



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 22nd March 2024

Head Teacher's Message

This newsletter will reach you on the final Friday of this term. With an early Easter this year, our term finishes on Thursday 28th March. Children will leave at 1.30pm to enable us to make sure that all learning environments and equipment are clean in preparation for the new term.

Lots has happened since our last newsletter. We finally moved into our Sixth Form building on Monday 11th March. There is still some work to do inside and outside the building, but this did not stand in our way! A huge whole school effort made sure that everything was moved out of our temporary accommodation ready for our young people's first day. It is fair to say that everyone was a little apprehensive when arriving for school on the Tuesday but by the afternoon everyone was feeling at home and already making plans for the space. Our first official visitors will be our amazing parents who have supported us through these first few terms. Our opening morning for parents will be Monday 25th March.

In our last newsletter we told you about the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) national conference in Liverpool where our very own John Camp OBE was speaking in his role as President of the Association. We were very excited to hear John's speech which specifically mentioned special schools and children with SEND. We were even more excited to see our children's artwork, photographs and writing on display alongside work from other Compass schools. There was a lot of interest from the delegates including the party accompanying the Secretary of State for Education.

During the last two weeks we have been continuing the application process to be the provider for the new Greenwich Free School for children and young people with autism. As you know, place planning and having enough capacity to meet demand in a timely way is one of Willow Dene's biggest challenges. We have now completed the process, including a presentation, tour, and interview. We would like to say a huge thank you to the parents, children and young people who were involved at short notice in the filming for the presentation. Your view of the school and what we



offer to you and your child is unique and your voice is better than we ever could have done! We hope that the unedited version of the film will be added to our website in the not-too-distant future to help others find out about Willow Dene.

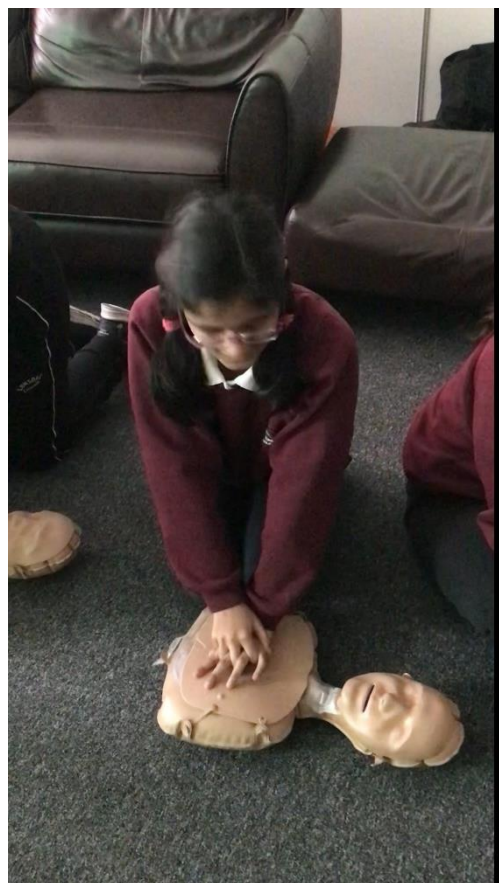
We celebrated World Book Day with an animal themed Power Day which was inspired by Rod Campbell's classic book 'Dear Zoo'. There were lots of opportunities to celebrate animals in books and stories along with some real life animal encounters.

This week, children and young people from all across the school have enjoyed our Careers Power Day. This Power Day has focused on giving children and young people the opportunity to experience favoured future careers. Sessions have included a superhero workshop from our Elevate Mentors, learning first aid with St Johns First Responders, vocational profiling from Unity Works and vocational experience alongside our Sixth Form business groups. Our Careers Power Day helps us find out more about what our children and young people are interested in and helps develop their own aspirations for their future.

We would like to wish you a happy and safe spring holiday. If you need us you will be able to contact us via the emergency line. Stickers will be coming home in your child's home schoolbook with a reminder of the number.

Thank you for all your support during such a busy term. We couldn't do it without you! We will see you all on 15th April ready for a packed summer term.

Rachel



Careers Power Day Gallery March 2024

Children and Young People at Oakmere Road loved our careers learning, highlights being the Careers role play, first aid skills and baking with Willow's Delish our cafe business venture!





Visitors to the school in the last two weeks have included a team of delegates attending our 'Little Wandle Live' event to find out how we teach early reading and phonics as a Champion School.

Our Governors have completed their termly monitoring morning, finding out more about our progress with our Core Priority which is guiding the changes to our annual review process.

Last week I Can Dance UK joined us with a group of children and young people across the school teaching us different dance techniques. Today we have been visited by Concrete Youth Theatre Company and have enjoyed their multi-sensory story telling.



