

NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools



You will receive this newsletter on the last day of this half term. We are already halfway through the school year. Hopefully you will have received the parent's briefing for this half term so you can hear some more details on what's been happening and what we have planned.

Last week we had both Willow Dene governors meeting and a governor's monitoring morning for Rowan Wood and Willow Dene. The monitoring morning focused on our core priority which is about ensuring consistency in everyday routines and supporting progress in learning and independence in these times of the day. Our most recent area of focus has been our morning routines, and we have been tracking how children's start of the day looks and what they are learning during this time. Governors were able to see some of our data and the training that we have delivered to our teams, and they were also able to visit classes to see morning routines first hand. During our governors meeting, we shared our annual update about how we deliver and develop appraisal for our staff team, discussed future planning for Rowan Wood and Willow Dene and talked about the leadership report. We welcomed a new parent governor following the recent elections and it was a great meeting with good debate.

As we approach the planned merger between Compass Partnership of Schools and Eko Trust we are continuing to build relationships with our counterparts in Eko schools. After half term we will be welcoming Philip Cranwell to Willow Dene for a visit. Philip is keen to know about how we assess children and how we report our data as well as having a school tour. In the coming weeks we will also welcome Karen Sitwell – Cook Headteacher from Summerdown school and the CEO, Paula Farrow from Nexus Education Schools Trust. We look forward to providing an update regarding these visits.



Community Cultural Celebration Day

SAVE THE DATE:
SAT 14TH MARCH 2026 - 2-5PM
WILLOW DENE, SWINGATE LANE

We are hosting a cultural celebration afternoon, highlighting and celebrating the richly diverse cultural heritage of our school community. With music, art, storytelling, traditional games, food, traditional clothing and more!

Can you help?
We are looking for support with:

- Can you volunteer your time to help run an activity or session?
- Do you have a skill such as traditional dancing or play an instrument that you would like to share?
- Can you contribute a dish or snack from your culture for others to taste?
- Do you have a favourite game or activity that you can share with us to recreate for families to take part in?
- Something else that you would love to share with the wider school community?

We can't wait to hear from you!
Email:
Joshua - jgarrett-smith@compassps.uk
and
Emma - ebennett@compassps.uk

The poster features a diverse group of people in traditional attire from various cultures, including a woman in a blue and white patterned dress, a man in a red and white outfit, and a woman in a red and white dress. The background is a light beige color with a subtle pattern.

We are looking forward to Spring and some of the events that will happen before the Spring holiday. We are particularly excited about our termly event taking place on Saturday 14th March 2026, which will be a Community Cultural Celebration Day which will celebrate cultural heritage of our school community with music, art, storytelling and more! Make sure you save the date.

This week we had our older siblings pool party event at Swingate Lane where our siblings were able to join in with swimming fun, food and drink. These events are part of our regular termly calendar and we very much look forward to spending time together with extended families and building positive relationships.

You will know from the letter you received this week that both Willow Dene sites will be polling stations at the local elections on May 7th. We know from our experiences during Covid when our designation as a polling station was temporarily suspended how important an accessible venue is for our local community as many of our older neighbours or people with mobility needs were unable to vote during this time. Due to the stringent requirements for polling stations and the fact that the sites will be open to the public, we cannot open to children. On May 7th our team will be completing mandatory safeguarding and health and safety training.

This week we are interviewing for a Premises Officer and Office Lead for Rowan Wood. They will be working at Willow Dene alongside our premises team and Barbara, Willow Dene Office Lead, who will provide mentoring and induction. We are looking forward to meeting with the successful candidates and introducing them to our community.

Please read the attached nursing team newsletter carefully for important information regarding supplies.

We wish you a happy and safe half term holiday and for those of you observing Ramadan, we wish you Ramadan Mubarak. If you need any support or advice during the holiday time, please telephone our emergency line on 07716 388634 and a school leader will return your call.

