

NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools

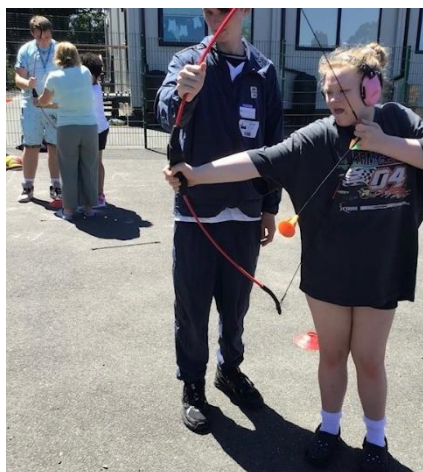


Time moves so quickly. We are just two weeks away from the end of this school year. It's an emotional time for us as we prepare to say some goodbyes and watch children as they achieve milestones in their lives. This year will be particularly emotional as we say goodbye to our first group of year 14's, but more about them later in the newsletter!

Sadly, we were not chosen by Royal Borough of Greenwich to be the providers for their new post-19 transition learning centre. We felt, and still do feel that we had a lot to offer our complex young adults as they enter into life beyond school. We have asked for feedback about why we were not the chosen provider and of course will share this with you in due course. It goes without saying that we will wholly support the successful provider and focus our energies on Compass Special Schools and Launch-19 instead.

First of all, a big thank you for your patience and understanding during the heatwave last week. We managed to remain open throughout, just modifying the end of the day slightly to avoid children travelling on transport in the hottest part of the day. Our school buildings were also extremely hot during the late afternoon, so finishing at a slightly earlier time was the right option as children were hot and tired by then.

The heatwave did not stop our next round of school sleepovers. Our year 14's had a planned trip to the centre of London to see The Lion King and spend the night in a hotel. As a 'once in a school lifetime' opportunity, we really did not want to cancel, but instead we risk assessed carefully and maximised opportunity to use air-conditioned places. Everyone had an amazing time, and we were so proud of the young people's confidence doing something completely new. Although some places are still being finalised, year 14's will be attending a variety of placements including colleges and the new Launch-19 project which will be delivered by our team, commissioned by Royal Borough of Greenwich. We look forward to telling you more about this in our last parent briefing of the year, coming soon.



Our Sports Day was tremendously well attended. This year, as well as our favourite foam-pit we had additional organised activities provide by our internal and external partners. Everyone had the chance to try something new and to enjoy the sunny weather.



Sleepovers continued on Friday with both Little Night In's for children with complex needs and children with autism. Swimming, outdoor activities in the sensory garden and a fun music session with Charlie wore us all out and we were ready for bed and not too hot before it got dark. You can see our story from Little Night In for children with complex needs in this newsletter.

Unfortunately, the hot weather meant that parents evening was not practical. However, if you were planning to attend, we hope that you have had chance to catch up with your child's teacher virtually. Do let us know if you still need an appointment. We have also sent home contact details for the organisations that were coming for the information fair.

Of course, since the last newsletter, we have had several very fun and enjoyable events which we have been able to share with you.

Our younger siblings event this term was a festival theme, with everyone having fun with the bouncy castle, swimming and arts activities. We also managed to watch the football!

Yesterday was our first community fun day at Oakmere Road, with live music and some enthusiastic dancing from children and adults! Swingate Lane fun day will be next Tuesday, and we look forward to seeing lots of you there.

From Wednesday next week we will be celebrating our year 6, year 11 and year 14 leavers with a series of leavers events and presentations. We will also be holding our bi-annual alumni event where we invite children and young people who used to attend Willow Dene to come back and visit us.

This week, the sixth form showcase of The Café at the Edge of the Woods was performed to a packed audience at the Tramshed in Woolwich. It was a remarkable performance with the set, costumes, music, acting and singing all being provided by our sixth formers, who were absolutely amazing. They received a standing ovation from parents, staff, governors, the Tramshed team and other guests!

One of the most exciting things that has happened this week has been the handover to Compass Eko Trust, of Rowan Wood School building. After a delay of nearly a year, we finally have the keys and can visit freely. It is a beautiful school and worth the wait. We are looking forward to parents and children being able to visit before the holiday.

Finally, we are excited to announce that Compass Eko Trust was awarded the Inclusive Trust of the Year Award at the TES Awards 2026. Joshua, Claire and I were delighted to be there with John and Rebekah and trust representatives to receive the award. We talk a lot, about the importance of our amazing children, young people and community of families and professionals being seen and valued. This award is recognition of everyone's contributions and we are very proud.

