

NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools



Welcome to the last newsletter of this half term. This week, the weather has undergone a definite change, and we have seen the first autumn storm approach. Wednesday was the first day of the Dashain Festival, the biggest Hindu festival in Nepal. Being located so close to the army barracks, and in the centre of the Nepali community, we were surrounded by members of our local and school community celebrating in colourful dress. We hope you enjoyed the festivities despite the rain! We can't believe that the first half term has gone so quickly, but we are ending the half term feeling very happy about how quickly our new children and families have settled and how calm everywhere feels.

The atmosphere in school is something that has been commented on by our visitors over the last few weeks. Margaret Mulholland and Mary Myatt, who are very well known in the SEND world, have both visited us the last few weeks. This is important because they are closely involved with the government and DfE and the people who make policies at a national level. We are so pleased to be able to add our voice and the voice of our children and families to their thinking. This week we also provided induction for the new social workers joining the Children with Disabilities team. The recent social worker reforms mean that many new social workers have been recruited. We were asked to provide an introduction to special schools for them and we used this to talk about how we work closely with parents and some of the common barriers that affect our families. Of course, there was also a tour at Willow Dene, Swingate Lane to meet children and families face to face so that we can start with a good understanding of who is at the centre of everything we do. We felt the session was very positively received with lots of questions and enthusiasm.

The week after half term will be exactly 4 years since our last Ofsted inspection at Willow Dene. This means that we will be due our next inspection at any time. This framework for inspection is very different to the last framework and there are no more one-word judgements. Instead, we will be judged in a number of main areas. In the parents briefing I have set out some more information about the new inspection framework, what our hopes are, what we believe about our school and how you can help support us if you would like to.

In most of our newsletters this year, you will have seen the common theme of transport. Particularly at the beginning of the year, several parents and families had negative experiences with school transport. And unusually, we found it difficult to communicate with our transport providers. Having collated everybody's encounters into one document, this week we met with SEN Transport and Passenger Services to look at the common areas and how Passenger Services can improve for the future. We have also been assured that every case highlighted will result in feedback to individual parents.

If you are visiting any of the schools, you will see new displays of learning appearing all over the place. Our displays showcase the learning that is happening for children and young people in classrooms and we place high priority on sharing this with everyone through our beautiful displays. We hope you enjoy looking at them because we are extremely proud of them.



Our core priority focus on play has continued following our OPAL audit. Over the next few weeks, we will start to introduce new areas to our playground at Swingate Lane and following a review of its success, we will introduce the same thing at Oakmere Road and Rowan Wood. Our first addition will be a sensory play area containing water and other sensory play materials. We're excited to see how the children adapt to this and which children are very motivated by having more sensory play in the playgrounds.

We also want to thank our parents who've been involved in the filming for our Funds of Knowledge Core Priority. This core priority continues our work on incorporating the home lives and experiences of our children into our teaching and the experiences and knowledge of some of our parents who kindly agreed to be filmed will make for a powerful and unique training session after holiday.

After the holiday we will be opening our first two Rowan Wood Primary classrooms in their temporary accommodation at Horn Park School. There will be 15 children in total, and the specially converted area of Horn Park that we will be using for the next few years is looking beautiful. This week we have met our parents and both they and the children have had their first look at the new classrooms. We look forward to reporting how our smallest Rowan Wood children have settled in our next newsletter.

Other things to look at for after the holiday include parents evening and our Winter celebration dates. If you have already watched the parents briefing, the eagle eyed amongst you may have spotted that I was given the wrong information about the date of Winter Wonderland! Winter Wonderland will be on the 3rd of December and more details will be coming soon!

In this newsletter, you will see some amended term dates for the coming year. We have added an additional training day for this year only to the end of the summer term. This means that we will be able to do some of our mandatory training for the new school year before we break up for the holiday. Term will finish on the Friday, which will make short breaks summer play scheme more manageable for all as it will run from Monday to Friday for two full weeks rather than splitting across weeks as it would have done if term finished on the Monday. We are hoping this will also make it easier for those of you with children attending other schools, and those of you who want to book holidays!

We want to thank you for your support in this very busy half term of the year. As always, we couldn't do it without you, Your ongoing support means more than you know. If you need to speak to somebody during the holiday, please do use the emergency phone line and a school leader will call you back.

We would like to wish you a happy and safe half term and we will see you in a week.

Rachel

Emergency telephone number:
07716 388634

LET NO-ONE STEAL YOUR DREAMS

By Paul Cookson

Let no-one steal your dreams
Let no-one tear apart
The burning ambition
That fires the drive inside your heart

Let no-one steal your dreams
Let no-one tell you that you can't
Let no-one hold you back
Let no-one tell you that you won't

Set your sights and keep them fixed
Set your sights on high
Let no-one steal your dreams
Your only limit is the sky

Let no-one steal your dreams
Follow your heart
Follow your soul
For only when you follow them
Will you feel truly whole

Set your sights and keep them fixed
Set your sights on high
Let no-one steal your dreams
Your only limit is the sky

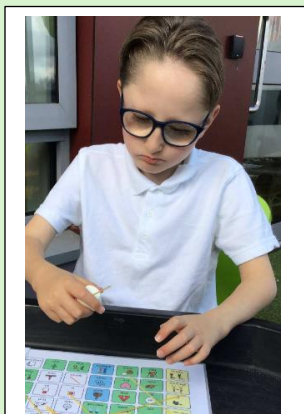
From The Very Best of Paul Cookson (Macmillan, 2018)



SPARROW CLASS

The children in Sparrow class have been having a lovely time listening to a different poem each week. They have then enjoyed decorating and using their fine motor skills to put it in the envelope and the sticker on the front. It's been very exciting seeing some of the neighbours too.