Rachel

NEWS FROM ROWAN WOOD



In Monarch Class we have continued to enjoy our class book 'Journey' by Aaron Becker, the children have worked fantastically when writing a setting description, their imaginations ran wild when thinking about what could be in the castle! In Learning Technologies we have been working on our use of the camera to record, we have learnt how to record short films while keeping the camera focused. We planned and filmed short clips with a beginning, middle and end! Great fun was had when watching back their recordings. In PE the children have continued to enjoy their swimming lessons as well as developing their Martial Art Karate skills. In TPPC, we have enjoyed linking our learning to the diversity of our class, we have learnt about each other's heritage, religion and cultures which we will also be incorporating into our Art lessons in the next half term. Monarch Class have had a wonderful half term and are looking forward to lots of exciting learning opportunities after the half term break!



In Peacock class - over the last two weeks, the Peacock children have been enjoying an immersive experience by role-playing events from the story *Chalk* by Bill Thomson. We used real chalk to create vibrant images on the ground and imagined what would happen if they came alive. In Science, we continued exploring gravity and discussed what makes all objects fall to the ground. We also looked at air resistance and made parachutes to test this concept. In Maths, our focus is subtraction. We use a variety of concrete objects to help us visualise and understand why numbers get smaller when we take away. In Phonics, we are recapping the digraphs /th/, /sh/, /qu/ and /ch/. We have been practising reading and spelling words that contain these digraphs.

Skipper class has been enjoying a series of exciting Specialist Interest afternoons, giving the children opportunities to explore activities they love while developing new skills. The children have been decorating biscuits to practise cooking skills, enjoying fidget and iPad sessions, making playdough to strengthen fine motor skills, and exploring textures and colours through foam and colouring gel painting. They have also taken part enthusiastically in Drama sessions, building igloos and exploring cold objects, sparking curiosity, creativity, and imagination. These afternoons are a wonderful opportunity for staff to get to know the children better and celebrate their individual interests. Overall, the children have had fantastic and enjoyable sessions together.

Swallowtail class has been enjoying creating art inspired by the Arctic landscape, exploring icy textures, cool colour palettes, and the sense of vast, open space. We have worked together in our drama sessions, where the children particularly enjoyed the interactive elements, using movement and imagination to bring ideas to life. These collaborative activities have supported creativity and confidence, making the sessions both engaging and rewarding.

We are all looking forward to the half term holiday! **Ross**

Rowan Wood classes have had another successful half term. Monarch and Peacock teams are looking to the half term ahead and in my role as lead for learners with autism we are planning sessions for the groups to explore the young people's personal strengths, as well as helping the children reflect on their challenges and areas of development. Please watch this space as we plan those sessions going forward.

Skipper and Swallowtail have started some lovely sensory processing sessions which are helping the children settle into their new classrooms with their new friends and we have plans going into the summer term to explore emotional regulation. **Claire**

GOLDCREST CLASS

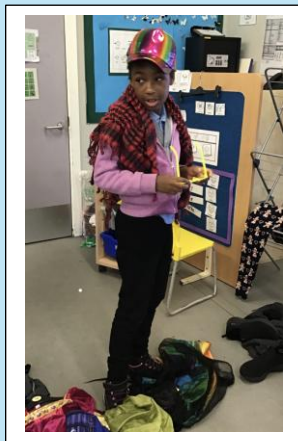
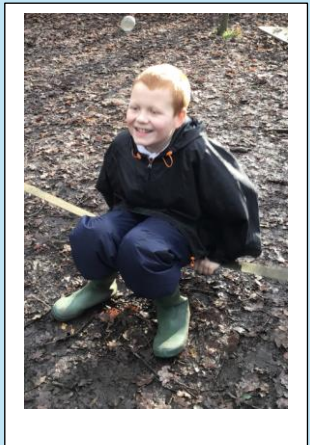
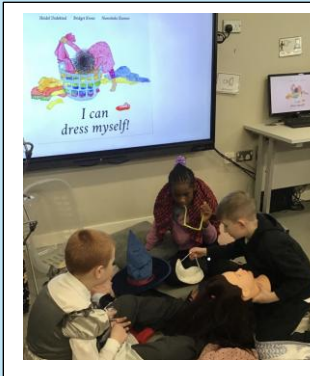
Goldcrest Class have had a fantastic Spring term, including welcoming a new friend, Fenom, to our class. Fenom has settled in brilliantly, joining in with games and showing a real love for swimming!

