



WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 20th December 2024

Issue 6

This newsletter will reach you on the last day of term. It has been a very exciting two weeks for us all and this newsletter will give you a flavour of this. Of course, lots of you have joined in and supported our seasonal events and already know about some of this! There will also be a parent briefing released this week giving more details about the end of this term and the start of next term.

Our winter activities have kept us very connected to our school community as they have been so well supported by you and our other school community members. The week beginning 9th December was performance week. As part of their arts learning, children were fully involved in decorating sets and making their own costumes. Beginning with a lovely snowman themed performance from Toucan and continuing with an energetic story telling in KS1 and KS2, an interactive sharing time with EYFS, a creative performance from KS3 and KS4 and finishing with Sixth Form's dramatic event. We loved them all. We had the privilege as School Leaders to be at every event and to see how confident our children were and what amazing creative strengths they have. There was a fantastic atmosphere from the audiences who wholeheartedly embraced the event and gave the best support. We hope you came away feeling uplifted because we certainly did.

Our Winter Warmer on Thursday 12th December was amid the most awful rain and heavy traffic. Even so, the snow was falling from our snow machine and so many of you ventured out to support this event. Our older children were selling their enterprise items, and all of the stalls, photo opportunities, raffle and food stations were packed. This event is never about raising money. It is about spending time together and having fun as a community. On this occasion, we certainly did have fun. There were lots of old friends and past Willow Dene pupils who found the time to join us for a catch up and a song around the Christmas Tree. With your incredible support, we've raised approximately £2,256 so far, and we're still receiving donations for Friends of Willow Dene. Thank you

In our last newsletter we talked about the success of the older siblings bowling event this term. Since then, we have held our first younger sibling's event. This was a resounding success with more than 20 younger siblings joining us for an evening of fun including bouncy castle, arts and crafts activities and pizza. The amazing thing about this event was seeing new friendships being made and details being swapped so that new friends could stay in contact. We are looking forward to building on this in the Spring term.

In the Autumn term, we aimed for every child and young person at Willow Dene to have a high quality arts experience provided by an external visitor. This year our focus has been on live music. We thoroughly enjoyed sessions listening to

'One Drum', and the most amazing jazz musicians and even having the chance to join in. We have asked School Council to think about whether we should incorporate more live music in our daily routines and how we could do this, so watch this space.

Our other pupil-led committees have also been busy. Environment Committee and Arts Ambassador Group both had stalls at the Winter Warmer. Arts Ambassador group sold t-shirts, bags and framed prints of their artwork and Environment Committee encouraged our community to look after birds in the winter by selling bird food packs. These groups all make sure that our children and young people are represented in all aspects of our school life and really do make a change to what happens here.

During the Autumn term as part of our response to the proposed national music strategy we investigated the possibility of teaching some of our children how to play a musical instrument. We arranged a trial of a keyboard tutor for some of our children at Oakmere Road who have shown musical aptitude. We have been surprised and delighted with how well they have responded, and this Monday they held their first recital for their class groups. We are now looking at extending the trial and expanding so that children at Swingate Lane can have a similar opportunity.

This week has been more relaxed with the chance for Christmas Dinner and Christmas Parties with our friends. As you all know, reading is very important to us in school, and we spend a lot of time teaching our children the joy of books. Every class at Willow Dene has a book area and all children have access to high quality, appropriate books. We believe that reading with our children is fundamental to their development in many ways. This year we have tried to match the books that your child has received as their Christmas present from us with their likes and interests and we hope you will enjoy reading them at home. A huge thank you to Friends of Willow Dene for funding this year's Christmas presents.

All that remains is to wish you a happy, healthy and fun holiday. Thank you so much for all of your support. If you need anything during the holiday, please call the Willow Dene emergency phone (07716 388634) and a school leader will call you back. The number will be on a sticker in your child's home schoolbook. We are looking forward to seeing everyone on Tuesday 7th January. In the meantime, happy new year and we look forward to 2025 with you all.

Rachel



Sparrow Class

In Sparrow class we have been working hard to get things ready for Christmas. We enjoyed making salt dough Christmas decorations and chocolate Christmas trees for the winter fair! We hope you were able to buy some!

We also worked hard to learn our Christmas dance which we performed to Diamond's by Rhianna. We used ribbons to help make diamond shapes in the sky. We did a fantastic job on the day!

We have also been making Christmas decorations for the class, such as Christmas wreaths, to make our classroom feel festive and ready for the Christmas party.



Message from our Chair of Governors

Another term (and year!) nearly over and as ever it has been a busy one at Willow Dene.

