



# WILLOW DENE SCHOOL

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022

## Head Teacher's Message

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new school year. By the time you read this we will have already been back at school for three weeks and a lot has happened already!

We started the summer holiday with two weeks of summer fun at summer playscheme. While the school gates were closed, we were busy harvesting our annual honey yield from the Willow Dene bees. Look out for news about the sale of our bumper crop coming soon – complete with labels designed by the children. We also had some new interactive curriculum displays installed in the corridors at Swingate Lane which we will enjoy seeing the children use.

We were hugely excited to see children back at school on the first day for term for children. There were so many smiling faces – both children and staff, and all over the school there was a 'buzz' about the new year and genuine happiness to all be together again. We have welcomed lots of new families over the first few weeks. To all of you, welcome to Willow Dene. If we have not met you in person, we hope we will do soon. We have a genuine open door policy for our parents and you are welcome in school at any time. Our provision at Willow Dene is personalised to meet the needs of every child and family. We will use newsletters, video briefings, texts and of course your child's home contact book to keep you up to date with our news and we want you to be able to talk to us openly about anything, whether it is related to school or not so that we can help where we can.

Finally, this week we have two important pieces of news to announce. Firstly, we have had a request for two schools to join the Compass Partnership. Please see our 'Announcement' section in this newsletter.

Secondly, many of you will have been involved in the public consultation to expand Swingate Lane to accommodate more children. Following the consultation, the Local Authority have made the decision not to go ahead with this plan. The reason for this is that there were more significant implications of the site being Metropolitan land than had been initially anticipated. In addition, the Local Authority listened to resident objections about parking and traffic

implications. Instead, the Local Authority has agreed to work with Willow Dene to open a sixth form for both children with autism and those with complex needs. In the coming weeks we will be sharing more information with you about what this will look like, before we hold a public consultation. This is an area we feel very strongly about, particularly because not all of our year 11s were able to find school places on leaving Willow Dene this year.

In addition to this project, the local authority are consulting about a new free school on a separate site and how this could look. We know that this could affect the future for your child so if you would like to join the consultation the link can be accessed here, as can further details

<https://www.menti.com/4ao3xqtd4o>

Lots to share and lots to look forward to for Willow Dene!

*Rachel*



## Pool Frog



It's wonderful to be back and Pool Frog class are working hard.

One afternoon, the children discovered 3 trays had been left in the classroom!

The children explored the artefacts and tried to work out who had left them so that we could return them to their rightful owner. There was lots of exploration and conversations about what the artefacts were, and how they may work. Codey knew the word telescope and was able to show us all how they worked! Annie opened a treasure box and discovered that it was full of tea bags! Noor examined the model boats and pointed out where the anchors were! As a group we decided the items must belong to a sailor working on a boat. We spoke about the famous boat, that is now a local museum, called 'The Cutty Sark'.



Working together, the children followed instructions to make their own sailor hats and decorated them. Then we all had a great game of 'sailors and pirates' highlighting the high value tea had during this time period.

Everyone in Pool Frog is eager to continue learning about Maritime travel and trade.



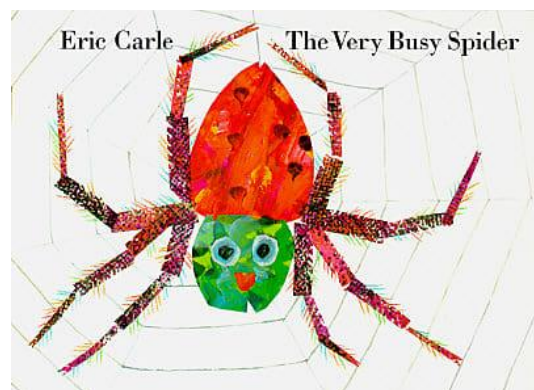
## Wren Class

**Wow!** Each child in Wren has settled back to school so well. We have changed classroom environments and gained a new friend. However, the children have all taken this in their stride and have been putting their all into their learning from the start. We have now established our routine and have enjoyed engaging, and participating in some new lessons. We particularly enjoyed our first swimming session of the academic year. For our new friend this was his first time. We were all very proud of how well he did adjusting to the surroundings and had the biggest smile on his face throughout.

In literacy, we have been reading the story "The Very Busy Spider" by Eric Carle. Wren class enjoyed engaging with a range of sensory materials and props to represent the animals and

and touching the sensory materials.

In our writing sessions we have been continuing to work on our mark making skills. We have been practising using different sensory materials linked to our story which has been very exciting. The children enjoyed completing their circular, liner and horizontal marks whilst being busy spiders!



## IMPORTANT DATES

**Last day of Term**  
**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

**Half Term**  
**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October**  
**To**  
**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Return to School**  
**Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022**



### ***Lily-Rose Jenkins***

We started our new school year with a mixture of sadness and excitement. You will all already know of the sad death of Lily-Rose Jenkins. Lily-Rose should have been starting her new secondary school this September but instead we unexpectedly found ourselves mourning her loss.

