

NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools



Well, what a strange and busy few weeks we have had! This newsletter will reach you in the shortest of weeks. We hope you all enjoyed the long bank holiday weekend, even if the weather was a bit cool at times. As I am writing this newsletter contribution, the schools are closed to children because of polling day. Our local residents are extremely grateful to have the accessible venue we provide and have mentioned this on several occasions. Our adults have a full day of mandatory health and safety training including safe moving and handling, working at height and food hygiene training. We are looking forward to a full week with business-as-usual next week!

We were very proud to hear that one of our budding artists has achieved wider recognition of his talents this week. We submitted some artworks into the RA Summer exhibition and one of our Monarch class children, Anthony's self-portrait has been accepted for the online exhibition! There were over 25,000 entries this year so it's an incredible achievement! As you know, one of our primary aims is to make sure that everyone knows how clever and talented our children and young people are and this is a very good example of how this can be achieved. Our artist is also very pleased with himself!

As you know, we committed earlier this year to submitting an application to be the provider for RBG's new Transition Learning Centre for adults aged 19-25 with complex learning needs. We have been heavily involved this year, with trying to find appropriate places for our year 14's to flourish when they leave Willow Dene and can clearly see that the Transition Learning Centre is something desperately needed in Greenwich. While we are no means experts in Post-19 education, we are ambitious and passionate for our young people and know exactly what they need to thrive. The deadline for the application to be submitted is today, so the last few weeks has been an intense focus on putting everything together. We will, of course keep you informed as we hear more.

Don't forget to come and join us in Saturday May 16th for our Cultural Celebration Day. This will be a great opportunity to bring the school community together to have fun and celebrate together, with food, music and fun. These events are always special as we encourage extended families of our staff team and wider community contacts and of course all of you to enjoy spending time together. This is our first Saturday event this year and we are looking forward to some of our Rowan Wood community attending for the first time.



We are now in week 4 of being The Compass Eko Trust. There are many meetings happening at the moment, forming the vision and agreeing values for our new organisation. It is lovely to see that every voice counts and that the thoughts of our children and staff have been central to discussions so far. In our own school councils, our children said that they would like music to greet them in the mornings as they arrive, and so we have invested in some portable speakers which will be put to good use soon!

Next week is our first school journey to Kingswood for some outdoor and adventurous fun, including climbing, swinging and lots of fun team games. This is one of our longer residential experiences. As the term goes on we will be having our little and big night school sleepovers, our one-night camping stay for children with autism, our sixth form sleepover and for the first time this year a special London residential for our year 14 leavers! We will be publishing some reports as they happen so you can find out more. As always we appreciate our trusting parents allowing us to have the children overnight and our great team of adults who are committed to making these events fun!

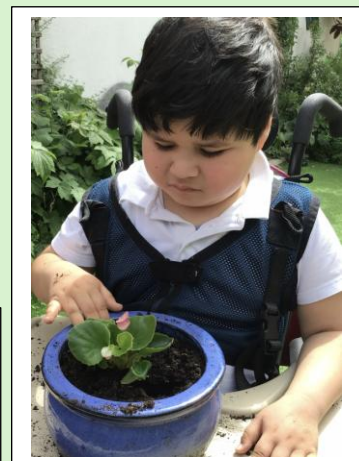
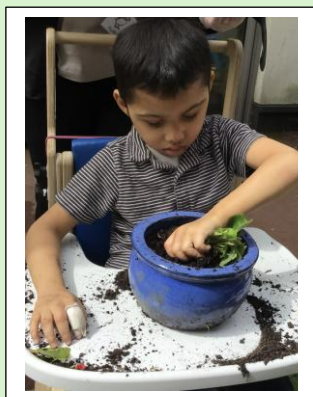
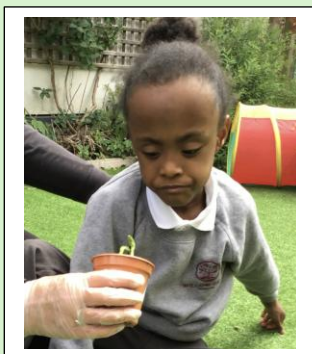
In exciting news, The Compass Partnership of schools has been nominated as Inclusive Trust of the Year at the annual TES awards, which are prestigious awards in the world of education. The nomination for this award celebrates the inclusive practice here in Compass Eko special schools as well as our SEND outreach and our contribution to making sure that children with complex SEND across the Trust have aspirational provision and can succeed. As parents, you have been fundamental to our approach and without your support and engagement, none of this would be possible so we are looking forward to talking about this more and updating you after the awards ceremony on June 17th. As you all know, we are passionate about our children and young people, our school and community so this is a fabulous opportunity for more people to hear about us!

