

NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools



Welcome back to the last half term of this academic year. Time is going so fast! We hope you all had a happy and safe half term and enjoyed the warm weather.

This is an extremely busy half term with lots going on for everybody. By now you will have had your letters regarding sports day on Wednesday 17th June at Swingate Lane and Thursday 18th June at Oakmere Road. This is always a very popular event for families and we look forward to seeing many of you there. You should also have received the save the date flyer for our Willow Dene sibling events. On 1st July 2026 our primary aged siblings will be joining us after school for a music festival including pool party, DJ, and festival crafts. On Wednesday 8th July 2026 our secondary aged siblings will be taking over our swimming pool at Swingate Lane. We hope to see lots of brothers and sisters at these events.

Letters will be with you soon to tell you which class your child will be in next academic year and the name of your teacher. This will be followed by letters about our parents evening on Wednesday 24th June. If your child is staying in the same class, with the same teacher, parents evening is an informal opportunity to catch up about the year and to visit our information fair. If your child is moving to a new class or a new teacher, you will have an opportunity to review the year with the current teacher and then meet the new teacher on the same evening. There is also a space on the reply slip for you to indicate if you would like a longer meeting on a different date with your child's new teacher.

Children who are leaving us at the end of this year for Charlton Park Academy will begin their transition visits in the next week. There will also be transition visits to Willow Dene Oakmere Road and Rowan Wood. Dates for these visits will be with you soon.

At the beginning of last week, we received our Challenge Partner review report following our external consultancy review last half term. We are very happy with the content of the report, which you can read on the website Willow Dene School - Ofsted & Challenge Partners or in our reception areas. Here are some of the quotes we are particularly proud of:



'A consistent three-part lesson structure across the arts establishes clear expectations for both children and young people and staff. Sessions follow a prepare and explore, learn and create and share and celebrate sequence ensuring all have time to engage, have opportunities for deep learning and structured moments for reflection and recognition'

'Developments in the creative arts in Willow Dene school have attracted interest from external professionals. The school has contributed to research leading to published articles, including work on musical leadership and music therapy for students in special schools'

'In lessons, young people in sixth form were highly engaged in preparing for an upcoming performance. Whether working on performance skills, in backstage or set design groups, they participated fully and collaboratively in stimulating activities supported by teachers and experienced support staff'

At the end of last week, the Willow Dene team and a representative from Compass Eko Trust attended an interview to be the provider of Royal Borough of Greenwich Transition Learning Centre for 19 – 25-year-olds. We gave a presentation and answered five very long questions which covered all elements of our plans. We hope to know about the outcome soon.

This week we enjoyed a visit from Jo Atkins, who is an old friend who knows the schools well through her former role as our Improvement Partner. It has been two years since Jo's last visit and it was exciting to tell her everything that we have been doing since we saw her last. During her visit Jo was able to catch up with some of the children and young people she has met over the years and to meet our Rowan Wood group.

Yesterday was International Day of Play. Children and young people across our sites were encouraged to use our corridor spaces and specialist rooms and to visit each other's classrooms to try lots of different play activities and have fun together. Activities included; messy play, bouncy castle, small world and role play. Everywhere was full of the sound of laughter.

Next week we will be reviewing the seven core priorities that formed the basis of our school development plan for 2025 / 2026. These included our funds of knowledge focus and supporting our Year 14's into their future plans. Everyone in the school community will contribute to this review because we use this information to help us decide what to focus on next. If you have any thoughts or comments about these years focus areas which you can see on the website Willow Dene School - 2025-26 Core Priorities please do email us willowdene@compassps.uk

On Friday 19th June a group of us from Willow Dene will be attending the TES awards 2026 as part of Compass Eko Trust. As a Trust we have been nominated as 'Inclusive Trust of the Year'. This is a prestigious award and we are proud to be part of the team who are delivering high quality inclusion practice to all our schools and beyond. Willow Dene and Rowan Wood play a fundamental part in Trust inclusion and we hope that this will give us a greater platform to share the achievements of our children and young people. We will look forward to telling you more about it in our next newsletter.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend *Rachel*

NEWS FROM ROWAN WOOD

Monarch class

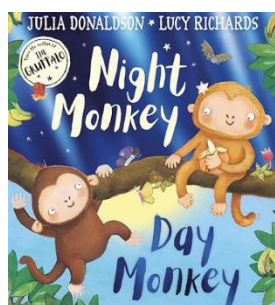
It has been a wonderful start to the final term of the academic year in Monarch Class, and the children have been extremely busy!

In Maths, we have been learning all about money. The children have been practising how to identify different coins and understand their values. They especially enjoyed taking part in role play activities where we set up our very own classroom shop. They took turns being customers and shopkeepers, using coins to "buy" and "sell" items.

In Literacy, we have been enjoying exploring our new book *The Magic Crayon*. The story follows a child who discovers a special crayon that can bring anything they draw to life. We are currently working on creating and describing the magical forest that the drawings take the girl to, using exciting vocabulary and our imaginations.

