

NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools



The last two weeks have flown past. Children and young people have settled remarkably quickly into the new school year supported by our focus on positive relationships. The other thing we look at early in the term is learning environment, making sure that each classroom reflects the diverse needs of the learners. Now things are largely settled our focus will shift to the quality of the teaching and learning. Michelle Bernard, who is one of our Compass Eko Directors of Schools, and who knows our special schools well will be joining our leaders to observe in classes at all sites over the month of October, so that we have a shared understanding of the teaching and learning profile and can target the support and development.

We have continued to work closely with SEND transport to share the concerns about Passenger Services that we have raised and that you have raised since the beginning of term. We have documented each one, both specific incidents and more general issues and these are with RBG SEND leaders. We are expecting some individual and general meetings in the next weeks to discuss and to agree a forum for you to be able to have your voice heard.

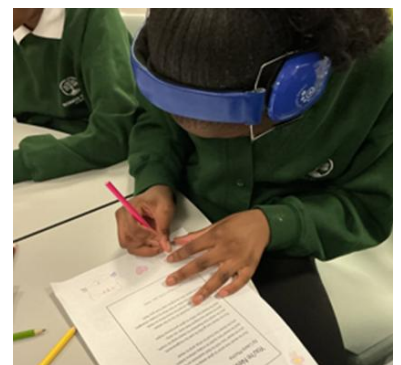
Last week we hosted a visit at Swingate Lane from Councillor Jeremy Fraser. Jeremy contacted us after visiting Demelza House Hospice where he learned more about how we work together. He was very interested to know where the gaps in service are for our children and families, so as well as a full tour we were able to talk about wheelchair services, respite, housing and some of the other current challenges we face. We found him to be very receptive and interested. We put him in touch with our colleagues at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in Greenwich child bereavement team who see a different side to the same issues that we encounter everyday. We hope that what Jeremy finds out will benefit all of us in terms of council actions for the future.

At Rowan Wood we are busy planning the official opening ceremony for the building at Hargood Road where a plaque will be unveiled in our reception area. We are expecting lots of visitors on 25th November 2026 and Charlie our creative arts lead is planning a performance from children to ensure that their voices are present in the opening of their school. We will be asking for some parent representatives to join us along with Governors, the people who designed and built the school, and Royal Borough of Greenwich colleagues.

On Wednesday we held our first Governing Body meeting of the year at Willow Dene Swingate Lane. Our Local School Committee spans across Willow Dene and Rowan Wood. The experienced and established team will continue to support Rowan Wood as it grows. At this meeting the focus was on Willow Dene. Governors had time to read assessment case studies showing the progress that children and young people made last year. They also read the new Willow Dene Self Evaluation (SEF) which sets out how we assess ourselves against the criteria in the Ofsted handbook. This is a key document and it is important that all governors understand it. The next governors meeting will focus on Rowan Wood and there will be a monitoring morning on the subject of one of our shared core priorities. If you would like to meet Lynne, our chair of governors or Leviza, or Kafayet, our parent governors, please do let us know.



One of our shared core priorities focuses on our routine times of the day and maximising learning in the morning, lunchtime and at the end of the day. This continues the work we started last year ensuring every child has a positive start and end to their day. In the teachers meetings over the last two weeks we have been focusing on the 12.00 – 12.30 period directly before lunch and introducing some new resources to support early communication, oracy skills and love of reading. We look forward to sharing progress in these areas over the next months.



Over the last two weeks our team has been out and about supporting families outside of the school. At Willow Dene the sixth form team have been supporting the first days in college for our Year 14 leavers and the first week of Launch 19. Our Launch 19 apprentice, Arianna, has made a great start using her admin skills to set up the reception area in the new part of the Oakmere Road building. Aryan and Jamal have both made great starts to their Launch 19 year. At Rowan Wood the leadership team have been busy meeting our 15 new starters who will join Rowan Wood primary in their temporary but purpose built accomodation at Horn Park school . We are excited about all of these new opportunities.

Other things we are excited about include; the reopening of sixth form businesses for the new school year (there are a lot of hungry staff at Willow Dene who are ready for Willow's Delish to open the café doors), the publication of the Chesti-study research paper about the chest health of children with cerebral palsy; a number of our staff and parents took part in this and if you would like to read it please contact me, stay and play for our primary new starters and their first look at their new classrooms. We look forward to telling you more in our next edition.

Have a lovely weekend

Rachel



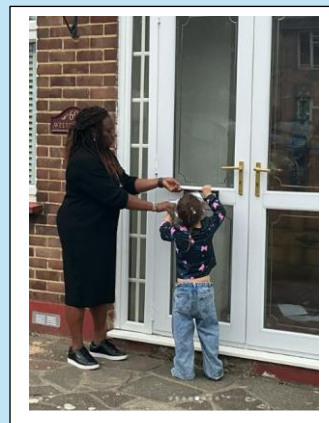
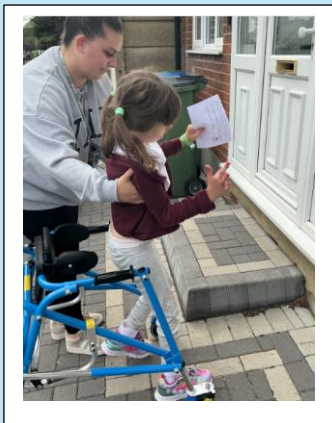
With the start of the new school year, Willow Dene and Rowan Wood have launched 'A Poem for You'. This project aims to share joy and build community through poetry. Each week, our children and young people read a poem linked to our school values.

