




# Willow Dene School

Seeing possibilities, realising dreams



'I like school  
because of the stuff  
I do. I do literacy,  
maths, science, art  
and many more.  
I like literacy best  
because you can  
create stories'

Pupil

happiness

# Welcome

Seeing possibilities, realising dreams

Willow Dene is a values-based learning community completely focused on building provision around the needs of each child and their family. We are a very happy community and aim to offer our families support to enable children to thrive and enjoy living and learning.

We are the only primary special school in Greenwich and meet the needs of children with a wide range of special educational needs. Our teachers are exceptional practitioners who work as part of an extensive multi-disciplinary team of specialists to plan learning pathways that ensure children are given the best opportunities to thrive and become independent.

We are a school of enablement. Our environment is designed to stimulate and support children to build on their curiosity about the world around them and to communicate their thoughts and feelings. We work in close partnership with families, providing care and support to enable everyone to feel confident and secure.

As a school, we are always learning. We are actively engaged in research-led improvement, which ensures our provision is innovative and cutting edge; providing children with the very best possibilities to realise their dreams.



'The stimulating learning environment supports the high quality of learning taking place, encourages independent learning, enriches pupils' experiences and demonstrates pupils' pride in their work'

Improvement Partner Report





# Exceptional Teaching for Exceptional Learners

## Personalised learning pathways

Our aim is to provide personalised learning pathways of the very highest standard for every child, to ensure that they enjoy learning, make excellent progress and achieve.

Central to our vision is the understanding that exceptional learners need exceptional teachers. Our goal is that all children are enabled to be active learners who are curious and given opportunities to take risks and explore their ideas. The ability to channel that curiosity and exploration into effective learning is a key role of our teaching staff, through providing carefully planned and structured contexts to meet children's needs.

Our curriculum balances meeting individual needs with ensuring all children access broad, balanced and rich learning experiences. At the centre of the provision Willow Dene offers is a focus on independence and the skills that enable children to exercise greater autonomy and choice. This is underpinned by four 'Essential Strands' for life and learning, which are integral to the whole curriculum and school day. These consist of Communication, Learning Skills, Social Skills and Self-Care Skills. The Core Areas of our curriculum include Literacy, Numeracy and Problem Solving, Physical Development and Wellbeing, and ICT. We balance this with the Enrichment Areas of the curriculum, including Art and Music; Science and Technology; Play and Leisure; and Time, Place, People and Culture. These are taught through a topic-based approach.



'In every area of the school, there are examples of outstanding practice'

Ofsted Report



thou



ghtfulness



respect



# Enabling Success

Innovative practice to empower children



'Pupils enjoy their learning and work hard to succeed because they are given a wide range of interesting activities'

Ofsted Report



We are committed to research and development which allows us to refine our provision to offer the very best for all children. This includes harnessing opportunities that new technologies present to provide children with greater autonomy and independence.



Precise assessment and personalisation of provision is central to the way in which children's learning pathways are determined at Willow Dene. We have developed our own assessment system called Learning Journeys which ensures that we are able to accurately evaluate children's progress and identify their next steps. This informs our target setting which defines the priorities for each child. We work closely with families to ensure their aspirations for their child are addressed, building on existing skills to work towards future goals, regarding parents as partners in supporting their child's learning.

We use technology as a tool to support children to access and engage with the curriculum. From the very latest eye-gaze technology, which allows children direct control over a computer using just their eyes, to specialist keyboards and predictive text to enable children to develop their literacy skills without limitations, we are constantly looking for the opportunities that technology can provide to support learning.

# Centre of Innovation and Excellence

Pushing the boundaries of possibility

We believe that our children are exceptional and that they are all capable of great things. We have developed a unique school to make this a reality. We are committed to imaginative, exciting and innovative practice which will enable every child to meet their full potential. In order to do this we constantly evaluate what we do and use research, collaboration and our own expertise to change our provision for the better.



The MOVE philosophy states that movement is the foundation for learning. MOVE is an activity based programme which uses the combined knowledge of education, therapy and family to teach children with physical disabilities or complex needs the skills of sitting,

standing, walking and transferring from one position to another. MOVE focuses on what the child can already do and not what they cannot do. At Willow Dene we have a full time MOVE co-ordinator and a large number of staff who are MOVE trained. Willow Dene School is a MOVE centre of excellence and holds the MOVE quality mark in the category of outstanding.



Children with sensory processing difficulties can find it difficult to calm themselves or to be active and alert. They may avoid different types of sensory information such as touch or smell, or they might seek sensory input such as movement. We recognise that sensory processing difficulties affect

the majority of children at Willow Dene and can impact significantly on learning. We provide comprehensive Sensory Processing Provision which includes a dedicated OT and a full time Sensory Processing Coordinator. Children have access to a sensory circuit room, individual sensory diets and groups which focus on common areas of difficulty. We also have an extensive range of specialist resourcing.

'The MOVE Programme is embedded in the philosophy of the school. Every opportunity is taken to naturally include the children's physical skills in the school day'

MOVE Centre of Excellence report







positivity

# Positive Partnerships

Working together for the best outcomes



Willow Dene is home to an exceptionally skilled therapy team and nursing team. Collaborative working between education and health is exemplary. It ensures that children's needs are fully supported in a holistic way. The experienced and innovative lead practitioners from each service are committed to the school and to the best possible provision for all children and their families.



To minimise disruption to our children's education, Willow Dene has developed a number of unique school-based clinics, where visiting professionals conduct their appointments on site. Specialist clinics include neurology, ophthalmology and dietetics. Parents are welcome to request an appointment at any of our school-based clinics.

'I have to say a big thank you for making the impossible possible'

Parent

Willow Dene has well established relationships with a range of Partner Services. These include Greenwich Sensory Service, Demelza House and our local and tertiary hospitals. These relationships enable us to learn from each other's expertise and continually improve the provision for Willow Dene children.

The school employs a full-time Family Support Worker who ensures access to all services and benefits for our families, provides a very important 'path finding' service, and works particularly closely with any families who need support through difficult and challenging times. Our Family Support Worker strengthens our learning community by organising a range of support and information groups for parents and families.





courage



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SCHOOL





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'Going to school is my daughter's highlight of the day'

Parent

