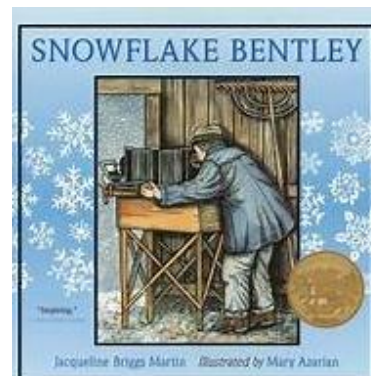
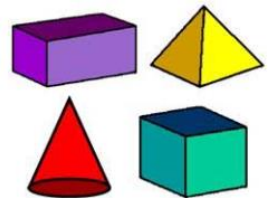
Pheasant Class has had a busy half term, and we have lots of highlights to share.

Our candle time sessions are a great place to reflect on the day and enjoy time to chat and relax together. While watching a video with a magic carpet, **Tyrese** commented; *"I wish I was on a magic carpet ride with Mehrish and Rayah, singing about the ride like in the song. Maybe we can enjoy a magic carpet ride, but not in the sky."*

During our morning greeting, **Dimitar** was very excited at the prospect of a busy day; *"I like everything on the timetable, but especially ball pool, two playtimes, Charlton Football practice, learning and dinner!"*

Members of Pheasant Class have formed wonderful friendships, and it is always a delight to hear some of their interactions, such as when **Rayah** excitedly said to Mehrish; *"Oh Mehrish I love your new backpack! Can I see what's inside?"*

Shatu enjoyed our active searching games to support learning 3d shapes and gave it her all; *"I looked everywhere! And I can't find it!"*



George enjoyed learning about Snowflake Bentley, who we read a biography of. He said, *"I think that Snowflake Bentley is interesting because he took good pictures of snowflakes."*

Mehrish has become very health conscious and is always there to remind us of what we should be eating; *"Fruit and vegetables are healthy and they make us feel good. I don't want to eat junk food!"*



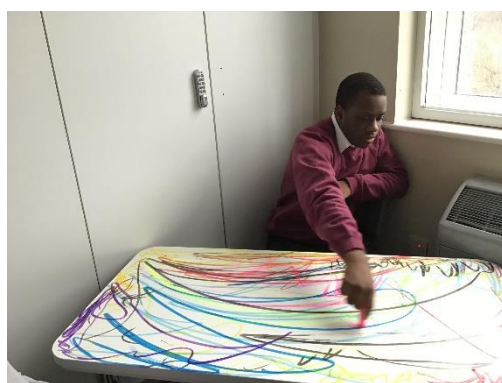
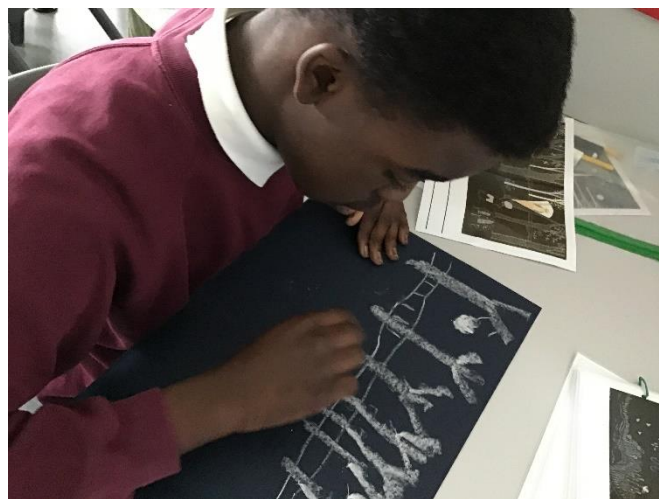
When we were learning about the art of Romero Britto, **Demi** told us; *"I think Romero Britto art is fun and colourful."*

Harry likes to talk about his snack and told us; *"I like to eat apples and I like my new plantain crisps. I like snack from home and Shatu likes snack from school."*

Badger Class

Badger class are having an exciting and fun packed term! We are really enjoying our literacy story 'Flashlight'. Using this as inspiration to develop our fine motor skills, including engaging in colourful early writing, recreating scenes from the story and using our imagination to write a sentence about what we think might be happening!

We are also learning important self-care skills, including practicing how to shave. We have used shaving foam and lolly sticks to learn this, and we have really enjoyed these sessions. The opportunity to practice this in a structured routine has allowed us to embed these skills.



Kingfisher Class

In Kingfisher class we have two groups working with Milo the school dog. Both groups are becoming more confident around Milo and are beginning to build a bond with him. For some of the children being around a dog is a new experience. Other children have dogs in their family and are immediately at home with him.

Some of our children, who are using walkers have been holding on to the lead and taking Milo for a walk around the hall and throwing a ball for him to fetch and bring back. This really motivates them to move and helps to build their confidence. They can also hold a treat ready for Milo (who is always hoping for a treat!) and then release it when Milo tries to take it from their hands.

Other children are practicing sitting with less support so that they can stroke Milo, feel him lying next to them and also practicing sitting so that they can give Milo a treat. They have also been enjoying a s



Thinking of joining the gym? '

Better Leisure' are doing an offer at the moment of 14 days membership for £14.

Check out their website for more information
<https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/london/greenwich/greenwichcentre/news/join-us-for-14-days-for-just-14>
#Parentandcarerwellbeing

WHAT'S ON



SUPER SIBLING SELFIE COMPETITION



Snap your best selfie with your sibling(s) and send it to us to be in with a chance of winning a great prize!

Selfies will be exhibited at our Spring Fling Event on 23rd March 2023

Send your selfies to Joshua by Monday 20th March 2023, with your names and child's class to:

Jgarrett-smith@willowdene.compassps.uk