In Art, we have begun exploring *protest art*. The children have been looking at different types of protest art and discussing the messages behind them. They have started to use these ideas to plan and create their own pieces of artwork based on topics that are important to them. It has been wonderful to see them express their thoughts and opinions creatively.

Peacock class



Our first week of summer has been incredibly busy and off to a fantastic start! The Peacock children really enjoyed learning about the changes that happen throughout the day reading the story "Night Monkey, Day Monkey" by Julia Donaldson. We tied this into our science lessons, discussing why we have day and night and sharing what activities we love to do at different times.

In Literacy, we dove into our new action-packed story, "We're Going to Find the Monster" by Malorie Blackman. We followed two young siblings' wild imaginations as they journeyed over shimmering oceans and scaled tall mountains to track down a monster—who turned out to be their sleeping teenage big brother! To help our understanding, we acted out the story by 'sailing' through shimmering oceans in search of the monster.

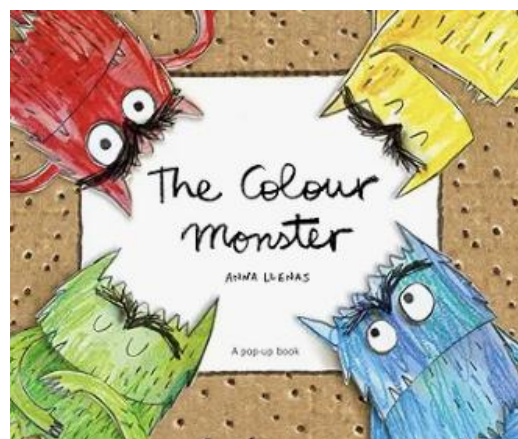
In Maths, Peacock Class started learning all about British coins and notes. We took a close look at each coin to recognize their main features and understand their values. This learning fits perfectly with our Citizenship topic of Saving and Spending. We are reading "Money Box: Saving Money" by Ben Hubbard, which is giving us a great introduction to the value of saving, budgeting and setting goals. The children had an enthusiastic class discussion about what they would like to save up for in the future.

Skipper class

Skipper Class have made a wonderful start to the final summer term. We have begun exploring our new communication topic, *It Is Not a Stick*, and the children have thoroughly enjoyed reading the story and developing their early writing skills through mark-making, tracing, and a range of fun activities.

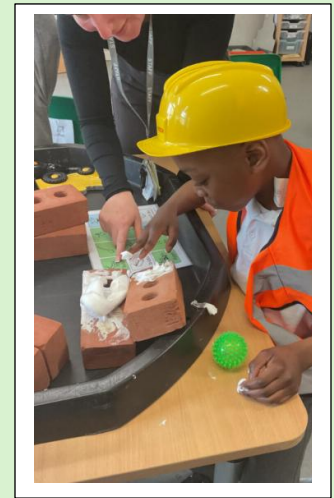
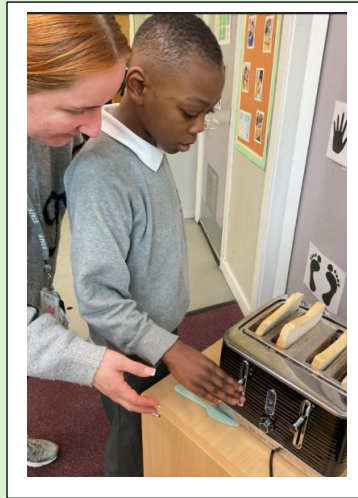
In PSHE, the children have been learning about emotions, using *The Colour Monster* to help them understand about different feelings. In Citizenship, we have been exploring different jobs in our community, and this week we learned about firefighters.

The children had great fun pretending to put out fires in the classroom and enjoyed taking on the role of firefighters themselves. Our off-site swimming sessions have also continued and, as always, have been a huge success.



It has been a fantastic start to the final term of the school year, and we look forward to many more exciting learning experiences ahead.

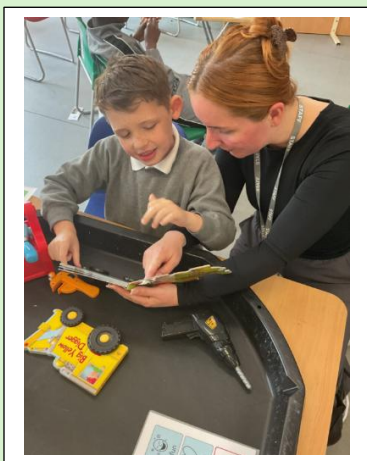
Robin Class



Robin Class have been focusing on developing expressive communication in a range of contexts by exploring core and fringe boards linked to curriculum areas.

In Play and Leisure, construction play has been our focus where we visited a builder's site to build and deconstruct using different bricks and shaving foam to make cement. Also, we have explored books which link to developing our visual skills. Our core and fringe boards use language linked to construction play which develops and embeds our understanding.

