



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 17th November 2023

Head Teacher's Message

Welcome back to the first Newsletter of the second half of the Autumn Term. We cannot believe that time has gone so quickly, and we are already close to December. Within the next few weeks our decorations and trees will be up which is always a cause for great excitement with the children and staff. It has been extremely busy as you will be able to tell with this bumper addition of this Newsletter. Hopefully you have been able to watch the parents briefing released this week which has lots of useful information.

We have started the term with some extreme weather conditions! Storm Ciaran in the first week of term brought the opportunity for lots of fun outside learning. Children were outside experiencing the elements, splashing in puddles and collecting leaves. As the weather gets colder there will be a whole new set of sensory experiences to explore. We are lucky that both sites allow us to get into nature very quickly.



If you follow Twitter (X) @willowdenesch you will have seen photographs from some of the many visits that have happened already this half term. These include a group of secondary aged children who went to the Houses of Parliament to advise on The Children's Enquiry and a very brave Pheasant class who navigated the glass floor on the top of Tower Bridge with no fear at all. Over the next few weeks, we will all be exploring the themes of theatre with a creative arts Power Day which will give all children the experience of being the audience at a performance and the chance to try costume and stage design. This will lead neatly into our Winter Performances where everyone will be an actor or performer.

On Friday we were at Woolwich Town Hall celebrating the achievements of four of our children at the Annual Royal Greenwich Do The Right Thing Awards. This awards ceremony celebrates the achievements of children and young people who are outstanding citizens. Four of our children were nominated and received awards presented by the Mayor of Greenwich. Congratulations to Hajra, Estelle, Jonas and Abdulrahman. We are very proud of you all.

Within this Newsletter you will find a calendar of important dates in the lead up to the holidays. As usual there is a wide spread of events, and we hope all of you will be able to join some of them. In the mean time, have a lovely weekend and we hope that everyone celebrating had a Happy Diwali.

Rachel



Greenfinch Class



Greenfinch class are enjoying the seasonal events that come with this time of year!

So far, we have immersed ourselves in the experiences of Halloween, Bonfire Night and Diwali, and look forward to continuing the term with a focus on Autumn, Winter and Christmas. Our Play & Leisure sessions have focused on sensory play and the use of senses, which have seen us mixing potions, enjoying water play with smoky tea and water lights and hearing the sound of rice pouring as we designed our own Rangoli.

We have taken this inspiration into our writing sessions, creating seasonal still life drawings, using bingo dabbers to complete spooky spiders and sparkling fireworks, and practicing mark making in colourful scented sand, explore orange pumpkin spice and spice-infused bright colours.

Van Gogh inspires our artwork this term, with his 'Starry Night' recreated onto pumpkins, our own attempts at 'Sunflowers' and as we move into our winter focus, we will seek inspiration from 'Landscape with Snow'. Aligning our learning with the events we may experience in our wider community enables us to understand, prepare and enjoy the seasonal changes this half of the term brings.

Brambling Pupil Voice



Brambling class have been looking at communication and telling their friends what they like about school. Joel used his voice to say 'I like swimming Ellie, swimming on Wednesday then we see the chickens, yay!' His friends in class communicated with the help of choosing boards.



FOWD - Cake Sale



Thank you for all of your support at our recent cake sale. It was a great success and we raised a whopping £504.82! We want to say a big thanks to everyone who helped out and supported it, and to our wonderful parents for their very generous donations!



Parent's Evening

This week was Parents Evening. Our first Parents Evening of the year is always an opportunity to talk to your child's teacher directly about your child and the progress they are making. This year Parent's Evening was well attended, and it was lovely to see so many of you visiting us in school.

This is also the time of year when we release our Parent Satisfaction Questionnaire, seeking your views about Willow Dene and your child's experience. The questionnaire is available on paper and virtually via the QR Code.

If you have not already completed it, we would really appreciate it if you could. Your views are important to us, and we want to make sure your experience and your child's experience at Willow Dene is the best it can be.



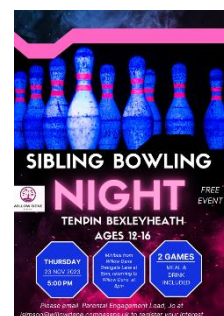
It has been a very busy few weeks with Little Wandle, our phonics provider. As a Champion School we have a responsibility to share our phonics practice and early reading practice with other schools and professionals. Since half term we have had two days of filming with Little Wandle and these films will form part of their SEND resources on their website. While they were filming it was announced that Little Wandle SEND Program had won in the SEND category of the 2023 Teach Primary Awards, so there was opportunity for a celebration too. In January we will be holding a live event which will allow delegates to see how Willow Dene puts Little Wandle into action.



This week our secondary aged children experienced a Careers Workshop led by Azeem Amir as part of their careers curriculum. Azeem is an aspiring Paralympian who is currently representing England in The Great Britain Blind Football Team. Azeem gave a passionate and inspirational talk to our young people on the theme of "Can't see'ness does not mean can't do'ness". He is keen to stay in touch with the school, as we are the first special school he has visited and he will be a fantastic advocate and role model for our children and young people.



