



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 20th October 2023

Head Teacher's Message

As we approach half term we are reflecting on all the things that have happened already this year and how lucky we are to have all the exciting opportunities that are coming our way.

At Oakmere Road and Swingate Lane our reception displays are all about 'Black History Month' which is an opportunity for us to reflect and celebrate. There are several themes for this year, with the main theme for 'British Black History Month' being an opportunity to celebrate black women.

All across the school classes have been celebrating black female poets, musicians, writers, activists, politicians and even super models! Our 'Black History Month' libraries are available for classes across the schools to use and we have all enjoyed some exciting music assemblies to celebrate 'Black History Month'.

After half term we will be launching our three Sixth Form business ventures with our young people having spent this half term planning and preparing with everything from deciding on business uniforms, names and logos to purchasing equipment and promoting their businesses. The three businesses are:

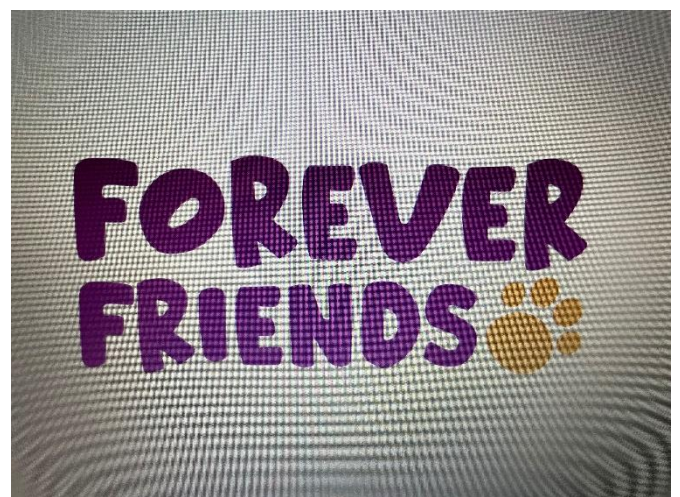
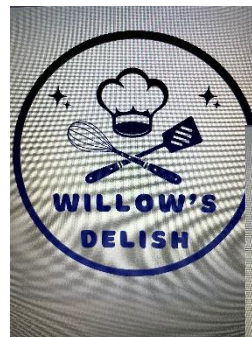
- Forever Friends – making high quality pet products for our animals.
- Compost Crew – taking on horticulture projects across the community.
- Willow's Delish – an exclusive café making lunches for adults at Swingate Lane.

In upcoming newsletters, you will be hearing a lot about these business ventures as they grow and develop. In the background our Sixth Form building is slowly becoming a reality. Last week we saw photographs of the inside of the building for the first time and can see that the rooms are starting to take shape. Look out for more photographs coming after half term.

We were excited to hear from our friends at Little Wandle, our synthetic phonics provider, that they have been at the TES SEND show sharing the work that they have done with us to create the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds SEND programme. This programme contains the film that they took at Willow Dene in the summer term and will support other children with special needs to learn to read.

All that remains is to wish you a happy and safe half term. We will see you in a weeks' time with an exciting calendar of events. If you need anything over half term you can contact a member of SLT through the emergency line 07716 388634.

Rachel



Greenwich National Maritime Museum outdoor play area



We were invited to the opening of 'The Cove' last week. 'The Cove' is the National Maritime Museum brand new accessible and inclusive play space which is situated on the borders of Greenwich Park directly outside the Maritime Museum café. Willow Dene staff, families and children have been part of the consultation process for this play space from the very beginning and it has been a pleasure to be involved from the initial meetings to reality. Last week we were able to see the finished play space in an exclusive opening ceremony which included some of our Willow Dene families. We all enjoyed our very own Lisa Parascandolo's speech which described the importance of representation and inclusivity in our children's lives and particularly in relation to accessing places of

cultural interest in the community. We are hoping that lots of you will visit and explore the playground next week in half term. If you do visit look out for our children's artwork which has been transformed into a wooden sculpture and labelled with their names as part of the playground itself.

IMPORTANT DATES

Pupils return to school on 30th October 2023

Children in Need – 17th November 2023

Parents Evening 15th November 2023

Braiswick Photos 23rd November 2023

Wren Class

Wren class have had an exciting start to the autumn term, welcoming new friends and settling back into school routines. We have been spending time in getting to know each other through our play and leisure sessions and RSE sessions in the ball pool where we have had lots of lovely giggles and smiles. Wren class have a love for swimming so it has been great at seeing each child so happy when swimming and learning new strokes and water safety.

