

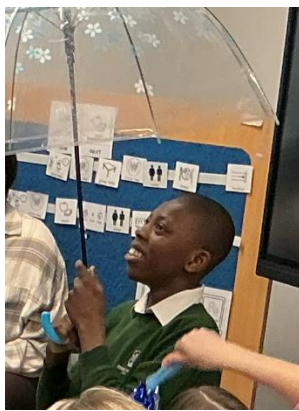
NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools



Welcome back to spring term 2026! We hope you had a lovely, well-deserved holiday. We all did, but there's nothing as joyous as returning on the first day of school and knowing everyone is well and happy to be back to school.

If you are visiting us, you may see some new faces in our admin team. Lucy has joined us to support with our HR and Amy will be working closely with Claire Bayfield. Please do say hello when you get chance.



There have been a lot more new faces join us this January. Just before the holiday, we took handover of the two temporary classrooms for Skipper and Swallowtail our two new Rowan Wood classes. Until the new building at Hargood Road is ready, Skipper and Swallowtail will be located in the playground area at Swingate Lane. Linda and Samira, our teachers were with us in the autumn term getting to know their children and we are delighted to report both classes have made a really positive start. Some of our Willow Dene team have been supporting during the first weeks. Some Rowan Wood children have now transferred to Peacock and Monarch classes at Oakmere Road, from Swingate Lane, making them full. We are proud of how they have managed this change!



Swallowtail



Skipper

All these moves and changes have made room for our January new starters, who have joined Willow Dene classes across Swingate Lane. If this is your first Willow Dene newsletter, welcome! We are delighted that your child has joined us and we are looking forward to your family joining our community. The children have already made an amazing start!

We are preparing for the first admissions panels next week, looking at our placements for September 2026. You will remember what a difficult process this is with so many applicants for relatively few places. Lots of you have been in this position yourselves. The first panels will decide onward placements for our year 14's which is something we feel passionate about as you know, and the places for our complex learners. Other panels will follow later in the year. With places at a premium, we feel really positive about the extra space we have acquired at Oakmere Road with the addition of the former PDC space. This will mean that for our children with autism, who are secondary age, there will be room for more children to move to Oakmere Road this September. We will give you more details about this later in the year.

We are excited that all our music activities including open orchestra and a new sensory music group, music tutoring and choir have restarted for the new term. We look forward to sharing what they get up to later in the term, but all our buildings have been filled with amazing musical sounds!

We started the term with the first really cold weather we have had. The combination of rain then ice made the school sites particularly slippery. We always clear the pathways as early as we can but please do be careful especially outside the main school gates. In the unlikely event of snow, we will contact you immediately with an update. This will be via parentmail so please don't forget to tell us if your number changes.



To our delight, our gardening club noticed that it's a tiny bit lighter after school already and things are beginning to grow! We have much to do outside as spring arrives including planting up our new pond before frog season and preparing our allotment. We can't wait!

Last week we met with the team from Demelza House Hospice to look at ways to work more closely together and try to understand what each service can offer. One of the things you have mentioned is the ceasing of provision of school transport when children stay at Demelza House, meaning that during mid-week stays, either parent's breaks are interrupted to bring children to school or there is no school for the duration of the stay. This is

something both teams would like to see a solution for, particularly with the renewed emphasis on children's school attendance. We have agreed to work together with RBG to try and find a solution.

Next week we have a week of visitors with a delegate from Singapore education joining us on Monday to look at the quality of education for children with complex needs. We are looking forward to sharing what we do. Later in the week we will be hosting a large delegation of visitors from The Netherlands who want to find out more about how we use technology. We will also be spending a day with our friends from Mary Rose School in Portsmouth who will be looking at our PE and swimming provision. We look forward to sharing how all these visits went in our next newsletter.

I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Rachel

News from Rowan Wood

Happy New Year and welcome back! It is exciting that from the start of this term all 4 Year 7 Rowan Wood classes are in their own classrooms with their classmates. This is an important next step as we get closer to moving into our new school building. Everyone is settling in well and, in particular, the children in Skipper and Swallowtail are getting to know the new adults that will be supporting them with their learning. As always, if you would like to catch up or have any questions, please contact the school office. Thank you.

Ross

Swallowtail and Skipper classes have settled into their new classes this term. They are enjoying exploring their new environment and resources and getting to know their new classmates and team. This half term we are focussing on relationship building and routines which are fundamental.

Monarch and Peacock have had some new friends who have transitioned from their Swingate Lane setting and are enjoying getting to know one another.

Everyone is looking forward to the term ahead and hearing about the updates on our new building.

Claire

With the spring term now in full swing, my creative arts role this term will focus on supporting both Swallowtail and Skipper classes as they continue to settle into their new learning environments and build positive relationships with one another.