Our staff have also been out and about attending the Sibs UK Conference which included the launch of their Talk Lite materials which has given us a lot to consider as we move forward with our work, supporting the siblings of the children and young people who come to Willow Dene. With this in mind there are several opportunities coming up to get siblings involved with school. The first is our annual Sibling's Competition. The flyer for this should have come home already, but just ask if you need another copy. We are taking a group of teenage siblings bowling on the 23rd November and are looking forward to see how this goes as this is our first off site visit together. We are also planning a Teams meeting for siblings aged 18 and over to meet and discuss how they might like to interact with the school in the future.



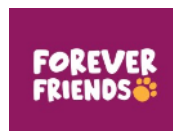
Sixth Form Business Ventures

Also, in the first week after half term we were very excited about the opening of our three Sixth Form business ventures.



Willow's Delish has opened at Swingate Lane with our Sixth Form team preparing delicious lunches.

The Compost Crew have been out and about working on horticulture projects in our local community and at Swingate Lane including clearing and planting a cul de sac area for local residents and preparing the ground at the side of Swingate Lane for a project to make the railings much more interesting!



Forever Friends, our pet product making business sold out their handmade remembrance poppies for pet collars on the first day and we were excited to see photographs of pets wearing them.

If you watched briefing you will have seen that the business uniforms for each group, complete with the logo that Sixth Form they designed have also arrived and our business groups have an identity in the school community already.



Important Information

School number

020 8854 9841

Greenwich

Transport

020 8932 8652

School website:

[Willow Dene School](https://www.willowdene.school)

- Home

[compassps.uk](https://www.compassps.uk)

Twitter(X):

@WillowDeneSch

Important Dates

Pantomime in school	20 th -21 st November 2023
Siblings Teenage Event	23 rd November 2023 (5.00pm)
School Photos	23 rd November 2023
New Parents Therapy and Nursing Information Session	6 th December 2023 (12.00pm-1.00pm)
Current Parents Therapy and Nursing Drop in Session	6 th December 2023 (1.00pm-2.00pm)
Friends of Willow Dene Winter Fair	7 th December 2023 (5.00pm – 7.00pm)
EYFS Christmas Performance	14 th December 2023 (10.30am)
Christmas Parties and Santa	15 th December 2023 (pm)
EYFS Christmas Party and Santa	19 th December 2023 (pm)
KS3/4, Sixth Form Christmas Winter Wonderland Performance	18 th December 2023 (10.15am)
KS1 and KS2 Christmas Winter Wonderland Performance	20 th December 2023 (Time to be confirmed)
Last day of school	21 st December 2023 school finishes at 1.30pm

School Vacancies

Please find below our school current school vacancies. Please follow the link to apply:

Specialist Swimming Instructor/Lifeguard and Pool Plant Operator – 1 Year Maternity Cover

Lunchtime Learning Support Assistant

Learning Support Assistant

Please follow the link to apply [Willow Dene School - Vacancies \(compassps.uk\)](https://www.willowdene.school)

WHAT'S ON



**WILLOW DENE
WINTER
Fair**

THURSDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2023

5-7PM

WILLOW DENE, SWINGATE LANE,
SE18 2JD

STALLS
MAGICAL PHOTO
OPPORTUNITIES
LIVE PERFORMANCE
REFRESHMENTS
RAFFLE
SING-ALONG
GAMES
SANTA
SIBLING
EXHIBITION

LIVE PERFORMANCE:
WILLOW DENE DANCE COMPANY - 6:15PM
FINISHING UP WITH
CAROLS AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE - 6:45PM

WILLOW DENE
SCHOOL

Friends of Willow Dene
Charity Number 1130491

LUSH Bluewater ExperiSense SEN Workshop

Come and join us for a 45 minute
LUSH CHRISTMAS SEN sensory
experience.

This tailor made SEN workshop
consists of multiple stations to help
you explore your senses. All ages are
welcome. Each station will have a
specific FESTIVE theme attached to it
with visual communication cues
available.

You will even get the chance to make
your own Lush product!



Sunday 3rd December
9AM - 9:45AM

Sunday 3rd December
10AM - 10:45AM

For any further details please call, email or visit
us in store.

01322 427951

Bluewater@lush.co.uk



Sensory Gym Play

At
Sutcliffe Park Sport Centre
Gymnastics Hall

On
26th November - 4-5pm
&
10th December - 2.30-3.30pm

Suitable for adults (8yrs +) with
learning disabilities

£4 per session



Express your interest by contacting us at
Greenwich.getactive@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

BETTER

Greenwich
GetActive

ROYAL
GREENWICH

How are we doing?

Please tell us what you think about our
services in Willow Dene.

Help us to improve our services by completing a
short patient experience survey – it will only take a
few minutes of your time.

We are nurses, occupational therapists,
physiotherapists, speech and language therapists +

Scan the QR code to complete the survey.

Oxleas
NHS
Improving lives



SCAN ME

Thank you!