



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 19th May 2023

Head Teacher's Message

It has been a busy two weeks since our last newsletter. We cannot believe that we are almost at the end of this academic year. We are already in the process of planning leavers events and our alumni evening for our previous Willow Dene Year 11's to come and visit us. This newsletter will start to feature some of the important dates coming up before the end of term. It has been quite the year for Willow Dene in more ways than one, so we intend on making our end of year a special and celebratory time for everyone. Look out for some important upcoming dates in this newsletter.

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week. This has been the inspiration for our Power Days for this term which have had an Essential Skills and well-being focus. Our Power Days are part of our Careers offer. Over the year children will experience a range of subject related Power Days which aim to give them a breadth of experience so that we can identify strengths and likes to build on in the future. During this Power Day children learned how to make healthy fruit smoothies, about the joy of plants and breathing techniques to help them relax (amongst lots of other things!). Look out on Twitter @willowdenesch for our photographs from the days.

One of the things we are very excited about is the opportunity to host a group of visiting Head Teachers from Africa next half term. The group of five Head Teachers are going to join us for a placement of two weeks to find out more about how we meet the needs of children with autism. At the moment we are putting together a timetable to give them the opportunity to spend time with children and classes across age groups as well as meeting some of our specialist teams and learning about the daily lived experience of our children and staff. We hope they will meet some of you at one of our Speakeasys during their stay.



During the last two weeks, The Royal Borough of Greenwich have been having their SEND local area Ofsted inspection. We were chosen as one of the settings to be visited by the inspection team. On Tuesday we welcomed two inspectors for an afternoon at Oakmere Road. During their time here they looked at individual children's records and talked with us about how we work collaboratively with other children and the progress the children make. A huge thank you to the parents of our focus children who provided a parents-eye perspective on their child's experience at Willow Dene. As always, we are so grateful for your support.

Watch out for details of our new adventure into social media as we keep up with the times by joining Instagram! New learning for many of us but hopefully an exciting new way to make connections and share the achievements of our children to a wider audience.

Half term is approaching, so we would like to wish you a happy and safe half term holiday. We will see you all, ready for an action packed half term on June 5th. Don't forget that if you need us during the holiday, the emergency phone line will be available for you to contact us on. Look out for the stickers in your child's home schoolbook with a reminder of the number to call.

Rachel

IMPORTANT DATES

Last day of Term - Friday 26th May 2023

Pupils return to school - Monday 5th June 2023

Little Night in – Complex Needs and ASD Groups

16th – 17th June 2023

Big Night Out – Complex needs and ASD groups (Oakmere Road)
7th – 8th July 2023

School Journey, Broadstone Warren
21st – 22nd June 2023

Sports and MOVE Day - 28th June 2023

Sibling Evening (12-16 years) -30th June 2023

Parents Evening – 12th July

Summer Fete - 15th July 2023



Our MOVE team have been working very hard behind the scenes this term, preparing for our re-accreditation that happened on the 4th May.

We welcomed two members of the MOVE Europe team, Emma and Chloe to the school enjoyed a day of showing them all things MOVE and Willow Dene. We answered lots of questions, and showed our evidence of how MOVE is integrated into the school day and integral to the school.

We are very pleased to say that we have retained our Centre of Excellence and continue to hold the MOVE Quality Mark.

We continue to hold MOVE Milo sessions (the school dog) and the children are very motivated to roll and reach towards him, lift their heads or take him for a walk.

The children that use the Try-Cycle have been completing a mini marathon of 2.6 miles over the last couple of weeks and we hope to join the Daily Mile Guinness Book of records bid with this.

The MOVE Team

YEAR 11'S TRANSITION TO 6TH FORM

One thing that we will not need to do this year is say a permanent goodbye to our year 11's!

Of course, we will be celebrating the end of their time in secondary school in our usual style with a yearbook and presentation of their Records of Achievement.

However, this year we will be welcoming all fifteen young people back in year 12 to be our first ever sixth form. If you have visited Oakmere Road recently you will know that building work for the new building has started and is progressing at a pace. The ground is cleared, and the foundations are in the process of being laid. We are very excited about putting our plans into place.