Equally importantly, congratulations to our Milo, who won Exceptional Dog Mentor of the Year 2026 at his own awards ceremony. Both awards will be on display soon!

Have a lovely weekend. *Rachel*

NEWS FROM ROWAN WOOD

Monarch Class has had a busy and fun time, filled with creativity, teamwork, and hands-on learning. We have really been enjoying our Play and Leisure lessons on the theme 'Join a Club'. The children helped to decide which clubs they would most like to experience during our lessons; they created posters related to their interests and voted on different types of clubs. So far, we have enjoyed taking part in Gardening Club and Lego Club. Their sunflowers are currently beginning to grow, and they are looking after them very well - they'll be taken home very soon!

In DT, we are continuing our unit on making different types of rice. Last week was especially exciting, as the children had the opportunity to taste a variety of rice puddings. After touching, smelling and tasting them, the children then had a vote on which flavour we should make. They decided on a chocolate flavour which they are really excited to make!

A real highlight for the whole class last week was, of course, Sports Day! The children showed great skill, determination, and resilience as they took part in a range of activities, including basketball, archery, and a firm favourite, the foam pit!

Peacock class continued to learn about money in Maths, using coins and notes to make different amounts. The children expanded their knowledge through fun activities and games. They have been learning to recognise British coins and understand their value. Following the class story 'We are going to find the monster', we planned, designed and published our own mini-books. The children worked hard to retell the events of the story in a chronological order, adding captions to go with their beautiful illustrations. In Science, we continued to explore the Solar System and made fascinating fact booklets about different planets. Last week, we were fortunate to experience an engaging drama session with Charlie that gave us opportunity to link nicely Dharma with our Citizenship topic. To support our learning about the climate change, the Peacock children enjoyed acting as little seeds gradually turning into a mighty forest, using their whole bodies and facial expressions to retell the story of *Greta and the Giants*. Due to hot weather condition, we discussed the importance of looking after ourselves, staying hydrated and applying sunscreen.

Swallowtail Class have been enjoying learning about emotions through a range of multi-sensory activities. The children have been exploring differing feelings and developing their understanding of how emotions can be expressed and recognised in themselves and others.

In Drama, we have started an exciting new topic, 'Greta and the Giants'. The children have thoroughly enjoyed immersing themselves in the story and have shown increasing confidence in their participation, communication, and understanding of the characters and events.

In Art, the children have been creating their own protest posters as part of our campaign to Save the Bees. They have explored the importance of bees in our environment and have enjoyed expressing their ideas creatively through painting, drawing, and collage. We are very proud of their enthusiasm

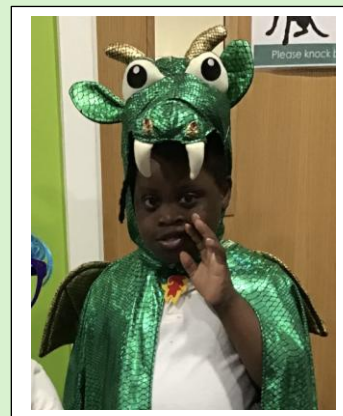
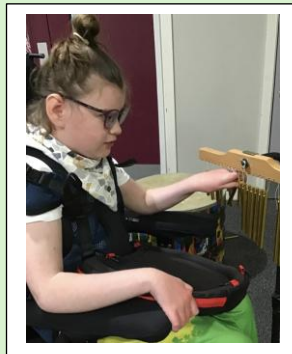
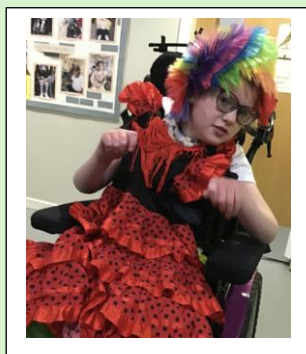
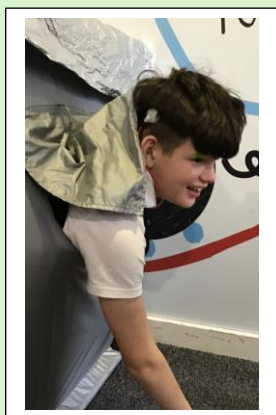
Skipper Class despite the hot temperatures over the last few weeks, the children in Skipper Class have continued to enjoy their learning and have made the most of the sunny weather. They especially loved water play and a range of fun outdoor activities, and together we made sure to find cool, shaded spots to stay comfortable throughout the day.