We have been very creative this half term during our lessons, in art we are working on a project called 'Who am I' using a range of materials to create a media master piece. We are excited to see the outcome of these portraits and to be able to share them with the school when we place them proudly on display in our classroom.





Friends of Willow Dene
Charity Number: 1139449

A message from... **Friends of Willow Dene**

Hello!

This week all of our children have been taking part in a Sponsored Selfie Circuit. This was part of the Power Days, Let's Care, Create and Collaborate. Looking at themes such as charity, community, teamwork and friendship. The Sponsored Selfie Circuit gave children the opportunity to move around the school to different Selfie Stations such as 'Shiver me Timbers!', 'Giddy up, Cowboy!', 'Come on Barbie, lets go party!' and other fun themes. Children had lots of fun getting out and about, snapping shots with their friends, whilst raising money for charity. The photos are fantastic! Thank you to all of those families who gathered sponsors. Money is still coming in, so we will update you with the final total in the next newsletter!



Power Day

This week has been our first 'Power Day' of the year, focusing on the Citizenship theme of 'Care, Create and Collaborate'. Power days encourage children and staff to try something new and find areas of the curriculum where they may have strengths or interests. This forms our approach to early Careers.

During this Power Day children from across the school have been involved in activities including meeting Milo our school dog, making a friendship poem potion, taking photos at our 'selfie station' and engaging collaboratively in 'The Great Rabbit Rescue'. Have a look at the photographs on Twitter (X) [**@WillowDene Sch.**](#) It has been particularly lovely to see our Sixth Form helping staff to lead the session for the young children.

New Displays



New displays have been prepared all over the school and this week we have seen them start to be finalised. Our wall displays are the culmination of half a term of work, displaying children's learning for everyone to see. They are absolutely beautiful and play a fundamental part in making sure that our school environment celebrates and values children's learning. Our giant reception display will be all about our work with siblings over the last year and will be ready for you to see in time for parents evening after half term.

Bunting Class



Bunting class have had an exciting and busy start to the school year! Our timetable is jam packed with a range of inspiring learning opportunities for our children.

We have enjoyed participating in sensory games and activities in our RHE lesson where we have focused on getting to know our peers and teachers by choosing friends to share favoured games with, in pairs or small groups.

We have had a lovely time exploring forest school with the help of Jorge. We made mud monsters and did some beautiful leaf printing.

Our PE gymnastic sessions have been going very well. Children are now confident making shapes and holding a range of poses with our bodies such as the L shape, snake shape, star shape and bridge shape.

Our reading sessions have been a big hit. Our story this half term is called 'Dream a Dream You'll Love for Life'

and the children have been doing very well developing their reading skills by following the story using differentiated reading books. In this story we go on an exciting journey to explore environments that include the clouds, a rainbow, the ocean and a field. The children have loved trying different foods such as ice cream, skittles and

different fruits and they have enjoyed exploring sensory materials such as sand, grass and snow!



Sixth Form

As we reach the end of this half term we have so much to share with you!

I am now pleased to announce that we have our three business names and logos as shown on page one of this newsletter. Each young person has been given a role within their business and we are really excited to officially launch after half term. The young people have settled into sixth form so well, we have been on a number of visits within our classes and business venture groups including; pumpkin picking, Bluewater, shopping for resources and snacks and visit the local parks to build our community and independence skills.

Next half term we look forward to building upon this, launching our businesses, beginning our accredited learning units and visiting many more places both locally and further afield. We are immensely proud of the young people, they are already showing great progress, resilience and confidence beyond the Willow Dene setting and we have an exciting journey ahead of us. The pictures show a snap-shot of the fun we have had in only a few weeks. Thank you to everyone for their support.

Kate

WHAT'S ON

Enjoy free holiday meals this half term

Information

During the October half term, children can pick up free holiday meals from libraries and adventure play centres in Royal Greenwich.

From Monday 23 October to Friday 27 October, any child can pick up a nutritious packed lunch from sites across the borough. There are no forms or fuss - simply turn up, tuck in, and enjoy.

The pickup locations will also be hosting a range of fun activities for children to get involved with, allowing parents to take a breather this half term please click on the following link for more information.

<https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/holidaymeals>