Governors have been really pleased to hear about the progress children are making and the amazing work staff do with them. We spend quite a lot of time discussing the running of the school with senior leaders, but it is important that we see that work in action with the children. A highlight this term for us was the opportunity to see the Willow Dene players perform at the Maritime Museum, a beautiful setting for an event that was inspiring and emotional. Several governors have been into school and seen children working hard and learning new things. I was privileged to come and observe school dog Milo – a really important part of the school – working with some of the children. We are also grateful to Willow's Delish one of the Sixth Form Business Enterprises who provide our lunch to order.

I would especially like to thank Kafayat Eletu who has decided to step down as Vice Chair of Governors. Kafayat has been a governor for a very long time and although she is stepping away as vice chair, I am delighted that she will remain a Parent Governor. Bob Janes has agreed to be the new Vice Chair – thanks Bob! We are looking forward a busy 2025!

On behalf of all the governors I would like to wish those of you who celebrate, a very happy Christmas. To you all have a great break and a happy new year!

Lynne – Chair of Governors.

Sixth Form

As we reach the final days in our first term, we are celebrating the achievements of our young people in both business and their preparing for adulthood curriculum. We have had such a busy start to the year with numerous visits, experiences all whilst maintaining our business ventures Monday-Wednesday, this accumulated to selling a range of products in Morrison's pop-up shop and our Winter Warmer last Thursday.

We are very proud of all our young people, our year 12's who joined us this year have settled in beautifully and they are enjoying their sixth form lives! Our newest class Woodland have also taken to sixth form like ducks to water!

We are looking forward to the new year where we will be expanding our business

opportunities, attending community events such as a weekly gymnasium session at Sutcliffe Park and continuing to develop our communication, independence and interests and hobbies.

On Friday we hosted our parents to show them our Christmas performance, our young people chose the poem Stopping by woods on a snowy evening by Robert Frost whereby each class performed a musical piece representing the poem. It was a lovely event.

We would like to thank our parents for their continued support and the Willow Dene staff for their support too, particularly within our business ventures.





IMPORTANT DATES

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 20 th December 2024 | End of Autumn Term finishing at 1:30pm |
| 6 th January 2025 | INSET Day |
| 7 th January 2025 | Pupils Return to school |
| 14 th February 2025 | Last day of 1 st half of Spring Term |
| 17 th February 2025 | Half Term holiday begins |
| 24 th February 2025 | First day of 2 nd half of Spring Term |



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 \(royalgreenwich.gov.uk\)](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Important Information

School number - 020 8854 9841

Greenwich Transport - 020 8932 8652

School website: [Willow Dene School - Home \(compassps.uk\)](https://www.willowdene.compassps.uk)

Twitter(X): @WillowDeneSch

School Vacancies

We currently have 2 vacancies available at Willow Dene School:

powered by mynewterm

Learning Support Assistant

EDV/2024/WDS/99838

We are looking for an enthusiastic and committed individual to join our team to support children in their learning. Up to 32.50 hours per week, 39 weeks per year.

📍 Swingate Lane, London, SE18 2JD

🕒 Permanent | Part-Time

£ £21,241.07 Annually (Actual)

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

72 Days Remaining * Apply by Midnight, Friday 28th Feb, 2025 * Job start: ASAP



Apply Now

Lunchtime Learning Support Assistant

EDV/2024/WDS/93938

This role supports children at lunchtime. We are looking for a motivated person to join our Lunchtime team. 8.75 hours each week, Monday to Friday, 38 week per year (term time only).

📍 Swingate Lane, London, SE18 2JD

🕒 Permanent | Part-Time

£ £5,570.81 Annually (Actual)

Actual salary will be pro-rata based on hours and weeks worked

72 Days Remaining * Apply by Midnight, Friday 28th Feb, 2025 * Job start: ASAP



Apply Now

For further information please follow the link:

<https://www.willowdene.compassps.uk/page/?title=Vacancies&pid=66>

WHAT'S ON



Greenwich Park Winter Solstice Festival | The Royal Parks

Make the most of the shortest day of the year and head to the Winter Solstice Festival at Greenwich Park.. Folk meets science for this special midwinter celebration in Greenwich Park, with live performances, a craft and food market hosted by the Royal Parks, plus live science demos led by Royal Observatory Greenwich astronomers.. This first ever Winter Solstice Festival