They decorate a copy of the poem, reflecting on the feelings, words and meaning within it, while practicing their fine motor skills and letting their creativity shine.

The children and young people then deliver the embellished poems to our neighbours, sharing the beauty of words and hopefully spreading a little happiness to the people around our schools. This provides them the opportunity for physical exercise and practicing skills in the community, such a crossing roads, interacting with the public, and posting letters, in a regular and functional context.

The project means that all children and young people hear a brilliant poem by a fantastic author every week, that gives them access to rich and beautiful language and ideas. It allows our classes to connect with the local community and by spreading happiness and a love of reading with the poems they distribute.

So far, we have shared 'You're Never Too...' by Laura Mucha and 'Meet at the Horizon' by Matt Goodfellow, two beautiful poems that exemplify the power and emotion in words. Keep an eye on Instagram @willowdenesch and @rowanwoodschool #PoemForYou to see the project in action.



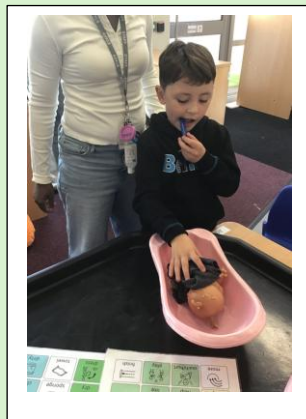
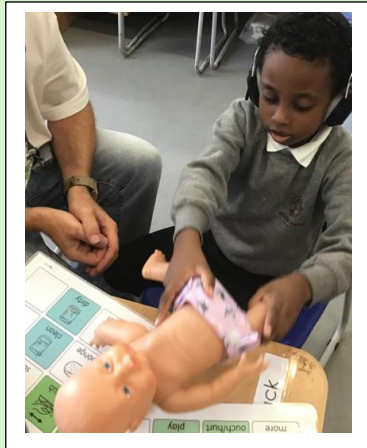
BRAMBLING CLASS

We have had a wonderful start to the school year, we are enjoying making new friends and sharing our favourite activities with them all! Sensory play is one of our favourites; we enjoy filling and emptying containers whilst counting our scoops as well as touching and feeling new textures.

We love practicing our self-care skills during RSE and are becoming so confident with our dressing and washing skills. We have been learning how to care for babies by using bathtubs to wash them and choosing which clothes we would like them to wear.

Our drama sessions have been so exciting! We are following a routine of activities relating to the story 'The visible sounds'. We love relaxing under the waves and feeling the breeze as well as popping popcorn on the parachute. It's so much fun when we pop it as fast as we can and it flies around the room!

We are looking forward to having even more fun and learning as the year goes on!



BUNTING

Bunting class has had a wonderful start to the term! The children have been busy developing a 'Love for Reading' during our early morning sessions.

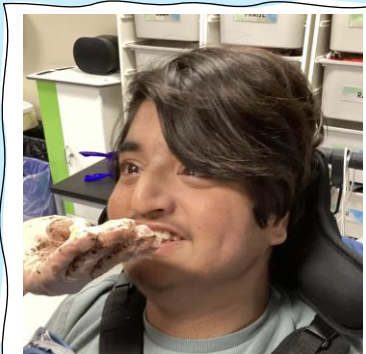
So far, they have explored a wide range of books, including both fiction and non-fiction genres. It has been wonderful watching them share stories with their peers, share their own thoughts, and build confidence in their reading fluency.

🌟 Spotlight Book: 'It's Mine!'

During our literacy sessions, we have been exploring the book 'It's Mine!' by the author Emma Yarlett. The children have absolutely loved bringing the story to life by joining in with interactive role-play and creative activities.



MEADOW CLASS



We have settled wonderfully into Sixth Form life, which is a new experience for some of us. We have spent lots of time building friendships, getting to know each other, and becoming familiar with our new routines.

One of our favourite activities so far has been the sensory story *Under the Stars*. Through a range of sensory experiences, we are transported to a campfire beneath a dark, starry sky. The students have loved engaging with the different sights, sounds and textures throughout the story.

We have had the exciting opportunity to take part in our business trials. We explored a variety of enterprises, including the café, horticulture, pets, arts and crafts, and DIY. Everyone enjoyed trying the different businesses, sharing their preferences, and discovering new interests. We are looking forward to the full launch of our businesses in the coming weeks.

