



# WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

## CAREERS POLICY AND STRATEGY

Reviewed policy agreed by GB on:	Autumn 2025
Reviewed policy shared with staff on:	Autumn 2025
Policy to be reviewed again on:	Autumn 2028
Committee responsible for review:	Local Governing Body

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

### INTRODUCTION

Willow Dene places the needs of each student at the centre of all learning and experiences. This ethos is reflected in our Careers Policy which has been developed to meet the specific individual needs of our young people whilst following the government Careers Strategy and Statutory Guidance. At Willow Dene the planned Careers Programme centres upon our young people's individual interests and strengths in relation to their future, work and further education. These areas are explored from Year 7 to Year 14 through the curriculum which includes the Special Interest Scheme and Enterprise Projects in Key Stage 3 and Positive Contribution and Futures Mapping Schemes in Key Stage 4 and Business Ventures within Sixth Form. Through these, young people learn about careers, opportunities to volunteer and experience encounters with employers both in and out of school.

### AIMS

Willow Dene's Careers Policy outlines how the school Careers Programme is designed to equip young people with the confidence and skills needed to prepare them for their future, which may include further/higher education and employment. This takes place through bespoke support starting in Year 7 by enabling young people to understand and share their own likes and interests and how these can translate to FE/HE/work. Our curriculum provides young people with opportunities to learn essential skills and enhance personal characteristics such as social skills, communication, independence and self-help. Our children will achieve personalised positive career outcomes such as identifying and choosing appropriate colleges and FE courses, developing independent living skills, supported internships and work placements.

### ENTITLEMENT

All young people in years 8-14 should receive careers support that:

- is impartial
- includes information on a range of pathways, including apprenticeships
- is adapted to the needs of the child

### ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY

The CEIAG Policy is led and managed by Mark Clayton: Careers Programme Lead  
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# Careers Rationale

Careers learning is interwoven into all aspects of the curriculum at Willow Dene. From Early Years to KS4 children are provided with opportunities to practice and develop the skills needed to access a career.

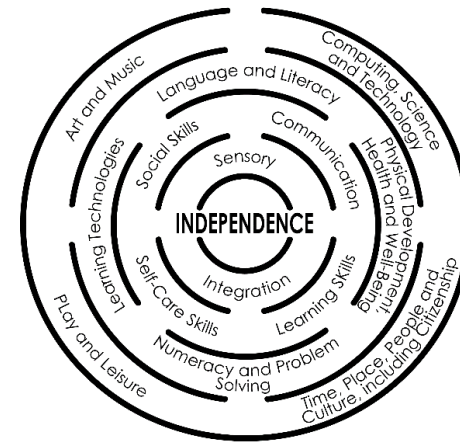
Skills necessary for career learning such as communication, social skills, problem solving, and independence are integral to our curriculum and are taught throughout the school, as highlighted in our Curriculum Wheels.

All children from KS3 onwards participate in careers-based learning opportunities, and 'Power Days' are our way of making this meaningful for children to start their careers journey. Power days champion and raise the profile of a variety of core and enrichment subjects across the school year and happen every half-term.

In KS3 children are supported to identify their strengths and value to future employers. Children will learn about different types of work, including employment, voluntary work and that everyone has the right to a career. This shapes their pathway through life, education, and work.

Additional careers learning includes Specialist Interest Afternoons from Years 7-9. These afternoons showcase children's interests and strengths, linking them vocational activities, which they share with their friends.

Information gleaned from these afternoons is used alongside child and parental involvement to support accredited learning choices at KS4 for any future career decisions.



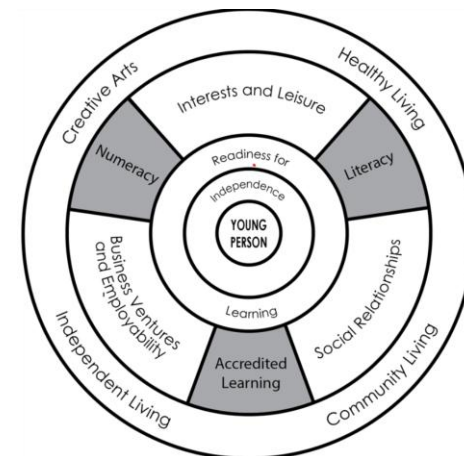
At KS4 children continue to develop their understanding of their personal interests and strengths, alongside the skills required for vocational learning, including work experience placements.

At Key Stage 4 children engage in Accredited Learning via AQA Unit Awards, these further enhance children's career learning and support them to gain accreditation in areas of interest, personal strengths.