We have thoroughly enjoyed our weekly Forest School sessions. Highlights included making bird feeders and hanging them around the forest, zooming down the mud slide (a firm favourite!), and relaxing in hammocks while listening to the sounds of nature.

In Literacy, we have been developing our self-care skills by practising how to dress ourselves using dressing-up clothes. We have loved exploring the wordless story *I Can Dress Myself*, which has led to lots of laughter, especially when the teacher modelled dressing in some very silly outfits!

During TPPC, we have been learning about our friends' cultures by exploring music, traditional clothing, and food from around the world. We have enjoyed making a range of different recipes and trying new foods, with the Caribbean theme being a particular highlight, especially making and tasting delicious jerk chicken wraps.

We are very much looking forward to next term, as our Forest School sessions will continue and we have lots more exciting learning ahead!



WOODPECKER CLASS



This term in Woodpecker Class, we have been delighted to welcome two new members to our class. We have been focusing on adapting our engagement in lessons and developing our play skills. Each week children have been introduced to a variety of resources and textures, allowing them to learn and develop their social skills through parallel play.

This is an important aspect of learning in our classroom, as it supports the development of self-regulation. It provides a structured and supportive environment where pupils can explore sensory experiences they seek, while gradually increasing their tolerance of new and unfamiliar textures. Communication between is a key focus in Woodpecker Class and play and leisure activities offer an excellent opportunity to encourage interaction and meaningful social engagement.

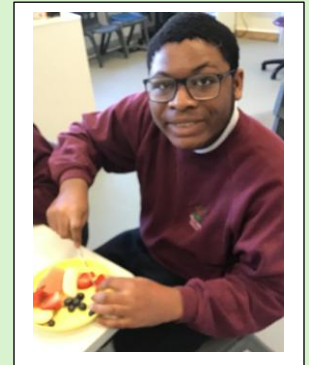
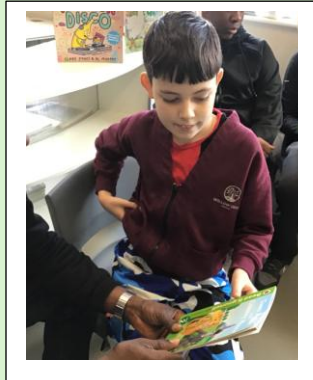
As a class, we have all thoroughly enjoyed this time together and look forward to it each week. We are now exploring the possibility of expanding these sessions to include an early morning activity, helping pupils to regulate as they arrive at school and prepare for learning.



OTTER CLASS

A Love of Reading Blossoming Every Day

Our children have been having a wonderful time this term, especially during their daily reading sessions. Each day, they read alongside an adult, building both confidence and excitement around stories. It has been fantastic to see how engaged they are, listening carefully and proudly using their phonics knowledge to decode new words. These shared reading moments are not only supporting their phonics learning but also helping them develop a lifelong love of books.



Cooking Fun: Making Our Own Fruit Salad

Another highlight of the week has been our cooking sessions, which the children absolutely love. Recently, they had the opportunity to make their very own fruit salads. From washing and cutting the fruit to mixing everything together, the children were completely absorbed in the process. They explored different colours, textures, and tastes, and showed great independence and enthusiasm. The best part, of course, was enjoying their delicious, healthy creations afterwards!

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHER

Please note that further details will follow after half term

**Van Cols
Schools
Photographers**

**we're
coming
to take
your
picture
on...**

Monday 9th March 2026

A young boy in a plaid shirt and jeans stands next to a professional camera on a tripod. The camera is mounted on a black base. The background is white.

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

Last day of spring term – Friday 27th March 2026 – school finishes at 1.30pm

ADMIN NEWS

Important numbers

School telephone number	020 8854 9841 option 1 for Swingate Lane and option 2 for Oakmere Road
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 right-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 of 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.

Did you miss your teenage vaccines at school?

Visit a catch-up clinic to make sure
you are fully protected

Monday 9 February

15:00 - 16:15

Waterways Children's
Centre, SE28 8EZ

Saturday 21 February

11:00 - 14:30

Clockhouse Community
Centre, SE18 5QL

Saturday 7 March

12:15 - 15:15

Holy Trinity Church Hall,
Eltham, SE9 2SD

Thursday 12 March

15:30 - 16:30

Waterways Children's
Centre, SE28 8EZ



Scan the QR code or call
020 3903 3345 to book an
appointment or for more
information

SPECIAL SCHOOL NURSING NEWSLETTER



Our **Special School Nursing Team** continue to work across the Greenwich and Bexley Special Schools. The current Team comprises of Nurses, Nursery Nurses, and Health Care Assistants.