Transition to Secondary School

If your child is leaving us at the end of year 6, transition arrangements with new schools are underway and we are already making links with your child's new teams. Watch out for details coming your way soon. We will also be focussing on celebrating your child's achievements in the time they have been with us and making their last weeks at Willow Dene special.

NIGHTINGALE CLASS



'Nightingale Class have been working hard on communicating their likes and dislikes this term. This has been especially evident during our DT sessions where we have been making a variety of party and Coronation themed recipes!

The children have used all their available senses to explore a range of ingredients and express their favourite foods through tasting, smelling and feeling the different textures. We have worked on expressing how we feel about them through our facial expressions, reaching for the things we like and pushing away the things we are not so keen on! The curry dressing on our Chicken and Mango Salad had mixed reviews, whereas the buttercream icing on our Union flag cake was universally enjoyed!





TOUCAN

In Toucan we have started to meet new families who will join us next term. Spending time with these children who are just approaching their second birthdays has made us realise how grown up and confident our established children have become.

We have celebrated one of our little girls graduating from the MOVE programme. She is delighting in her independence which has been a joy for her family and for us to watch and share.

We have focused on our garden area which has become an extension of our classroom. We have been using our object of reference along with photos to cue going outside. This also supports independence in requesting and/or going outside from the classroom.

We have new storage which keeps everything clean, organised and accessible. We include lots of sensory play and opportunities to explore natural materials.

We have mounted photos of children enjoying the garden area. We have made more use of our fence areas with activities including mirrors, weaving frames and activity toys.

As we start to enjoy warmer weather, we will spend more time outside and our family celebrations including the end of term get together will be in the garden area.



PARTRIDGE CLASS

In Partridge class, we decorated our class to celebrate the King's Coronation. We made crowns, bunting and paper chains. We watched some of the Coronation on the board.

Kiera enjoyed looking at the 'millions of horse's galloping with guards.' She pretended that she was a horse, Kiera also expressed how excited she was to see Buckingham Palace.

Keegan enjoyed making cream cheese and cucumber sandwiches for our tea party, while David and Amelia decorated cupcakes with the Union Jack colours. Here are some photos of our Royal Afternoon Tea Party.

In our Science lesson, we have been learning about 'The Human Body'. This week, we explored our hands, by touching different textures and temperatures. There were items like jelly, shaving foam, corn flour gloop, ice, textured balls, massage rollers etc. It is fair to say that the classroom got very messy but we enjoyed exploring the different textures. Andy enjoyed touching the corn flour gloop, watching it drip from his fingers as he picked it up. Chelsea was fascinated by the crunch from the rice crispies and the coldness of ice.

Keegan 'squished' the tomatoes to 'make them explode'.

Here are some photos of our Science lesson.



SIBLING
night

**SWIMMING OR FITNESS
FOLLOWED BY
MOVIE NIGHT AND PIZZA!**

FRIDAY 30TH JUNE 2023

5-8PM
WILLOW DENE, SWINGATE LANE
FOR SIBLINGS AGED 12-16

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE, EMAIL YOUR NAME, AGE, CHOICE OF ACTIVITY AND CONTACT NUMBER TO JO:
JSIMSON@WILLOWDENE.COMPASSPS.UK

WHAT'S ON

WILLOW DENE
SCHOOL

SAVE THE DATE

SUMMER FETE

**SATURDAY 15TH
JULY 2023
11AM-2PM**

speakeasy Oxleas
NHS

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

Tuesday 23rd May 10.30am to 11.30am

- Does your child/young person have continence issues?
- Have you got any questions about toilet training, concerns with constipation, bed wetting or toilet refusal in your child/young person?

Then please come along and meet **Natalie Troy** the Oxleas NHS Paediatric Continence Nurse. Natalie will be joining us to offer advice and guidance around any continence issues and answer any questions you may have.

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

WILLOW DENE
SCHOOL

**FREE YOGA
WEDS 10 - 11AM**

**COME AND TRY A
FREE YOGA SESSION. DON'T
HAVE THE GEAR? DON'T
WORRY WE HAVE MATS YOU CAN
BORROW! CALL VICKY HOUSE ON 0208
854 9841 TO FIND OUT MORE.**