We have been working hard on developing our writing and tracing skills. In Drama, the children enjoyed exploring the story Greta and the Giants through role-play, movement, and shared activities.

In Citizenship, we have been learning about the important roles people have in our community. The children enjoyed discovering different jobs, such as firefighters, doctors, and other key workers, and talking about how they help us every day.

Skipper Class is a happy, caring, and enthusiastic class. The children love exploring new activities, learning through play, and celebrating each other's achievements, no matter how big or small. We are very proud of the smiles, resilience, and kindness they show every day, and it is a pleasure to watch their confidence continue to grow.

Skylark Class



We had a fantastic time celebrating International Play Day, enjoying a day filled with fun, friendship, and shared play experiences. It was a wonderful opportunity for us, in Skylark to explore different learning environments, play alongside children from across the school, and develop our communication and social skills whilst building new friendships.

Throughout the day, we used our core boards and communication systems to make choices, share our ideas, and interact with others as we explored the exciting activities on offer. The space-themed play experiences were a particular highlight, with the shape-themed play dough and rocket ship tent providing lots of opportunities for imaginative play and communication.

Toby had a wonderful time making connections with children from other classes and especially enjoyed spending time with his new friend from Bunting class. The two of them laughed uncontrollably as they defended their rocket from an "alien invasion," swatting away inflatable aliens and sharing in the excitement together. Toby confidently used his communication device to tell us when it was time to blast off and repeatedly signed "more" to his friend, showing just how much he was enjoying their shared adventure.

Michael's creativity and imagination were on full display as he immersed himself in role play throughout the day. He loved dressing up as different characters and creating his own stories, encouraging others to join in with his imaginative adventures. When he transformed into a fierce dragon, he delighted in making us all hide before jumping out to scare us. A special highlight for Michael was bumping into his good friend from Sparrow class, with both children proudly showing off their costumes and sharing in each other's excitement.

Sophie embraced every part of the day with enthusiasm but was especially drawn to the percussion area, where she became part of a lively band. She was incredibly vocal throughout the session, singing, dancing, and responding enthusiastically to the interactions and music of her new friends.

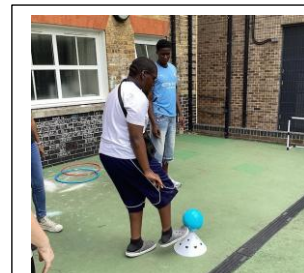
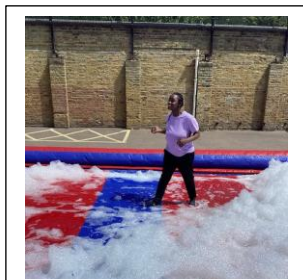
Building on the success of International Play Day, we will continue to strengthen our connections across the school by inviting new friends to join us for play experiences in Skylark and around the school!

SPORTS DAY

On the 17th and the 18th of June, we held our annual Sports Days. We had a great two days with some fantastic activities and wonderful opportunities for our children, young people and our families. The weather was beautiful and sunny and we were very excited to see so many of our families and friends come along to the events.

We would like to thank so many people for their help in running the activities. As well as our amazing specialist teams such as MOVE, the Swim Team. The Sensory Processing Team, Forrest Schools, Housekeeping, our fitness instructor, the Family Support Team and Zumba instructor, who we could not run sports day without, we also have to shout out to the incredible people who came and ran some fantastic activities for us. TK Sports who came and taught us basketball, The Open Yoga Project who came and taught us some great yoga techniques, Dynamic Coaching who taught us archery, Nam and Tunmise who taught us some football skills and UK Fun Leisure Events, who supplied and manned our foam parties. We also have to say a big thank you to Kuia, the community champion from ASDA in Erith for donating bubble machines, bubble solution and some tactile toys.

We hope if you attended you had a wonderful time and we would love any feedback you have. We look forward to seeing you all again next year!