🕒 21 December, 12pm - 6pm

🏷️ Free

📍 Greenwich Park

www.royalparks.org.uk

Useful Contacts and Services

- [Contact Children's Services | Royal Borough of Greenwich- 020 8854 8888](#)
- [Overnight short breaks | Royal Borough of Greenwich- Children with Disabilities Team- 020 8921 2599](#)
- [Get urgent housing support | Royal Borough of Greenwich- 020 8854 8888 \(24 hr line\)](#)
- [What is a child and family assessment? | Child and family assessments | Royal Borough of Greenwich- MASH telephone number- 020 8921 3172](#)
- [Support for children and young people | Mental health services | Royal Borough of Greenwich- CAMHS Crisis line number- 0800 330 8590
CAMHS General Mon-Fri number 9-5pm- 0203 260 5211](#)
- [Royal Borough of Greenwich- Short Breaks contact](#)
- [Homelessness | Royal Borough of Greenwich](#)
- [Protecting children | Report your concerns about a child | Royal Borough of Greenwich](#)
- [How to get help | Greenwich Foodbank](#)
- [Contact Us | Samaritans](#)
- [Home | Citizens Advice Greenwich](#)
- [Live Well Greenwich | Healthy living activities around Greenwich, London](#)
- [Greenwich Time to Talk: NHS Talking Therapies | Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [Advice Hubs | Welfare Rights Service | Royal Borough of Greenwich](#)
- [Advice on benefits, tax credits and grants | Welfare Rights Service | Royal Borough of Greenwich](#)
- [About the emergency support scheme | Emergency support scheme | Royal Borough of Greenwich](#)
- [Counselling service | Charlton Athletic Football Club](#)
- [Greenwich Mencap – The voice of learning disability in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, London.](#)



IncludEd

THE COMPASS INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

Family Edition

Issue 1 - Autumn 2024

Hello and Welcome to the IncludEd Family newsletter!

At Compass, we are passionate about creating learning communities where every child thrives and experiences belonging. We believe that belonging is more than just a word; it's about creating a culture where each child's unique strengths are understood and success is celebrated in many forms. Following the success of our staff inclusion newsletter, 'IncludEd', we are thrilled to introduce a new family edition for parents and carers. This newsletter will allow us to share our ongoing inclusion journey with you. By working together, we can continue to build strong, connected communities and ensure the best outcomes for the children.

Introducing our SEND Parent & Carer Forum

We're excited to introduce our SEND Parent and Carer Forum. This initiative brings together family representatives from each of our schools. This group shapes our strategic direction and ensures that children's and families' views are at the centre of our work.

"I recently joined the SEND forum with two goals in mind: connecting with other SEND parents and contributing to discussions on supporting diverse needs."

We can provide support and empathy by sharing information and guidance with each other and Compass. I hope to play a role in developing strategies for children with a history of trauma and those with complex needs."

Daniel

We are currently looking for representatives in several schools, so please look out for communications and consider putting yourself forward.

PARENT SURVEY

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the survey last summer. We have learned that parents and carers of children with SEND are eager for more opportunities to connect and discover supportive services and activities in their local area. You also told us that raising awareness of diversity and our support in schools should continue to be a priority. This newsletter will update you on our progress towards these important goals.



OUT & ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY

Look at some of the amazing things happening on our doorstep in Greenwich, suitable for children with SEND!



[Audio Universe: Tour of the Solar System](#) | [Royal Museums Greenwich \(rmg.co.uk\)](#) - A show from the Royal Observatory - made especially for visually impaired people/ children, but enjoyable by all!



[Dance Ability: Carers & Dancers](#) | [Trinity Laban](#) - A fun and creative weekly class, specifically designed for young dancers with cognitive and/or physical disabilities or who identify as neurodivergent.



[Morning Stars](#) | [Royal Museums Greenwich \(rmg.co.uk\)](#) - Relaxed Planetarium shows for those who prefer a calmer environment, such as people with autism.



[Sensory Sailors](#) - Come to the National Maritime Museum and enjoy this brand-new sensory play session for children with special educational needs.



[The Enchanted Cinema 'The Snowman' Interactive](#) | [Woolwich Works](#) - The Snowman (Interactive) glides across the towns and cities of the UK for another winter!



[Father Christmas](#) | [Christmas Magic in Greenwich - Old Royal Naval College](#) - Relaxed sessions available on Sunday, 15 December, 10.15 am and Sunday, 22 December, 10.15 am.



[Autistic Inclusive Meets](#) - Runs a Sensory session on Mondays for families in Greenwich.



[Royal Museums Greenwich](#) - offers a safe space for local LGBTQ+ families to meet one another, get involved in creative activities for all ages and explore the stories within the collection



[Royal Greenwich Children's Services](#) | [New Lodge \(newlodgerda.org.uk\)](#) - horse riding sessions for children with SEN in Greenwich.



[Family Fund](#) provides support for families on a low income who are raising a child with disabilities. Grants are awarded for clothes, sensory toys, games, books, music, laptops and tablets, outdoor play equipment, games consoles bikes and short breaks. [REACT](#) are another small charity offering rapid support, including Christmas gifts, for children with potentially terminal illnesses.