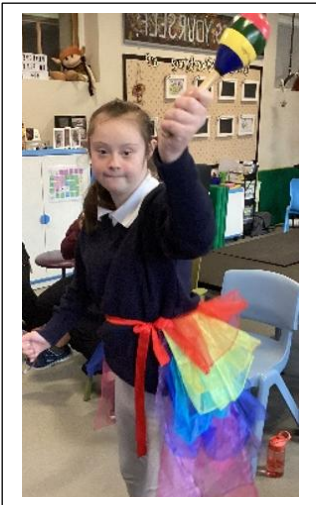
As part of my enrichment support, I will be delivering drama sessions in Swallowtail class, inspired by the story *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson. Through this work, our young people will develop body awareness and control, explore movement and spatial awareness by travelling through the "streets of New York," and take part in fun, interactive drama games.

In Skipper class, I will be supporting the delivery of dance sessions by helping to develop clear structure and routines. Young people will explore a sense of self through body isolation activities, experiment with space and movement using travelling exercises, and develop musicality in a sensory and accessible way.

I am really looking forward to teaching this term and to getting to know all our children and young people.

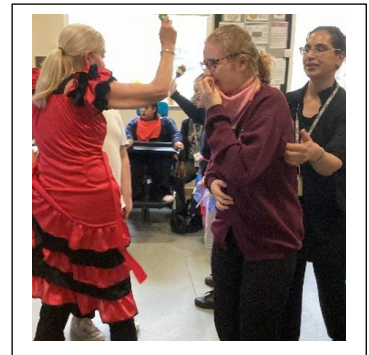
Charlie

DORMOUSE CLASS



Dormouse Class are so excited for our Funds of Knowledge Core Priority inspired TPPC learning this term. This is influencing our learning across other lessons as we embrace the rich and diverse cultural heritage of our young people, their families and staff teams. We are excited to explore traditional foods, rhymes, songs, traditions, celebrations, dance and history within our Dormouse family. Can you believe we have representation and history from so many countries just within our class including Greece, Cyprus, Poland, England, Ireland, Scotland, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Jamaica, Cape Verde, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan!

In our TPPC topic this term we have been learning about each other, our families, things and people that are important to us and sharing family traditions and beliefs. We look forward to inviting our families and friends to share their traditions, music and of course lots of food! This topic will form part of our corridor display so keep a look out next time you visit us at Oakmere Road; we are excited for you all to share our vision of our community and heritage and the wonderful experiences that brings.



Pre Loved at Willow Dene



Willow Dene and Rowan Wood schools continue to support families amid the cost of living-crisis and by doing so, raises much needed money for our school 'Hardship Fund'. This fund supports our families of both children and staff who suddenly find themselves in difficult financial circumstances.

You will find our 'Pop Up' rails in our reception area at Swingate Lane. The items are changed every two weeks and are available for you to take, all we ask is an affordable cash donation in the red charity pot.

We accept new and pre loved clothing and footwear. Items should be in a clean usable condition for us to share with the

school community.

Items that are not sold are then taken to our local charity shop in Plumstead, Emmaus Greenwich by one of our Sixth Form business teams. Emmaus Greenwich supports people that have experienced homelessness.

Should you have any clothing/footwear that you would like to donate, please pop your items into a carrier bag, which we will also reuse, and label for the 'Pre Loved' team.

We also have a 'Pre Loved for Pets' which has been set up and is monitored by our 6th form Forever Friends business group.

Your ongoing support with this and other school community projects are very much appreciated.

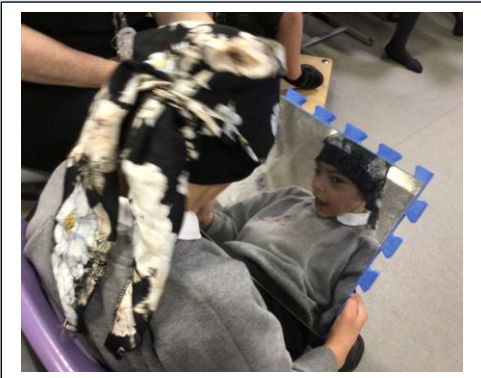
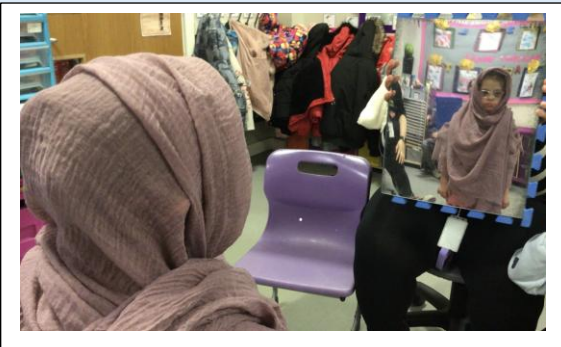
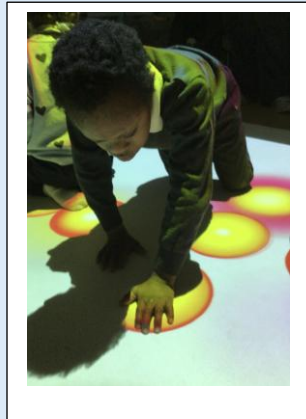


HERON CLASS

Hello and Happy New Year from Heron Class. We have come back to school looking forward to all our exciting new topics to learn.