In DT and Learning Technologies, we have been exploring equipment which helps through making snacks. We have practised using the toaster to make toast with our favourite toppings. We have had opportunities to make requests for what we would like on our toast by using fringe boards alongside objects. Also, adults have introduced language such as 'yummy' and 'yuck' to express our likes and dislikes. We have had lots of fun developing our independence skills within play!



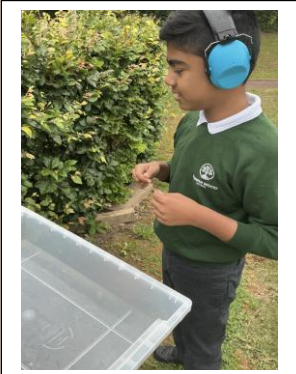
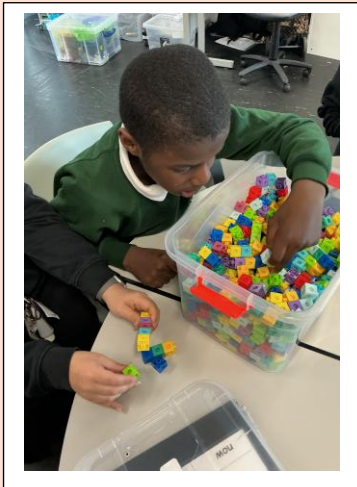
Swallowtail Class

We have come back from half term rested and ready to learn! We have started learning all about nature in Science and have enjoyed taking our learning outside. The children have shown their creative side by using natural materials they found to create different pieces of artwork.

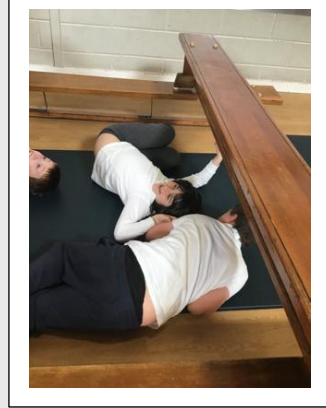
In Maths, the children have been exploring position and direction using a range of concrete materials. They have enjoyed practical activities that have helped them develop their understanding of positional language and movement.

We have also been enjoying their swimming sessions at Crook Log Swimming Centre. They have shown great maturity when going off-site, which has been a first for many of the children.

In Drama, the children have started a new topic based on *Greta and the Giants*. They have been exploring the story in a multi-sensory way, engaging with its themes through a range of creative activities.



Kestrel Class



In Physical Education, Kestrel Class have been exploring the theme '*Over, Under and Accelerate*'. The children and young people have been taking part in a variety of circuits using the apparatus in the large hall, discovering how to move their bodies effectively by travelling over, under and through different obstacles, as well as experimenting with changes in speed. This has been a fun and engaging topic, and Kestrel Class have thoroughly enjoyed being active, developing their physical skills, and challenging themselves through movement and exercise. Kestrel Class are very excited for Sports Day next week. The children and young people are looking forward to taking part in a range of fun activities, working together as a team, and celebrating their achievements. We can't wait to see everyone enjoying the event and showing their enthusiasm, determination, and sporting spirit.

In Writing lessons, we have been exploring the classic story *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll through a repeated sensory storytelling approach. The children have thoroughly enjoyed experiencing the fantastical world of Wonderland, engaging with a range of sensory activities that bring the story to life. Alongside developing their understanding of the story, the children have been working hard to improve their fine motor skills through a variety of writing and hands-on learning activities.





**WILLOW DENE
SWINGATE LANE SITE**

MUSIC FESTIVAL

Primary Aged Siblings (5-11)
Wednesday 1st July 2026

- 4.30pm** Festival Opens
- Swimming Pool party (prebookable)
- DJ and dancing
- Bouncy Castle
- Festival Craft stalls
- Festival Food
- 6.30pm** Festival Closes

To confirm your space contact :
jsimson@compassps.uk

Music



**OLDER
SIBLINGS'
POOL
PARTY**

Wednesday 08.07.2026
16:30 - 18:30

FOOD ~ DRINK

Swingate Lane - SE18 2JD

Limited spaces
Email: eshabani@compassps.uk
to book

IMPORTANT DATES

Sports Day Swingate Lane – Wednesday 17th June 2026 – time to be confirmed

Sports Day Oakmere Road – Thursday 18th June 2026 – time to be confirmed

Parents evening – Wednesday 24th June 3.30pm – 5.00pm

Year 6 leavers event – Wednesday 8th July – time to be confirmed

Year 11 leavers event – Thursday 9th July – time to be confirmed

Year 14 leavers event – Thursday 9th July – time to be confirmed

Rowan Wood last day of term - Wednesday 15th July

Rowan Wood moving day – Thursday 16th July

Rowan Wood moving day – Friday 17th July

Willow Dene last day of term – Friday 17th July school finishes at 1.30pm

Willow Dene and Rowan Wood Inset Day – Monday 20th July

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