This week it was our privilege to represent Willow Dene at Lily-Rose's funeral, taking the love of the school community and sharing all our memories. Thank you to everyone who was so understanding in allowing us to support Lily-Rose's family and pay our respects.



The first three days of school were Inset days for staff and everyone was involved in a rigorous program of professional development and learning in readiness for the new year. There was our annual medical competency, positive handling and safeguarding training. There were also three briefings for staff to keep everyone informed about plans, developments and expectations for the new year.

The annual Compass Conference brought the Compass community together to listen to speakers talking about 'Belonging'. We were inspired by Nicolas Hamilton who talked to us about overcoming his barriers, caused by disability, to become a racing driver.

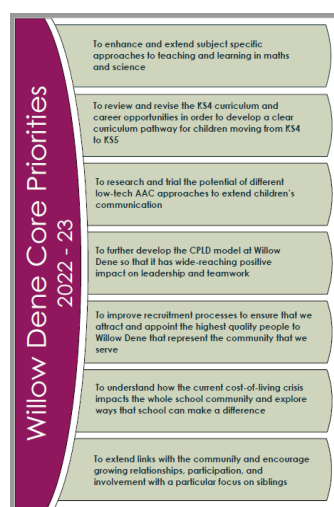


## Celebration Time

Exciting news for us in the first week included the news that our synthetic phonics provider Little Wandle has used Willow Dene videos of our children reading within their teaching support phonics resources for SEND. They have approached Willow Dene to be a Little Wandle Champion School.

Children from Willow Dene have been awarded either a Do The Right Thing Award (DTRTA) or Highly Commended certificate. Two children were nominated for the Jack Petchey Environmental Award and were successful and will be receiving a £300 environmental grant.

Finally, two of our children were recognised as National Champions in the Get Set Community Values Champions Awards for their demonstration of their Olympic and Paralympic values. Watch out for more news in all these areas on Twitter @willowdenesch



We are also ready to start work on our seven Core Priorities which will drive forward our school development over the next year and which all of the school community will contribute to. A copy of them will be included with this newsletter and the action plans related to each area can be found on the school website.

Some of these are directly related to curriculum areas. You will see there will be a focus on teaching and learning in Maths and Science, as well as a focus on AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication). Other Core Priorities are directly related to our families and wider school community. These include a focus on engaging siblings and one about supporting families through the cost-of-living crisis and making a positive difference where we can. Over the year we will be keeping you regularly updated on our progress in these areas and asking for your opinions and support.

## QUEEN ELIZABETH II

1926 - 2022



Our exciting start to the year, was of course affected by the sad death of Queen Elizabeth II.

To pay our respects in our own way, we turned all our lights off for two minutes on the day after her death was announced, looked back at the photos from our Platinum Jubilee Celebrations earlier in the year and had some quiet time to reflect. It felt like a very fitting and appropriate way to mark the occasion. We are glad that everything is now back to our normal routine and we can continue with our term.



The Trustees of The Compass Partnership of Schools recently received a request from the Governors of The Conatus Federation of Schools (Boxgrove and Kidbrooke Primary Schools) for their schools to join The Compass Partnership.

You should be receiving a letter tonight which will give you more details and tell you how to respond to the consultation if you would like to.

## WHAT'S ON



Willow Dene  
SCHOOL

## Parent-Led Coffee Morning



**Tuesday 27th September 10.30 - 11.30am**

**Leviza Ayaz**, a Willow Dene parent, has invited **Greenwich Council Leader - Anthony Okereke** and **Cabinet Lead for Children and Young People - Matt Morrow** to join next weeks Coffee Morning. This is to give parents/carers the opportunity to build stronger links with the council leader and cabinet member, ensuring that they have a better understanding of our families lives.

Anthony and Matt are looking forward to visiting the school. They hope to learn and understand more about the impact of having a child with complex needs and disabilities. This is a chance for parents/carers to share their experiences and hopefully build an effective connection and a familiar relationship with the council going forward. Please be aware that Leviza will be following the agenda that was set and agreed by parents at the Coffee Morning on **20.9.22**.

**For any further information contact Vicky House on 0208 854 9841**

# Willow Dene Core Priorities

2022 - 23

To enhance and extend subject specific approaches to teaching and learning in maths and science

To review and revise the KS4 curriculum and career opportunities in order to develop a clear curriculum pathway for children moving from KS4 to KS5

To research and trial the potential of different low-tech AAC approaches to extend children's communication

To further develop the CPLD model at Willow Dene so that it has wide-reaching positive impact on leadership and teamwork

To improve recruitment processes to ensure that we attract and appoint the highest quality people to Willow Dene that represent the community that we serve

To understand how the current cost-of-living crisis impacts the whole school community and explore ways that school can make a difference

To extend links with the community and encourage growing relationships, participation, and involvement with a particular focus on siblings