We have enjoyed exploring cause and effect in maths using the Magic Carpet, finding shapes and touching them to see what they do.

We have also started our lessons on culture and diversity, where we explored the book "Hats of Faith" by Medeia Cohan and Sarah Walsh. We tried on lots of different hats and looked at ourselves in mirrors to see how they made us look. We thought dressing up in different hats of faith was lots of fun and we enjoyed learning about how and why these hats are worn.

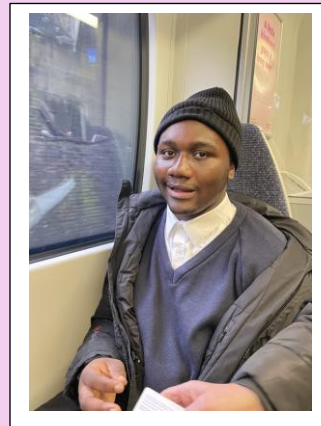


WOODLAND CLASS

On Thursday 8th January Woodland class visited the Tate Modern to explore Emily Kame Kngwarreye exhibition in order to influence our upcoming art project.

Our young people enjoyed travelling via minibus and public transport to navigate to the gallery, our travels we saw some London sites including St Paul's and Tower Bridge.

We look forward to creating our own pieces and forming part of the sixth form art exhibition which everyone is invited to in the week commencing 9th February 2026.



IMPORTANT DATES

Last day of 1st half of spring term – Friday 13th February 2026

Half term – Monday 16th – Friday 20th February 2026

First day of 2nd half of spring term – Monday 23rd February 2026

World book day – Thursday 5th March 2026

Comic relief charity day – Friday 13th March 2026

ADMIN NEWS

Important numbers

School telephone number	020 8854 9841
Willow Dene contact email	willowdene@compassps.uk
Rowan Wood contact email	rowanwood@compassps.uk
Willow Dene School website	Willow Dene School - Home www.willowdene.compassps.uk
Rowan Wood School website	Rowan Wood School - Home www.rowanwood.compassps.uk
School Instagram	@WillowDeneSch

My Child At School

Did you know that you can contact the school administrative team via your child's MCAS account by clicking on the envelope icon in the top left-hand corner of the app.

School Office Hours

Opening hours:
8.00am – 4.30pm
Monday to Friday

Royal Borough of Greenwich travel application

[Application for home to school travel assistance |](#)

Change of details

If you are moving, change your mobile number or have a new place or work please remember to update the school with your new details.

Illness

If your child or young person has vomited and or has diarrhoea, they should remain off from school for 48 hours after their last episode.

For secondary aged children:

London Philharmonic Orchestra OPEN SOUND ENSEMBLE

TUESDAY 17 & WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY



lpo.org.uk/open-sound
**APPLICATIONS
NOW OPEN!**

OPEN SOUND ENSEMBLE TUESDAY 17 & WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2026

Join the London Philharmonic Orchestra's free inclusive music ensemble for young people of secondary school age with special educational needs and disabilities and their parents/carers.

Tuesday 17 & Wednesday 18 February 2026
Woolwich Works, The Firework Factory,
Royal Arsenal, London SE18 6HD

Morning group: 10.30am-12.30pm | Afternoon group: 1.30-3.30pm

We will be making music in groups using both traditional and accessible digital instruments, playing alongside friendly musicians from the LPO.

"Open Sound is the highlight of the school holidays for my daughter. She feels so confident, she knows her opinion is sought, and it's so lovely as a parent to see her grow in confidence. And we both laugh a lot!"

Open Sound Ensemble parent, Spring 2024

To find out more or to apply, visit

lpo.org.uk/open-sound

If you have any questions please
get in touch with us:



Email: opensound@lpo.org.uk or



Phone: 07793 837357

The LPO Open Sound Ensemble 2025/26 is generously supported by The Bally Thomas Charitable Fund and The Viney Family Foundation.


South London Children and
Young People's Community
Immunisation Service

Missed your flu vaccine?

Live or attend school in the borough of
Greenwich? Aged 4 - 16?

Come down to a flu catch-up clinic and
protect yourself!

Saturday 17 January, 12:30 - 16:00
Holy Trinity, Eltham, SE9 2SD

Thursday 22 January, 15:00 - 16:15
Waterways Children's Centre SE28 8EZ

Saturday 24 January, 10: - 13:00
Clockhouse Community Centre, SE18 5QL

Call 020 3903 3345 or
scan the QR code for
more information or to
book an appointment



Grant Saw
SOLICITORS



Deputyship Workshop

Wednesday | 28th Jan | 10:30AM

Where: The Courtyard,
Swingate Lane

This 2 hour session will aim to help Willow Dene parents and carers understand the process of application and legal framework of Deputyship, particularly when their young person with SEN approaches adulthood

Spaces are limited, so please contact the Family Support Team to secure your place. It will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Email WD-FSW@compassps.uk or ring Family Support Team: 0208 854 9841

The workshop will be delivered by the team at Grant Saw solicitors.