STAFFING UPDATE

The nursing team will soon be welcoming back our band 5 nurse Nadine Coleman, who is returning from maternity leave.

Rebecca Garnett and Susan Wood (HCAs) continue to help with continence advice whilst our continence advisor, Millie Price, continues study leave.

Nursing continues to provide many services including: Phlebotomy, continence advice, annual nursing reviews, weights and heights, support for parents/carers and pupils, health assessments, health promotion, devising and updating care plans and hospital passports, safeguarding, collaborate working with education, allied health professionals, and parents/carers.

The Special School Nursing Team support with sharing hospital passports for 14yrs to 18yrs as to ensure that hospital visits and any transition to hospital is effective.

To continue to maintain nursing standards, we are making good use of our new purpose-built training simulation suite at our Goldie Leigh base, to ensure the highest training standards are achieved and maintained for all our staff and parents alike.

TIER 3 WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The Tier 3 weight management programme is still happy to receive referrals for children/young people living with complex obesity within the borough of Greenwich. To qualify for a place on this programme the child/young person must be a Greenwich resident, under 18yrs, and be registered with a Greenwich GP. The programme runs for a period of one year from acceptance by referral. A referral can be made from the GP, Dietician, Paediatrician or School Nursing Team. For more information about this service please contact either your GP, Dietician, Paediatrician or Nancy Williams (School Nursing) on 0208 294 3122.

CONTINENCE

Here are the contact details for any of our families with children/young people who use continence products, or require help or advice with continence:

Parent contact number for the continence service: 0800 030 4466

Email address: oxl-tr.cypcontinence.inclusion@nhs.net

MEDICATION

Please can we remind parents and carers that if their child/young person requires a prescribed medication to be administered during the school day please ensure that the medication contains a prescription label and is in date.

Please be aware that any medications prescribed to be administered three times a day should not be sent into school, as these can be given at home i.e., Morning, after school and bedtime. Only medications that are prescribed to be given four times a day should be sent into school. The exception would be if the prescription label specifies an actual time for a medication to be administered that falls during school hours.

PATIENT FEEDBACK



It is very important that the Special Schools Nursing Team continue to provide a good standard of practice for the children and families we look after. For our service to maintain these standards and make improvements it is necessary to ask for feedback. This happens in a variety of ways, word of mouth, paper surveys and electronic surveys.

If you are asked for feedback, please can you spare some time to provide this as it helps us to improve the service we provide. All feedback received is welcomed and important to our service.

Please use our QR code for submitting feedback:

HOSPITAL PASSPORTS

Please can parents/guardians of all young people over the age of 14yrs ensure that the information is correct on their hospital passport, and that it is shared with nursing. If your young person's hospital passport requires updating, please email Nursing on: - oxl-tr.cypinclusionteam@nhs.net

UPDATE FOR PARENT/CARERS

Nursing have been reviewing the supply of enteral syringes for those pupils that are on the list to receive them, in line with what our service users have said about sustainability.

Enteral syringe deliveries will now be received every four months and the amount your child/your person receives will be in line with their individual care needs.

If you feel your child/young person's needs require more than the allocated number of syringes, please email oxl-tr.cypinclusionteam@nhs.net

If you receive Disability Living Allowance this can also be used to purchase more syringes.

ASTHMA/ALLERGIES

A reminder for all parents/guardians with children/young people with Asthma to be mindful that even though the weather is war ming up asthma symptoms can still be triggered.

Common triggers in the springtime include pollen, temperature shifts, air pollution from increased vehicle use, indoor irritants such as duct, cleaning products and smoking.

Your child/young person should have a written asthma plan from their GP surgery and should be offered regular asthma reviews. If your child/young person has not been invited for an asthma review for some time, please contact your GP to make an appointment.

Owing to pollen and Mold allergies such as hay fever can emerge and worsen in springtime.

