

Willow Dene News

Friday 13th May 2022



Head Teacher's Message

What a busy two weeks we have had since the last newsletter. Last week was a very short week due to Bank Holiday and Polling Day. It has been good to be back in our regular weekly routine this week. On Polling Day our staff were all involved in mandatory safeguarding training and a manual handling training which is an essential part of making sure your child is safe at school. All teaching and support staff also completed their food hygiene training which make sure that any food related activity in school is conducted safely.

Last week some of our school community celebrated Eid. As Ramadan came to an end, class groups enjoyed celebrating by participating in a range of activities, sharing gifts and making cards. We worked in partnership with Ana Huna Charity to create Eid cards to send to Great Ormond Street Hospital for children and staff who are celebrating Eid whilst at work or in hospital.

Last week was also Deaf Awareness Week. If you follow us on Twitter @willowdenesch, you will have seen some of our amazing signers sharing video to help our followers practice their signing at home.

As part of the government's National Tutoring Programme, we are delivering some additional tutoring from school staff in areas that we have identified as important to our children following COVID disruption. During this term, there will be additional focus on the areas of physical development and fitness, social communication, maths and phonics for children for whom this has been identified as a priority. As the term continues, we will be analysing the impact of these programmes and this will inform our offer next year.

Hopefully you have had chance to watch our parent briefing which was recorded earlier this week. Within this briefing there is much less information about COVID and more information about the things that are important to you. You will be able to find out more about our expansion plans, transition into the next school year and lots more so please do tune in if you haven't already.

Have a lovely weekend

Rachel



WOODLARK CLASS



We are Woodlark class and we would like to tell you about how we use our sense of smell in our learning.

Every day of our week has a different smell associated with it. These smells are part of our sensory calendar and this is one of our first sensory experiences when we arrive in school. Our

favourite is the 'fruity' Friday smell and TJ's least favourite is the 'ocean' Thursday smell. It makes him pull a face! We always start the day with some hand massage to get our hands ready for a day of exploring.



We use an orange scented cream because orange has an alerting property and helps wake our brains up too. This is one of Jodie's favourite parts of the day. Later in the day we have a stretch and massage of our feet. This cream smells of peppermint and also boosts our circulation. For Jesse, this massage happens after he has been in his walker and is relaxing for his feet.

We add lots of variety of smells across our curriculum so that we have plenty of chances to respond and show like or dislike. Not all the smells we encounter are nice ones...



When we read a poem about a market there were lots of lovely smells to try but also smoked fish and stinky cheese, which were not so nice. It's important for us to learn how to show when we don't like something as well as when we do like something. At lunch time we read a story about food while we get messy with some food play. Some of the foods we try have very strong smells... pickled cucumber, fruity jelly and tomato sauce to name just a few! Abubaker sometimes likes these smells so much that he holds them close to his nose. Experiencing these smells helps us feel OK about being around food.

In art we have added essential oils to paint to give us an extra sensory dimension to our artwork. We finish our week with reflexology, as part of our PE curriculum. This year we have used natural waxes and oils like peach, citrus and lavender oil to support the movement of our feet and

ankles. Eividas is our most relaxed Woodlark by the end of this lesson!

Last week we celebrated Eid with an old Woodlark friend. We shared a beautiful 'shining light' bath bomb and some 'sticky date' scented bubble bath which Ezra was very excited about with big smiles and wide eyes. Of course, some of the places we visit have specific smells associated with them too... the most powerful of these is when we go swimming. Isabella and Tilly are all smiles and excited as soon as we open the door and can smell the chlorine.

At the end of every day we use our own personal care bags containing our individual body care resources. These make sure we are comfortable and happy with self-care routines with smells from hair gel, deodorant, lip balm and more. The last thing we do before we leave for the day is spray our 'twilight' spray which has a very distinctive smell. It has calming properties and sets us up for a relaxing journey home. This is JJ's favourite and is always on his blanket when he finishes school for the day. We would love to hear your recommendations and try some of your favourite smells so please send in any suggestions to Woodlark class and we will send you a 'review'!



IMPORTANT DATES

Summer Half Term

Monday 30th May 2022

to

Friday 3rd June 2022

Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday

Monday 6th June 2022

GREENFINCH CLASS

Greenfinch class have had an exciting start to the Summer term with lots of new learning taking place and opportunities to access learning outdoors too.

In science this term we are learning about animals, heading out to find common animals found in our school grounds, and investigating key attributes of these animals. We have also enjoyed taking play and leisure lessons outside and into the forest for our Forest School sessions, and our focus on motor and physical play has seen us enjoying new experiences such as the mud slide, tree swing and climbing trees!

Back in the classroom we have kept with our animal theme in art, looking at patterns found on animals, and using different tools to recreate these patterns ourselves. Pop into our classroom and see if you can guess which animals we have explored, by looking at the patterns we've created on our 'wow wall'.

We are also in the midst of an exciting new project in our Technology sessions. Inspired by the story 'When Grandpa Gives You a Toolbox' by Jamie Deenihan, we are in the research stage of creating our own dollhouses. We have created mood boards using inspiration from online searches, tested materials and adhesives and will soon be ready to begin building. We will need feedback when we evaluate our dollhouses next term, so bring some dolls and help test our creations!





We have been posting Tweets about Willow Dene since 2014. We have sent over 4000 Tweets in this time, all about our children, our news and the learning happening here.

We follow almost 4000 people and organisations that we can learn from and communicate with. At the moment we have 2904 followers. We would very much like to reach 3000 followers within the next half term. Twitter provides followers with the most up to date news about what's happening at Willow Dene... so if you aren't already link to our Twitter account please do follow us and help us reach the 3000 follower milestone!



This week, we have had our Quality Assurance Review visit from Challenge Partners. Challenge Partners is a national education charity. The review looks at all aspects of school practice. It identifies and celebrates exceptional practice, helping schools to identify what they need to do to improve on their previous best.

During our three days of review, the review team visited Swingate Lane and Oakmere Road. They spoke to leaders, teachers and parents and observed lots of lessons. The feedback we have had so far has been very positive and as this newsletter is being printed, we will be in our final feedback meeting where we will be given an overall outcome. We hope to be able to share the reports in the next newsletter.

WHAT'S ON

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY
London **Philharmonic** Orchestra

OPEN SOUND ENSEMBLE ZOOM SESSION FOR NEWCOMERS

TUESDAY 31 MAY 2022



Join the London Philharmonic Orchestra for a **free** taster session of Open Sound Ensemble on Zoom on 31 May 2022.

The Open Sound Ensemble is the LPO's inclusive ensemble for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Learn more about the group, meet our workshop leaders and musicians, make music together and have a good time!

**APPLICATIONS
NOW OPEN:**

lpo.org.uk/opensound



The Javan Coker Foundation
UK Registered Charity Number 1181275

SEND SIBLINGS CARE

Promoting Mental Well-being And Social Health

"You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them". Desmond Tutu

ALL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE FUNDAYS AND TIME-OUT

***TRIPS AND OUTINGS *COOKERY *CREATIVE ART**



Dates:
3rd|10th|17th|24th May, 2022
14th|21st June, 2022

**Venue: Jubilee Community Centre
Thamesmead. SE28 8DU**

**TIME
4-6PM**

www.thejavancokerfoundation.org
Email: thejavancokerfoundation@gmail.com
Telephone: 07765 331 092
@thejavancokerf1

In Partnership with   