Last Friday we joined people across the UK raising money for Comic Relief on Red Nose Day. The school was brightened by lots of people wearing red and there were bake sales and sweet treats at Swingate Lane and Oakmere Road. Thank you to all of you who took part and who contributed. We raised £430.

SEE ABILITY

About my Child's Eyes

Have you completed your digital form which replaces the old paper consent form.

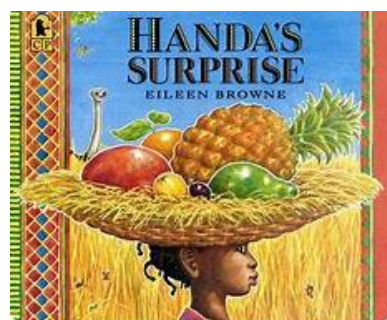
If you haven't, please do so now to ensure your child is not missing out on eye care in school. Once signed up, they will have up to date history of your child and you will be able to contact them direct at any time with information or for help with glasses etc. They will also ensure that if your child has been discharged from hospital they will be seen in school.

If you would like us to resend the link, please contact the school office.



Squirrel Class

Squirrel Class have been enjoying the story 'The Gingerbread Man' during Play and Leisure, which has been all about performance as per the subject descriptor 'I'm in a play'. Squirrel Class participated in a number of activities, including enjoying the story and songs, making puppets, making masks and decorating gingerbread men. The term culminated in a performance of the story with all the children joining in the chase after the gingerbread man.



Our Mathematics story this term was Handa's Surprise and we all enjoyed listening to the story and also trying out the different fruits during sensory sessions such as pineapple, banana, mango and passion fruit. Also the children enjoyed finding and counting all the different fruits that the animals had taken and that Akeyo (Handa's friend'), still enjoyed her 'surprise' at the end of the story.



Finally, in Art, Squirrel Class enjoyed learning about the celebrated South African Artist Esther Mahlangu. After exploring some of the amazing artwork of Esther, Squirrel Class set about creating some Ndebele inspired art, firstly on paper and then using clay. Each of the children create a piece of work detailing the white base colour, together with the brightly coloured geometric shapes.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can send messages via the My Child at School app.

When your child is absent, and you have not got time to call the school to inform us, you can send a message through the app which will be sent to the Admin Team.

✉

Log onto the app and click on the envelope icon.

To send a message, click on the drop-down box next to "New conversation" and select "Willow Dene School", enter your message at the bottom of the screen and click on the Flight icon. (Example, see below)

Hello Mrs Andrews, Can you tell me what Emma has to bring to the Red Hot Chili sessions please.

IMPORTANT DATES	
Spring Fling Event	23 rd March 2024 (11am-2pm)
Shakespeare for Schools, Albany Theatre	27 th March 2024 (TBC)
Last day of term	28 th March 2024 at 1:30pm
Easter break	29 th March 2024-14 th April 2024
Return to school	15 th April 2024
Polling day – School closed	2 nd May 2024
Bank Holiday	6 th May 2024
May half term	27 th – 31 st May

If you are considering a house move, you will need to reapply for transport and be aware applications take 28 working days to process before transport is provided.

If you require a transport application, please follow this link:
[Application for Travel Assistance | Instructions \(royalgreenwich.gov.uk\)](#)

Important Information

School number - 020 8854 9841

Greenwich Transport - 020 8932 8652

School website: [Willow Dene School - Home \(compassps.uk\)](#)

School Vacancies

Learning Support Assistant

EDV/2024/WDS/72822

We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed individual to join our team to support children in their learning , 32.50 hours per week (term time only).

- 📍 Plumstead, London, SE18 2JD
- 🕒 Permanent | Part-Time
- 💰 £21,525.99 Annually (Actual)

Actual salary will be pro-rata depending on hours / weeks worked

8 Days Remaining • Apply by 06:00pm, Friday 29th Mar, 2024 • Job start: ASAP

WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

[Apply Now](#)

If we do not have any vacancies matching your interests, please join our Talent Pool at MyNewTerm and we will review your application - [click here](#) →

WHAT'S ON



This Saturday will be our annual Spring Fling. We will be throwing open our gates at Swingate Lane and celebrating the end of term with our families, staff, friends and community. There will be something to keep everyone occupied from stalls to inflatables and some fantastic refreshments.

Look out for our Environment Committee encouraging native bird life with their bird feeders and our secondary aged children selling their enterprise project products. We welcomed over 400 visitors to our Summer Fair and we are hoping to beat this record tomorrow. Whatever the weather, we will have plenty to do inside or outside. We are looking forward to welcoming you all between 11.00am and 2.00pm.