Hay fever symptoms include: - sneezing, coughing, runny or blocked nose, itchy, red or watery eyes, itchy throat, mouth, nose and ears, loss of smell, pain around the sides of your head and your forehead, headache and feeling tired.

If your child/young person requires more of their inhaler, or has prescribed medications for allergy relief, please inform the school nursing teams so that we can accommodate your child/young person's needs in school.

COUGHS, COLDS, FLU & RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES

Adenoviruses are a group of viruses that cause a range of infections. Unlike flu, which typically peaks in Winter, adenoviruses can occur all year around.

Symptoms of adenoviruses are often mild and similar to a cold e.g. fever sore throat, runny or congested nose, cough. These mostly occur in babies and children but can affect anyone especially those with weakened immunity.

Adenoviruses can also cause other illnesses, including conjunctivitis (pink eye), lung infections (bronchitis & pneumonia), croup (a barking cough in children), ear infections, and gastroenteritis (tummy bug).

Adenoviruses can be spread by droplets in the air, (coughs and sneezes), through contaminated water in swimming pools and coming in to contact with an infected person's excrement when carrying out personal care, especially if not wearing protective clothing.

Seek Medical Advice if your child/young person has any of the following symptoms:

High fever for more than a few days

Difficulty breathing

Red eyes/eye pain

Changes to vision

Severe diarrhoea, vomiting or signs of dehydration.

If your child/young person is experiencing a cold or cough which is lasting longer than normal and not being eased by over-the-counter medications, please seek advice from your GP or 111.

Antibiotics are **not recommended** for the common cold or flu as they are only effective against bacterial infections. Colds and flu are caused by viruses. Advice from your local pharmacy can be helpful.

Please ensure that your child/young person has their flu jab and Covid jabs, if eligible, and that all the recommended childhood vaccinations are up to date.

RASHES & COMMON CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

The nursing teams are happy to advise if children/young people are presenting as unwell and will do our best to signpost to other medical professionals. Please remember that the nursing team are unable to diagnose. Any rashes and/or symptoms of common childhood illnesses should always be diagnosed by an appropriate medical professional.

Please adhere to medical advice received and do not send your child/young person back to school until they have fully recovered and are deemed no longer contagious. This will ensure that the other vulnerable children attending the special schools will be protected.

BASELINE ASSESSMENTS

Nursing undertakes baseline yearly observations on children with complex needs that attend our special schools. These assessments involve: temperature check, oxygen saturations, respiratory rate, blood pressure and heart rate. These observations help nursing and other allied health professionals to recognise the signs and symptoms of any illnesses that may present in our client group and act quickly and appropriately to ensure that every child remains in the best of health.

Wellbeing

Stay warm and dry, layer up when out and about.

Short enjoyable outdoor activity can help boost mood. Keeping active with even gentle movements can help with stiffness.

Maintain good nutrition and hydration.

Frequent hand washing to prevent infection.

Make sure vaccinations are up to date.

Mental and emotional well-being: - routine and predictability are key along with visual schedules and checklists.

Sensory Support: - weighted blankets, soothing sounds and lighting help with sleep and regulation.

Stress Management: - incorporate hobbies, meditation and journaling can help.

Safety and Preparedness: - have a backup for medical equipment during power outages. Register with utility companies as a vulnerable customer.

Home Safety: - check heaters are safe and serviced regularly and have fire safety measures in place.

Ventilation: - balance warmth with good ventilation to reduce the spread of germs.

If your child/young person is resistant to wearing certain items of clothing or is an independent dresser try visual storyboards showing different types of weather and appropriate clothing. If unsuccessful speak with school staff about incorporating this in their class activities.

Explore Fun Ideas This Spring Break

If your child/young person is between the ages of 4yrs to 16yrs and are receiving benefit-related free school meals, they may be able to qualify for a free holiday club space. Each family can sign up to four sessions of free holiday provision through the scheme.

Spaces are usually available for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These may continue to run throughout the Easter Holidays.

There are also many free and affordable activities available to explore throughout Greenwich and Bexley Boroughs which include museums, toy libraries, open spaces, recreation parks and water parks. Often local leisure centres offer sessions dedicated to children/young people with special needs.