IMPORTANT DATES

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

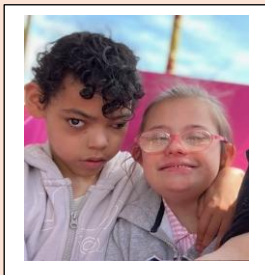
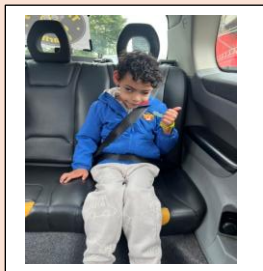
Rowan Wood moving day – Friday 17th July

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

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



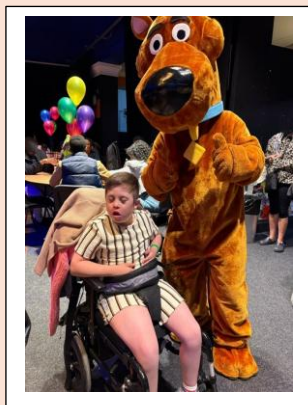
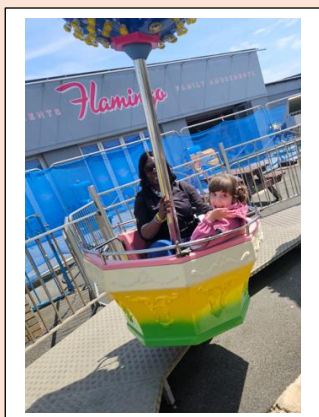
Hastings



On Monday the 15th June we were lucky enough to take a group of children from three classes on the annual Albany Black Cab charity day to Hastings.

With an early start of 8:30 am at Charlton Football ground, we got into our black cabs and made our way to Hastings seafront. We had a go on some of the rides and attractions during the day and then enjoyed a meal and a disco in the early evening before jumping back into the cabs for our journey home.

A huge thank you to the Albany Black Cabs, their volunteers and cabbies for giving their time and energy to the day and to the people of Hasting that welcome us every year.



Kingfisher Class



This year we have focussed on enabling the children to develop as much independence as possible and here are some of our highlights –

Falak is in the standing sling and is putting her feet down. She is getting herself organised so she can use a walker

Tom is out and about in his bugzi and is learning to use a joystick

Matvii is using his hands and arms to engage with lots of sensory toys on his own

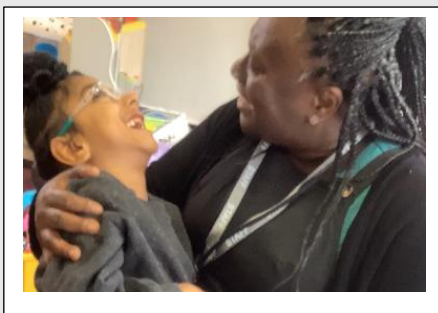
Maggie is enjoying using eye gaze to play some games independently

Ismail is walking all round the building and negotiating stairs.

Marcel is moving independently around school on his bike as well as walking with his cane.

Gavy is communicating about the things he likes and doesn't like and making sure we hear his message.

Maliya can get in and out of the ball pool all by herself.



LITTLE NIGHT IN – JUNE 2026



Despite an incredibly hot week and an especially warm day, our children and staff were determined not to let the weather stop them from enjoying a fantastic sleepover experience!

Thankfully, our amazing premises team had been hard at work since the start of the day, ensuring our sleeping area stayed cool and comfortable throughout the day. By the time the school day ended, the hall had been transformed into the perfect sleepover space, with air conditioning units and an army of fans creating a welcome oasis from the heat. Behind the scenes, every detail had been carefully planned and prepared, so all that was left for us to do was enjoy our adventure together.

As everyone arrived in the hall, there was plenty of excitement as children found their beds and discovered who they would be spending the night alongside. The anticipation quickly grew as it was time for our first activity—swimming!

After such a hot day, the pool was the perfect place to be. Some children enjoyed the chance to completely relax, floating peacefully in the water with their eyes closed, while others found a new burst of energy and delighted in splashing, swimming, and playing. It was wonderful to see everyone enjoying the experience in their own way.

Following swimming, we returned to the hall for some well-earned downtime. Medicines, feeds, stretches, and personal care routines took place in a calm and relaxed atmosphere while we listened to some favourite music. The soundtrack of choice for the evening was the hugely popular K-Pop Demon Hunters soundtrack.

Next, we were joined by Charlie, our Creative Arts Lead, who arrived with her piano, sensory resources, and a wonderful collection of musical instruments. Charlie led us on a magical musical adventure inspired by the Irish folk song The Rattlin' Bog. Together, we explored the sounds of rustling wind, swaying branches, and singing birds through a range of immersive sensory experiences. We found the rhythm of the song's chorus, felt the beat resonate through our bodies, and sang along together. The engagement and responses from the children were wonderful, making this a memorable highlight of the evening.

After all that excitement, it was time to refuel with dinner. As music filled the hall, everyone enjoyed spending time together.