We have also been really enjoying our DT this term and learning about bridges. We have been able to be creative and try and make bridges with different resources. For example, straws, paper and spaghetti. We made a fantastic bridge with the big lego!



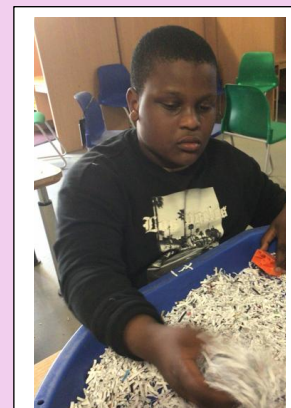
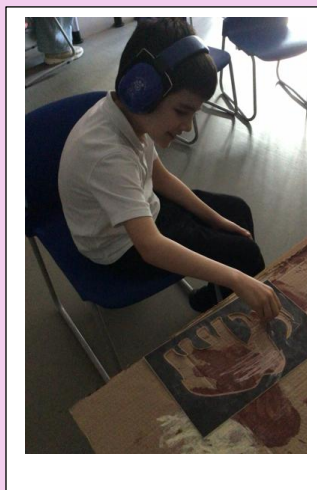
MAGPIE CLASS

We have had a fun first half-term back in school.

We have welcomed a few new friends into class and have enjoyed getting to know and play with them!

We have been exploring and sorting different materials during science lessons, including paper, wood, and metal and have also enjoyed being creative and using different materials and resources to create some cave paintings.

During TPPC we have expressed our creativity through movement doing PE and dance!



THANK YOU

A huge thank you to Jimmy's parents in Toucan Class for their very kind donation of the bike.

We are extremely grateful for your generosity and support. The bike is being greatly enjoyed by our children and will make a wonderful addition to our outdoor play area.



MERLIN CLASS

We have been busy learning and exploring lots of exciting things this term! We have been enjoying our sensory activities, developing our communication skills and learning together through fun, hands-on experiences.

Our Sensory Story – Animal Adventure

During our reading sessions, we have been thoroughly enjoying exploring our sensory story, Animal Adventure. The children have loved engaging with the story through sensory experiences, helping to bring the adventure to life.

Science – That's Not My Dinosaur!

In science, we have been exploring the story That's Not My Dinosaur! by discovering all the different textures. The children have enjoyed touching, feeling and exploring the different surfaces as we investigated the dinosaurs together.

Art – Exploring Techniques

In art, we have been practising lots of different techniques, including rolling, pushing and rubbing. The children have been busy experimenting with materials and discovering different ways to make marks and create artwork.

Play and Leisure – Learning Together

We have had so much fun in our play and leisure sessions! The children have been learning to play alongside one another and practising taking turns while building together. It has been lovely to see them developing their play skills, sharing experiences and enjoying activities with their friends.

We look forward to sharing even more of our Merlin class adventures with you next time!



IMPORTANT DATES

Last day of term – Friday 23rd October 2026

First day of autumn 2 – Monday 2nd November 2026

Parents Evening – Wednesday 18th November 2026

Children in Need – Friday 20th November 2026

Last day of autumn 2 – Friday 18th December 2026

First day of Spring 1 – Monday 4th January 2027



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

Autumn Term 2026		
September	Tues 1 st – Thu 3 rd	INSET Days – School closed to children
	Fri 4 th	First day of Autumn 1 for Year 8 pupils
October	Fri 23 rd	Last day of Autumn 1
	Mon 26 th	Half-term break begins
November	Mon 2 nd	First day of Autumn 2
December	Fri 18 th	Last day of Autumn Term
	Mon 21 st	Winter holiday begins
Spring Term 2027		
January	Mon 4 th	First day of Spring 1
February	Fri 12 th	Last day of Spring 1
	Mon 15 th	Half-term holiday begins
	Mon 22 nd	First day of Spring 2
March	Thu 25 th	Last day of Spring 2
	Fri 26 th	Spring holiday begins
Summer Term 2027		
April	Mon 12 th	First day of Summer 1
May	Mon 3 rd	Bank Holiday – school closed
	Fri 28 th	Last day of Summer 1
	Mon 31 st	Half-term holiday begins
June	Mon 7 th	First day of Summer 2
July	Fri 16 th	End of Academic year for Pupils
	Mon 19 th – Weds 21 st	INSET Days – School closed to children

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	Mon 7 th	First day of Autumn 1 for Year 7 pupils
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GREENWICH SEND VOICE
Parent Carer Forum

Together for a brighter future

Everyone Welcome!
Children, young people, parents, carers and professionals

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

Information Support Advice Connections

A more inclusive Greenwich for a brighter future

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.



Scan me to book!

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.