Additional vocational learning at KS4 includes Future's Mapping and Positive Contribution. Futures mapping' includes vocational experience and leisure time activities. During Key Stage 4, we focus on how our children make a positive contribution to their communities. This aspect of the curriculum recognises and celebrates what children can individually and collectively offer the community, and what the community can offer to them. It supports our ethos of being both a valued and valuable member of society. This may take the form of events or opportunities to take part in volunteering, charity work or fundraising

Within Sixth Form our young people follow a split timetable between business ventures and preparing for adulthood. Our business ventures include hospitality; Willow's Delish, horticulture; Compost Crew, animal products and care; Forever Friends, art and design; Creations, and our latest business DIY/maintenance. Within business young people have the opportunity to explore different roles and contexts linked to their business and experience this both in and out of school. Our young people within business ventures spend time creating resources and products as well as learning externally.

Our year 14's are soon to complete their work experience placements with adults who know them well.





# GATSBY BENCHMARKS

Willow Dene Careers Programme follows the recommendations outlined in the Gatsby Benchmarks. We strive to achieve these fully and use the SEND toolkit to ensure provision for our young people aligns with the high standards of personal provision outlined in our curriculum.

## BENCHMARK 1: A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME

Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, employers and other agencies.

### CRITERIA

Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of governors, the headteacher and the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained careers leader responsible for it.

The careers programme should be tailored to the needs of pupils, sequenced appropriately, underpinned by learning outcomes and linked to the whole-school development plan. It should also set out how parents and carers will be engaged throughout.

The careers programme should be published on the school's website and communicated in ways that enable pupils, parents and carers, staff and employers to access, and understand it.

The programme should be regularly evaluated using feedback from pupils, parents and carers, teachers and other staff who support pupils, careers advisers and employers to increase its impact

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- Willow Dene has a structured Careers Guidance programme that provides young people with opportunities across the curriculum to develop transferable life and social skills; this has been reviewed and agreed by SLT and Governors and is published on the school website.
- Willow Dene's Careers Strategy and Career's Access Policy are published on the school website.
- Willow Dene's Career's policy is regularly reviewed (at least yearly) by Governors and amended to reflect changes both within school and nationally.
- Willow Dene has a named Governor for Careers – Jodi Mathers
- Willow Dene has a named Career's Lead – Mark Clayton
- Willow Dene has a qualified external Career's Practitioner – Ani Bolina
- The Career Access policy and Programme is published on the school website and provides opportunities for the development of student's self-advocacy, negotiation and decision-making skills – via a school council, membership of ACE and pupils with membership to the Greenwich Young People's Council (GYPC). Opportunities for purposeful interactions with a range of trusted and familiar adults including school staff and visitors, via Specialist Interest Scheme and the Jack Petchey Foundation.

## BENCHMARK 2: LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

All pupils, parents and carers, teachers and staff who support pupils should have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers may require different or additional information. All pupils will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.

### CRITERIA

During each Key Stage, all pupils should access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options or next steps.

Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported to access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their support for pupils in their care.

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- Young people at Willow Dene have opportunities to learn about and engage with potential careers routes from Year 7. Children engage in our Specialist Interest Scheme where their interests are celebrated and in Enterprise Projects, designed to equip them with some of the key skills required within the workplace shared with their peers.
- Willow Dene has an appointed Careers Practitioner (SEND) who works for the Targeted Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance and meets with parents to support to create and implement action plans for careers paths and further education.
- Willow Dene is a member of the Careers Enterprise Network and has an appointed Enterprise Coordinator Caroline Lee and Enterprise Advisor Geoff Hopper.
- Local Labour Market information is published on the Career's section of the school website for children, parents, teachers, and employers to access.
- Parental involvement is key element in choosing options for accreditation for our young people and are involved in this process. Parents attend our Year 9 and 10 Options Evening and support children to choose areas for further study in Key Stage 4 with a focus on potential employment and skills needed.
- Key Stage 4 Post 16 Information Event for Parents
- Parents are involved in Annual Review and EHCP planning meetings where potential careers and skills required are discussed and planned for.

## BENCHMARK 3: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH PUPIL

Pupils have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help pupils navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities should be tailored to the needs of each pupil, including any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, young people with SEND and those who are absent.