As the sun began to set and a welcome evening breeze arrived, we headed out to the sensory garden with a trolley full of intriguing resources. There, Joshua guided us through creating our very own nature-inspired sensory bottles and sleepy pillow spritzes.

The children enthusiastically explored the garden in search of treasures. They collected fragrant lavender for their sprays, alongside a wonderful variety of natural materials for their sensory bottles. There were vibrant red acer leaves, fresh mint, spiky pine needles, textured sticks, and lovely willow leaves. Everyone enjoyed sharing their discoveries and experimenting with natural oils to create the perfect sleepy spritz.

Soon it was time to return to the hall and prepare for bed. Pyjamas were put on, beds were settled into, and the atmosphere became noticeably quieter as tiredness began to take over. Our film for the evening was the new Pixar movie Hoppers, but many children found it difficult to keep their eyes open until the end. Perhaps the sleepy pillow sprays had worked their magic, as one by one, children drifted off into a peaceful night's sleep.

The next morning was a busy one! There was a hive of activity as everyone had breakfast, completed their morning routines and medications, and got ready for the day ahead. By 10am, everyone was showered, dressed, and ready to welcome their families back.

Before long, collection time arrived and children were excited to share their achievements, adventures, and memories from the sleepover.

We are incredibly proud of every child who took part. They embraced new experiences, and most importantly, had lots of fun along the way.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our dedicated staff team for giving their time, energy, and care to make the sleepover such a success. We would also like to recognise our admin and premises teams, whose hard work behind the scenes ensures these special events can take place.

Most importantly, thank you to our wonderful parents and families. We are grateful for the trust you place in us to care for your children overnight and for giving them the opportunity to enjoy experiences like this. It was a truly memorable sleepover, and we are already looking forward to the next adventure!

INFORMATION FAIR 2026

Services / organisations contact information

Unfortunately, due to the Met Office Red Warning for extreme heat, we were unable to hold the Information Fair on Tuesday, 23 June.

This will be rescheduled for later in the year, and we look forward to welcoming everyone then.

In the meantime, please find below the details of the organisations and services that had planned to attend, along with their contact information:

- **Children with disabilities team-0208 921 2599** cwdt.duty@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **Short breaks Team- 0208 921 3002** short-breaksreferrals@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **Greenwich Children Occupational Therapy Team 0208 921 2982**
Child-Occupational-Therapy@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **Housing Occupational Therapy Team 0208 921 2614**
DHIT-Housing-OT@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **Sendiass- 0208 921 8402** sendiass@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **Charlton Athletic Community Trust 0208 850 2866** Info@cact.org.uk
- **Direct Payments Team- 0208 921 5706** Directpayments@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **All Kids Can- 0208 836 8906** info@allkidsan.co.uk
- **Brighter Futures Project 0208 1919622** info@brighterfuturesproject.co.uk
- **Access Sports- 0207 993 9883** disability.inclusion@accesssport.org.uk
- **Sports Works- 0191 5800 120** info@sportworksltd.co.uk
- **Healthwatch Greenwich 0208 301 8340** info@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk
- **London Philharmonic Orchestra 07793 837357** OpenSound@LPO.ORG.UK
- **Families Information Service 0208 921 6921** fis@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **SEN transport provider GSPLUS-** Sen-transport@gsplus.org
- **SEN Transport- 0208 921 3082** SEND.TravelAssistance@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
- **Live Well Greenwich 0800 470 4831** www.livewellgreenwich.org.uk
- **SEN Dentist 0208 320 7336** bromleyhealthcare.org.uk/explore-our-services
- **Greenwich Welfare Rights 0208 921 6375** royalgreenwich.gov.uk/help-money
- **Greenwich Housing Rights 0208 854 8848** www.grhr.co.uk
- **Unique Cycling 07799 805 305** unique@limitededitioncycling.co.uk
- **Sport Development Officer** RBGSportdevelopment@gll.org
- **Greenwich Mencap 0208 305 2245** info@greenwichmencap.org.uk
- **Chartwells- Contact School** www.chartwells.co.uk/contact/
- **Greenwich SEND Voices** www.greenwichsendvoice.co.uk
- **Willow Dene Nursing and therapy Teams 020 854 9841** [contact school
www.willowdene.compassps.uk/contact-us](http://www.willowdene.compassps.uk/contact-us)

If you require any support in accessing these services, please contact the Family Support Team at

- **WD-FSW@willowdene.compassps.uk**