Have a lovely weekend

Rachel

PUFFIN CLASS

In Puffin class we have enjoyed observing the seasonal changes in our garden area, learning about plants and what they need to help them grow. We've had fun reading our sensory about Jasper the cat and his fantastic beanstalk and made our very own magic beanstalk grow. We planted some cress and broad beans and enjoyed watching them as they began to sprout. As the weather improved it was lovely to take our learning into our garden area where we planted some colourful flowers.

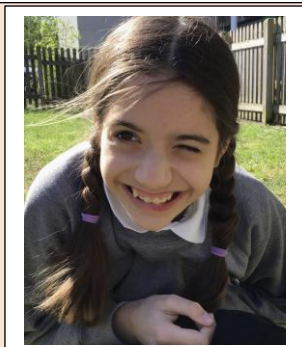


Wren Class

Wren class have had a fantastic start to the summer term! We have been really enjoying the weather and are very fortunate to visit Forest School each week, sunshine or not! In class, we are exploring moving our bodies over and under obstacles in the forest, such as over or under the slackline, over the logs in basecamp, under the hammocks... it has been a lot of fun and laughter.

We have been enjoying our Literacy lessons, where we have been reading the story Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. Each week, we all get excited to read our sensory story; we get on the bus by swiping our oyster cards, buy our chocolate bar to find the golden ticket and watch the chocolate river pour and splash!

Science has been really exciting... and noisy, and colourful, and smelly and tasty because we have been exploring with our senses! Each week, we have large sensory trays and sensory stations to explore, becoming scientists engaging in our experiments.



HIGHLAND CLASS



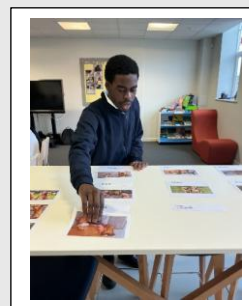
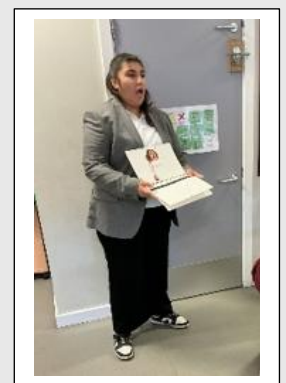
Highland class has had an amazing year as Sixth Form students! Learning has happened everywhere not just in the classroom, but out in the community too. We've really enjoyed building our confidence and independence while exploring all the opportunities around us.

For three days a week, we put our energy into our business venture, *Forever Friends*, with Highland class acting as the central hub. Through this, everyone has developed valuable skills for the future, from market and product research to making and selling products. It's been something the students have truly looked forward to and taken pride in every week.

Our Autumn term was a big hit, the calendars were incredibly successful and raised enough money for a fun trip to Winter Wonderland before the holidays! In the Spring term, we got even more creative with personalised pet photos, featuring fun themes including our very own school dog Milo dressed as a nurse, now proudly displayed in the nurse's office.

The excitement didn't stop on non-business days! Every Wednesday, we attended Flower Skills, where students developed hands-on DIY skills such as bricklaying, plastering, tiling, painting and decorating, and carpentry. Everyone showed great enthusiasm and really enjoyed getting stuck into this practical learning.

Cooking was another highlight of the week. Students chose and researched their own meals, and every Thursday we visited the local supermarket to pick up the ingredients. Then, on Friday mornings, it was time to bring everything together in the kitchen. Everyone took part in setting the table, cooking delicious meals, and working as a team to tidy up afterwards building confidence and important life skills along the way.



TCS Mini London Marathon

Willow Dene took part in the TCS Mini London Marathon for schools. The children and young people completed 2 miles over the course of two weeks, running, walking, cycling or wheeling at their own pace. They were able to complete the 2 miles all at once or in smaller stages across the weeks. This was a sponsored event to help raise money for our sports day events and we are so incredibly proud to announce that we raised over £1,500.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this amazing total and a special congratulations to all the children and young people who participated.



VICTA YOUNG ACHIEVERS

We are so proud of our VICTA young achievers award participants, where some of our children with visual impairments work towards completing tasks to achieve pin badges.

Over the course of January to March, children developed their understanding of science by carrying out three different experiments. Their hard work was rewarded with their very first pin to go on their banner. We are looking forward to exploring the next theme of Nature over the coming months. One of our first activities is to grow sunflowers!

IMPORTANT DATES

Last day of 1st half of summer term – Thursday 21st May 2026

Inset Day – Friday 22nd May 2026

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 |