



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 3rd March 2023

Head Teacher's Message

What a busy beginning to the second part of spring term we have had. It was lovely to see the children arrive back in school after half term so happily. There are some signs of spring in the air and we are excited for the half term to come.

Hopefully, you will have had chance to watch the most recent parents briefing. This gives more context to the second of the NEU teacher industrial action days which took place this week, alongside some other news which I will also mention here.

Our Family Support team have been busy setting up the parent yoga classes which have started this half term and we look forward to seeing how these go. They are also planning a revamp of the Oakmere Road parents room so there can be more of a family support offer for our secondary parents on-site.

There are some very exciting events coming up for us before Easter. For our children in Key Stage 3 and 4, our Careers week will begin next week with employer encounters and real life opportunities chosen from the world of work. Upcoming TPPC (Time, People, Place and Culture) Power Days will also take place on the theme of 'Discovery'. From metal detecting and treasure hunting to stories of adventurers, every child will have an exciting day filled with activities related to the theme. By offering Power Days every term, we can find out more about what each child likes and is interested in. This then supports the development of 'Specialist Interests' as children begin their secondary years. You should also have received a letter about Willow Dene's World Book Day. This year our Book Day will be water themed. To avoid additional cost to families we are, for the first time trying a 'hand made' theme for dressing up by asking children to wear decorated headbands. We are excited to see what everyone makes of this!

Our Spring Fling will take place at 5pm on the last Thursday before the holiday. After the success of Winter Wonderland, we have some new and fun experiences planned. We have a sibling event in the same week after school. This is targeted at older brothers and sisters who may not be able to visit us often. There will be a whole range of activities designed to help our older brothers and sisters to relax and have fun as well as to meet us and each other! Fliers advertising both of these events will be coming home soon.

Looking forward to giving you an update in two weeks time.

Rachel

IMPORTANT DATES

Spring Fling 23rd March 2023

Shakespeare for Schools 28th March 2023

Last Day of Term Friday 31st March 2023





If you are not following us on Twitter then you can sign up as a follower @willowdenesch or see our Twitter thread on our website. Over half term there were some lovely photographs

shared by parents as part of the NHS initiative, #bewellchallenge showing us what our families were up to while the children were not in school! As part of our school Core Priority about supporting families through the cost of living crisis, we are regularly posting money saving tips to help financial well-being. The latest of these have been about how to reduce energy costs and New Life Charity toy loans.



As you know, over the last months we have steadily reintroduced educational visits and working with community

partners and now it feels as though opportunities are coming thick and fast for us to be at the heart of our local and wider communities. This half term we have been engaging with Greenwich Royal Museums and have become part of their SEND Forum. Some classes visited the National Maritime Museum back in the autumn term taking part in a sensory sea journey. This half term we have welcomed the museum to school to lead some art workshops inspired by the sensory story. Using projected images in our sensory room we created seascapes. Our art will be displayed in the museum itself for everyone to see and also incorporated in 3D form into the Museum's area.

Rehearsals are well underway for our 2023 performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Shakespeare for



Schools Festival taking place in March. All over the country schools will be performing Shakespeare's works. The Willow Dene cast will be at the Albany Theatre in Deptford on the evening of 28th March 2023, performing alongside other schools. If you are interested in being in the audience on the night please contact us for information about tickets.

School Visitors

We continue to have requests from other special and mainstream schools who want to visit Willow Dene and find out more about what we do. Already this half term we have hosted a visit from Priory Woods School in Sunderland. Their day consisted of a tour of the school and talking to our team about our curriculum, how we teach reading and our environments.

In order to make sure we keep challenging ourselves, we will be having our annual Challenge Partners review next week on Wednesday and Thursday. This will involve a team of professionals from other schools looking at specific areas of our practice including curriculum, teaching and learning and early years on this occasion. They will also look at some of the areas in our school development plan, including our family Core Priority and work with siblings.

We will be able to give you some feedback straight after the review takes place and then a report will be published.

Secondary Placements

If you are parents of Year 6 children, you should have been informed of your child's onward placement during half term. If you have not heard anything or would like to talk about this more with us, our door is always open for you so please do call or drop into school.

Oakmere Road Expansion

During last week we completed our final consultation for our plans to open 6th form at Oakmere Road in September 2023. We are now in the final stages before approval and in anticipation of good news, the ground is being cleared so that work can start promptly in the new building if everything goes to plan. We know that Year 11 parents are desperate to know what will happen in September and we are planning a coffee morning where you will be able to hear more before the end of this half term.

FoWD Fundraising

Friends of Willow Dene will be holding their annual 'Sponsored Splash' the week of the 20th March. We are currently raising money to redevelop our sensory room. Sponsorship forms have been sent home so please try and raise as much as you can.



Pupil Voice Heron Class

During our Learning Technologies session, Heron class are able to pick the toys they want to play with, developing their hand to eye co-ordination and their cause and effect skills.

In our Play and Leisure sessions, most of the children chose cooked spaghetti and pasta to explore, while Alice preferred the coloured rice.



Puffin Class

In Puffin Class we started the term with lots of pancake fun. We enjoyed choosing resources and exploring different textures when making our pancake collages. We took our pancake fun into our music and movement session and competed in pancake races with our Kingfisher friends. Who knew pancakes could be so much fun?

We all loved our pancake sensory story. We had lots of fun tasting our yummy pancakes and using our senses to explore different toppings to go with them. Some of our favourite things were mango yoghurt, vanilla ice-cream and grated vegan cheese.

What would you put on a pancake?



WHAT'S ON



Families, Friends, Community and Staff are all invited to our

Spring Fling

Thursday 23rd March 2023
5-7pm
Willow Dene, Swingate Lane

LIVE MUSIC | STALLS | PHOTO OPPORTUNITY | CHOCOLATE RAFFLE
REFRESHMENTS | SIBLING SELFIE EXHIBITION

Free Yoga sessions for parents and carers!



with

gceda 365



Willow Dene School
Every Wednesday from the
1st March - 29th March
10am - 10.45am

(Please arrive at 9.45 to fill out paperwork.)

To find out more please contact Vicky House on vhouse@willowdene.compassps.uk or 0208 854 9841
Bring a yoga mat if you have one, we have some spare if you don't!



Speakeasy

Spring Term 2023

A weekly Coffee Morning for Willow Dene parents & carers
A safe space to talk, listen, share, encourage and make friends.

Important Information

From the 21st February our weekly Coffee Morning is being moved to
Tuesdays (10.30 - 12pm.) This is to ensure that we give all parents and carers the opportunity to come along and to feel part of our school community.

Please make a note in your diaries and pop along this Tuesday or any other to meet new parents (and old friends) for a coffee and a chat.
This year we will continue to invite special guests that are useful and of interest to our families and their children. Keep an eye out for the flyers!

For more information please contact: Vicky House on 0208 854 9841

Greenwich Parent Carer Participation Forum (GPCPF)

JOURNEY OF LIFE

INFORMATION DAY

Information day for Parent/Carers with a child/young person aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Friday 31st March 2023 10.30-2pm

At the Moorings sociable club Titmuss Ave, London SE28 8BH, bus 472, 244 & 301.

If you're a parent or carer with a child/young person aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) come along and get advice and information about local services that can support you and your family from early years through to adulthood.

Meet representatives from:

- Health
- Early years
- Social Care
- Short Breaks
- Leisure
- Parent support groups
- Education
- Voluntary and community groups

This is a free event and you can drop in any time between 10.30-2pm. Free refreshments.
For more information call 07852101492 (leave a message) or email admin@greenwichpcpf.org