### CRITERIA

- A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical thinking, showcase a diverse range of role models and raise aspirations.
- Schools should keep systematic records of the participation of pupils in all aspects of their careers programme, including the individual advice given to each pupil, and any subsequent agreed decisions.
- For pupils who change schools during the secondary phase, information about participation and the advice given previously should be integrated into a pupil's records, where this information is made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition.
- All pupils should have access to these records and use them ahead of any key transition points to support their next steps and career development. Schools should collect, maintain and use accurate data for each pupil on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations to inform personalised support.
- Schools should use sustained and longer-term destination data as part of their evaluation process and use alumni to support their careers programme
- Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school.

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- Willow Dene's Careers Policy challenges stereotypes and is aspirational.
- Children are challenged daily through the schools' curriculum and personalised provision. All young people engage in opportunities to develop these skills in a practical context via Special Interest Afternoons and Enterprise Projects.
- Our Careers Policy provides students with opportunities to engage in work experience with influential and prominent people within their chosen careers, this has included a spokesperson for SEN employment and Professional Photographer.
- At Secondary school, vocational learning, specialist Interests and Enterprise Projects are discussed and recorded in children's Annual Reviews. These are shared with parents and children.
- Children and parents have opportunities to access external and impartial Careers guidance through a designated SEND Career's Practitioner throughout their Secondary education.
- Post 16 plans are created alongside and external and impartial SEND Careers Practitioner.
- All Young people have an EHCP that plans for all aspects of their future lives including future employment. The school role is fundamental in systematically co-ordinating, reporting on and recording this process.
- Willow Dene collects and collates three years of destination data for our leavers; this is stored on our Careers strategy and shared on our website.

## BENCHMARK 4: LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS

As part of the school's programme of careers education, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.

### CRITERIA

- Every year, in every subject, every pupil should have opportunities to learn how the knowledge and skills developed in that subject helps people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.
- Careers should form part of the school's ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support pupils.

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- All young people engage in a range of specialist weeks which include a STEM focus, these include science weeks where sessions are led by internal and external specialist practitioners including activities led by local higher education settings.
- Willow Dene has a strong ethos of innovative use and application of learning technology in order to allow children to overcome access barriers, e.g. Eye Gaze, Virtual and augmented reality.
- All young people have an EHCP that plans for all aspects of their lives including future employment alongside parents.
- Post 16 Options Evening provides information to parents regarding future transitions and the school actively supports these transitions.

## BENCHMARK 5: ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and could include pupils' own part-time employment where it exists.

### CRITERIA

- Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer.

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- Children access multiple employer encounters each year, these take the form of in person visits both within school or within a place of work.
- Children also access digital employer encounters which promote diverse careers opportunities, ranging from video calling and questioning local police officers, immersing in the creative arts during digital career's week and interviewing a young lady with SEN who is now in paid employment within RBG.
- Children from Year 7-9 engage in an Enterprise Project which provides opportunities to develop workplace skills whilst providing opportunities to have meaningful encounters with employers.
  
- Willow Dene School is registered with the Careers Enterprise Network and works with the local LEP.
- Willow Dene has a designated Enterprise Coordinator and Enterprise Advisor.
- Willow Dene works alongside Talentino! to support Career's Education for our children.
- Children are offered opportunities to engage in Greenwich Council's Takeover Challenge Day where they work alongside a member of the local council responsible for SEND provision within schools.
- Children have opportunities develop self-advocacy, negotiation, and decision-making skills – via a school council, membership of ACE and pupils with membership to the Greenwich Young People's Council (GYPC)

## BENCHMARK 6: EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.

### CRITERIA

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful experiences of workplaces.
- By the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further meaningful experience.

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- Willow Dene is used as an employer organisation to develop work skills and routines in an environment that supports our children's needs as preparation for work experience outside of school. For example, internal work experience such as working with the school Admin team, Premises team and Catering team to gain experience of skills needed to engage in external work experience. An example of this is Greenwich Borough's 'Takeover Day' where students transferred skills learnt within school in order to support a senior member of Greenwich's SEN team in their daily duties at Woolwich Town Hall alongside students from across the borough.
- Fostering relationships with a range of local businesses as well as recognising the important role parents play in facilitating employment and exploring any employment opportunities they may provide.
- Futures Mapping will ensure that all children in KS4 have at least one experience of a workplace either digitally within school or on location.
- Engaging with positive career role models with agencies that work with Willow Dene and building relationships with young people initially within the school environment and expanding as appropriate

## BENCHMARK 7: ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes. This should incorporate learning in schools, colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), universities and in the workplace.