As part of our community living sessions, we have been learning about endangered animals and the reasons why some species are under threat. We explored the story *There's a Rang-tan in My Bedroom*, which helped us learn about the impact of rainforest destruction on wildlife habitats. After exploring the WWF's list of the world's most endangered animals, discussing our favourites and taking part in a class vote, we decided to adopt a tiger through WWF. We were thrilled to receive our adoption certificate and are very excited to receive our first information pack and learn more about protecting these magnificent animals.

We are looking forward to another busy and exciting half term of learning together.



THANK YOU

Meadow Class

You're helping WWF to protect the future of wild tigers and to tackle some of the biggest environmental challenges facing our natural world today.
Thank you.

Paul De Ornellas

Paul De Ornellas
Chief Adviser – Wildlife, WWF-UK

For a future where people and nature thrive | www.org.uk
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This certificate is not a receipt and cannot be exchanged for an adoption pack.



GREENWICH SEND VOICE
Parent Carer Forum

Together for a brighter future

SEND
Information Fair

Come along to meet a range of organisations and services supporting children and young people with SEND (0-25) in Greenwich.

Local Authority Services
Health Services (such as Oxleas)
Support Organisations
Information and Advice
Discover What's Available

Wednesday 4th November 2026
10:00am – 12:00pm
Woolwich Library
Woolwich Centre
35 Wellington Street
Woolwich, SE18 6HQ

Meet services and support organisations
Find out about local support, resources and activities
Ask questions and get advice
Connect with other families
All are welcome – no need to book, just drop in!

Stronger together

A more inclusive Greenwich for a brighter future

Information Support Advice Connections

info@greenwichsendvoice.co.uk
www.greenwichsendvoice.co.uk
@greenwichsendvoice

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH
Oxleas NHS

Working together for children and young people with SEND

GRAEae
YOUNG
COMPANY

Join our Children's Company

Open to children aged 8-12 who are Deaf, disabled and / or neurodivergent.

Monthly in-person sessions in Hoxton, London.

Join us to:

Create and perform stories
Play drama games
Make friends and have lots of fun

It is free to take part, and we provide BSL and SSE interpreters, and Access Support Workers.

Contact Mette@graeae.org for more information and how to sign up.

GREENWICH SEND VOICE
Parent Carer Forum

COFFEE MORNINGS

A friendly space for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND to connect, share and support each other.

You're not alone. We're here for you.

ALL WELCOME!
Come for a cuppa, a chat and useful info

Connect with other parent carers
Learn about local services and support
Relax in a welcoming, friendly environment

Representatives from the local authority, health and support organisations pop into sessions to share information and answer questions.

STARTING FROM
Thursday 10th September
and every 2 weeks

TIME
10am – 12pm

LOCATION
Woolwich Library
(Woolwich Centre,
35 Wellington St,
London SE18 6HQ)

PLEASE BOOK FOR ATTENDANCE
due to room capacity.

Eventbrite Link :
bit.ly/GSV-coffee-mornings

No need to come every time – drop in when you can. We'd love to see you there!

www.greenwichsendvoice.co.uk
Greenwich SEND Voice

GRAEae
YOUNG
COMPANY

Join our Online Children's Company

Open to children aged 8-12, who are Deaf, disabled and / or neurodivergent

Monthly creative sessions from September 2026

Create and perform stories
Play drama games
Make friends and have lots of fun

It is free to take part, and we provide BSL and SSE interpreters, and Access Support Workers.

Contact Mette@graeae.org for information and how to sign up.



Coffee Morning



For Parents and Carers of
all Compass Eko Trust Special Schools



Day: Every Tuesday | 10.30am

We warmly welcome new and existing parents and carers to our weekly coffee morning at Willow Dene. A chance to meet other parents and carers, share experiences, information and ideas, and build supportive connections within our school community.



We look forward to seeing you there!



**Biscuits are
provided!**



**Every
Tuesday
morning**



**Everyone is
welcome!**



Swingate Lane site



For more information:
Family Support Team | 0208 854 9841



SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANTS – ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/27

Royal Borough of Greenwich are pleased to confirm an expansion of the borough's School Clothing Grant scheme to academies for the beginning of this academic year. From September 2026, to be eligible for a School Clothing Grant, children must:

- Live in Greenwich (or be placed in out of borough temporary accommodation by Greenwich)
- Attend a state school (local authority maintained or academy, in or outside of Greenwich)
- Be entitled to and receive targeted free school meals

The school year eligible for an award and amounts paid are as follows:

- Reception £50.00
- Year 3 £50.00
- Year 7 £150.00
- Year 9 £100.00

Applications can be made on the council website: www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/help-money-free-school-meals

Willow Dene School

School Telephone number 020 8854 9841

Willow Dene contact email:

willowdene@compassps.uk

School website:

www.willowdene.compassps.uk

School office hours: 8.00am – 4.00pm

Instagram: @willowdenesch1

Rowan Wood School

School Telephone number 020 8059 2743

Rowan Wood contact email:

rowanwood@compassps.uk

School website:

www.rowanwood.compassps.uk

School office hours: 8.00am – 4.00pm

Instagram: @rowanwoodschoo1