

Willow Dene News

Friday 24th June 2022



Head Teacher's Message

Welcome to the first newsletter in the final half term of the year. We hope you had an enjoyable Jubilee weekend. After all the different jubilee celebrations in school and being part of history in the making, we certainly did!

We began this half term with the intention to make up for lost time, planning lots of exciting events which in particular involve our school community. Nearly every week this term, something is happening!

In the first week after the holiday, we opened the swim spa at Oakmere Road. We are really proud of this resource, which we believe will bring huge positive impact to our older children. We held an opening ceremony during the first week after the holiday where staff, Governors and Trustees were able to come and learn more about the facility. We invited parents to visit and also received our first joyous swimmers.

For those of you who don't know the idea of the swim spa was actually a child's idea. Emmanuel left us last year at the end of Year 11 but was able to return for the opening ceremony and made an absolutely amazing speech. Afterwards his Dad, Fred wrote to us to say 'Thank you and the team on behalf of Manny and the entire family for all the opportunities give to Manny, listening and letting him find his voice not only

in Willow Dene but the community as a whole. Willow Dene has been such a bedrock in his growth as he journeys on in life. We will be posting on social media by this weekend. He is still looking forward in working in Willow Dene in the near future. We are very proud of him.

This week was sports day. It was lovely to see so many families joining their children to complete sensory trails, navigate inflatables and of course experience foam machines. There was a sense of celebration and excitement all across the school, as everybody participated.

Rachel



Willow Dene School Dog.....



You may have seen on social media that we also received the exciting news that we are going to have a school dog.

Some of you will remember that before COVID we made a lot of preparations to get a school dog. It is important for us to have a properly trained dog, who will be able to work with the children and teach them about relationships, care and empathy and become part of our teaching team! In preparation we have had lots of different dogs visit in school and just after half term we received the news the suitable dog had been identified.

This is very exciting news for the whole school and we held a vote about what to name him. There were some brilliant suggestions from the children and staff, on the name. We agreed on Milo who is an 8 month old Labrador. He is currently undergoing training to be ready to join us after the summer holidays.



THEATRE PRODUCTIONS AT WILLOW DENE

Willow Dene had an amazing Theatre week with two shows from Head2Head theatre across four days: Captain Crabstick and The Amazing Under the Sea Adventure and Beachcombers and Mud Larking.

This term we have aimed for every child to have attend a theatre show within school and experience the joy and wonder of such an event.

For those classes that did not attend the Head2Head shows, they will be visited by the show Firebird in early July with Bamboozle theatre company.



September 2022

In the last two weeks we have also had our final admissions panel of the year. This was a very oversubscribed panel and it was difficult to make the decisions about which children will join us in September.

However, we are looking forward to meeting all of our new families in the next few weeks. Transition visits are well under way for the children who will be leaving Willow Dene. In the next few weeks, we will be handing over lots of important information to make sure that our children get the best start in their next setting.

For the children staying with us, we can now work on our class lists. We consider each child individually and look at the curriculum, environments and needs of everyone to make sure that we have the best class group combinations. Next week you will receive a letter telling you which class your child will be in in September and who the teacher will be. You will also receive an invitation for our informal parents evening on the 6th of July at 4:00 till 5:30 PM. At this event you will be able to talk to your child's current teacher, catch up with old friends and meet new staff. There will also be an information fair with useful services represented in the hall at Swingate Lane.

Upcoming Events

Please do save the date for our leaver's events in the last week of term.

At Swingate Lane this will be on Tuesday 19th of July and at Oakmere Road it will be on Wednesday 20th July. Invitations with specific times will be coming soon.

We are also looking forward to our very first Oakmere Road alumni event on the Wednesday evening of the last week. Please let us know if you would like to join this.

On July 15th we will be having a family and community picnic event with live music as an opportunity to celebrate the end of yet another unique year and enjoy being together. Further details will be coming soon.

WHAT'S ON

Willow Dene 'Speakeasy' Coffee Mornings are an opportunity to meet other parents. Recently we were joined by Gwen Jerrom SEN dental Oral Health promoter to give advice and guidance to parents on their child's oral hygiene.





speakeasy

Summer Term 2022

A weekly coffee morning for Willow Dene parents & carers
A safe space to talk, listen, share, encourage and make friends.

Every Thursday 10.30am to 11.30am

Thursday 30th June - Mandy Baines the Sensory Processing Co-ordinator and Shelley Arnott who is new to the Sensory Team at Willow Dene School are both joining our Coffee morning next week.

Mandy and Shelley would like to explain more about their roles and how sensory programmes are implemented across the school. Also looking at how sensory experiences can sometimes affect the way our children behave and how parents/carers can manage some sensory behaviours at home. This is an opportunity for parents to meet Mandy and Shelley and ask questions about their child's sensory needs.

For more information contact:
Vicky House, Family Support Worker at Willow Dene School on 0208 854 9841



IMPORTANT DATES

Parents Evening
6th July 2022 4-5:30pm

Family Community Picnic Event
15th July 2022

Leavers Events Swingate Lane
19th July 2022

Leavers Events Oakmere Road
20th July 2022

SENsory Sailors at The Royal Maritime Museum in Greenwich!

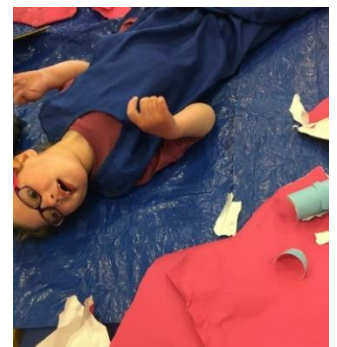


Sophie recommends SENsory Sailors at The Royal Maritime Museum in Greenwich!

Sessions are free, they run once a month, and last 90 minutes. Only 4 families can book on at a time and you do an activity related to the displays in the museum. Sophie went in May and she made a life-size ships figurehead (based on drawing around Sophie).

It was a really lovely session. Sophie had lots of fun, they adapted the activity to suit her needs, and there were lots of people to help her do it. The only problem is that spaces are very limited - it's best to follow RMG Engagement on Eventbrite so that you know as soon as tickets are released. Their website is www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/rmg-engagement-19949038562

For more information see www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/national-maritime-museum/sensory-sailors





WOODPECKER CLASS

Woodpecker Class have been really excited to see all the different places opening up now the COVID restrictions are easing.

On Mondays as part of our movement PE session, we head over to explore the soft play area by the Foundation Stage. We can climb up and down things, go in things, jump in the ball pool and even explore the sensory room. It is filled with some wonderful lights that move on the floor, glisten in bubbles or change when we touch things.

With Woodpecker being new last year and most of the children coming from surrounding schools, this has been the first time the children have been able to explore these places. It is so good for us to have areas like this at Willow Dene where we can go and have fun, parallel play and interact with each other in new ways, all while stretching our bodies!