### CRITERIA

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful encounters with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and ITPs.
- By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying to higher education should have had at least two visits to higher education providers to meet staff and learners

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- Children and their families are supported to make contact with and visit further education settings by school and our appointed Careers Practitioner (SEND) who works for the Targeted Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance
- Representatives from RBG Post 16 education attend children's Year 10 annual reviews to discuss the full range of learning opportunities available to children and their parents.
- Representatives from RBG Post 16 education attend our Year 10 Post 16 options evening to support parents discuss the full range of learning opportunities available to children and their parents.

## BENCHMARK 8: PERSONAL GUIDANCE

Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance meetings with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These meetings should be available for all pupils when ever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be scheduled to meet their individual needs. The careers leader should work closely with the careers adviser, SEND coordinator (SENDSCO) and other key staff to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded in the careers programme.

### CRITERIA

- Every pupil should have at least one personal guidance meeting with a careers adviser by the age of 16, and a further meeting by the age of 18. Meetings should be scheduled in the careers programme to meet the needs of pupils.
- Information about personal guidance support and how to access it should be communicated to pupils and parents and carers, including through the school website.

### HOW WILLOW DENE MEETS THESE

- Careers Guidance at Willow Dene means ensuring we have a comprehensive knowledge of each child, including their likes, interests, skills, and experiences. These are used to help young people to identify and explore suitable options. By doing so we aim to challenge pre-existing assumptions of people and parents or carers about what they are capable of.
- Children at Willow Dene will have an EHCP meeting at the end of Year 9. This is an opportunity to discuss their futures and put a system of support in place. This draws on support from a range of agencies. All children make a contribution to their EHCP meeting. At KS3 and 4 this includes reference to areas of interest, enjoyment and potential routes for future employment and further education.
- Futures Mapping and Positive Contribution schemes in Key Stage 4 include a planned focus on sharing which teaches children meaningful skills in communicating with unfamiliar adults, wider audiences and in a wider range of contexts.
- Where appropriate – children will have received personal guidance in the form of 1:1 time with a Careers Advisor by the age of 16; this will be either internal or external and will be based upon each child's individual need. Children will be guided to understand future options and choices and supported in making these decisions.



## CAREERS ENTITLEMENT

At Willow Dene children are entitled to the following careers provision. This will support children and their families to develop the skills you may need for working life including work experience. Make realistic, but ambitious, choices about courses and jobs, develop a plan of action for the future including understanding the different routes after Year 11 such as training, further education courses and employment including supported internships and Apprenticeships.

## Career offer by Year group

	<b>Autumn</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
Year's 7 & 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Specialist Interest Afternoons</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers Week</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Specialist Interest Afternoons</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Specialist Interest Afternoons</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>

	<b>Autumn</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
Year 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post 16 Transition Action Plan</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Specialist Interest Afternoons</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post 16 Transition Action Plan</li> <li>• Careers Week</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Specialist Interest Afternoons</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KS4 Options Evening</li> <li>• Post 16 Transition Action Plan</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Specialist Interest Afternoons</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>

<p>Year 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future's Mapping</li> <li>• Post 16 Transition Action Plan</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• At least one on-site work encounter with an employer</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers Week</li> <li>• Future's Mapping</li> <li>• Post 16 Transition Action Plan</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• At least one on-site work encounter with an employer</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future's Mapping</li> <li>• Post 16 Transition Action Plan</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• At least one on-site work encounter with an employer</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents, and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>
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<p>Year 11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Contribution</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• At least one on-site work encounter with an employer</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers Week</li> <li>• Positive Contribution</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• At least one on-site work encounter with an employer</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Contribution</li> <li>• Skills Builder project days</li> <li>• Enterprise Projects</li> <li>• Posters and Displays</li> <li>• Curriculum Links – PHSE/Life skills</li> <li>• At least one meaningful encounter with an employer per year</li> <li>• At least one on-site work encounter with an employer</li> <li>• Parents and carers will have access to LMI resources through website</li> <li>• Children, parents and carers have access to comprehensive and impartial careers advice</li> </ul>
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## DESTINATION DATA

At Willow Dene destination data is kept for all children who complete KS4, this information is recorded for three as outlined by Government Guidance. This information forms part of our alumni and past leavers are encouraged to return to Willow Dene as positive role models for current students.

# Destination Data

Destination	Number of Children					
	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Charlton Park Academy	4	9	1	0	0	0
Marlborough School	1	2	0	0	0	0
Marjorie McClure School	1	0	2	0	0	0
Parkwood Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0
LSEC Bromley	0	0	2	0	0	0
Shooters Hill	0	0	1	0	0	0
The Bridge School	0	0	4	0	0	0
The Anchor SEND Centre	0	0	2	0	0	0
Willow Dene 6 <sup>th</sup> Form				16	6	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>