Prospectus
William Ellis School

Introduction

I am delighted to introduce you to William Ellis School. This prospectus outlines what our school stands for: our history, what we hold as important and what we strive for.

William Ellis is a close community with strong relationships between adults and young people. The staff in the school are fully committed to growing and realising the ambitions of our students and working in partnership with their families. We are a centre of excellence for boys' education and work together to bring out the best in all our students. Honest, caring and robust relationships, paying due regard to physical and mental health, are at the centre of what we do. We recognise and address the need to challenge and support boys with every aspect of their learning, including literacy.

We provide a distinctive environment for boys that guides them towards healthy, happy and successful futures. High quality learning is central to everything we do; this enables students to build their cultural capital and intellectual skills, with Modern Foreign Languages a core part of our curriculum to GCSE. We also recognise the value of innovation: Food Technology is new to our curriculum, and we pioneered Camden's approach to online learning.

We work in an emotionally intelligent way to prepare our students for the society and workplaces of the future, regardless of their starting points or the challenges they face. This is grounded in the strong foundations of our William Ellis attributes: responsibility, resourcefulness, reflection, respectfulness, resilience, creativity, and communication. Our house system allows students to develop a sense of collective endeavour and common purpose and to be positive role models for others as they move through the school.

As the Headteacher of William Ellis School, I'm delighted to be writing this prospectus update. I worked alongside the previous Head, Sam White, and have inherited his vision for William Ellis School. This brochure gives you an insight into that vision, with further details available on our website.

I hope that this introduction gives you a flavour of who we are and the very special place that is William Ellis School. Please do find out more about us through this prospectus, our online content and visits to one of our open events.

Yours faithfully,

IZZY JONES
HEADTEACHER

William Ellis School

William Ellis School is a thriving, voluntary-aided, non-denominational comprehensive school serving the educational needs of boys from the ages of 11 to 18 from a diverse local community. Our co-educational sixth form benefits from being part of the LaSWAP consortium, a strong, long-established partnership with three other neighbouring schools: Parliament Hill, La Sainte Union and Acland Burghley. We have an outstanding post-16 course offer.

Much has changed since the school was opened by William Ellis in Gospel Oak in 1862 but the core principles of our founder remain: It is a school which believes in developing students' powers of reason and their thinking skills; we aim to develop high standards of personal conduct which will secure the future happiness and well-being of the individual and their community; we believe in offering a curriculum well matched to the individual and which meets the demands of higher education and the workplace.

While we hold to traditional values, academic achievement and standards of behaviour, we are also an innovative school. We respond to the changing needs of our students to ensure that they continue to develop academically and personally.

"William Ellis School provides pupils with a rounded education that develops them into confident young men. Their behaviour is good, as is their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development."

OFSTED 2017

Mission & Aims

We aim to be a distinctive and inclusive school, where there is a strong sense of pride. Our vision is to create an environment built on success, self-discovery, developing leadership, passion for learning and acquiring effective skills for life. We are concerned with the development of the whole person - intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually; we want our students to make a valuable contribution to society. We emphasise the dignity of the individual and promote respect for others.

Aims

William Ellis School strives to be an excellent school where students feel confident about their future. It aims to be a school where students:

- Have ambition, work hard and make excellent progress
- Have pride in their school and have high expectations for themselves and their peers
- Believe that with their own effort, combined with learning, feedback and reflection they can get better
- Are involved in their own learning and help drive school decisions
- Feel safe, supported and respected for their individuality and know where to turn when in difficulty
- Know their rights and their responsibilities and are prepared to be responsible, global citizens in a democratic society
- Possess an informed understanding of the world of work and how wealth is created with an awareness of ethical behaviour, respect for the environment and social justice
- Cultivate creative skills and an appreciation of art, music, drama and design
- Develop an interest in the wider world and other cultures
- Understand fair play and participate in healthy competition

“Pupils follow an academic curriculum that provides them with a good breadth and depth of knowledge. This serves them well for the next stages in their lives.”

OFSTED 2017

Our Values

ALL WHO WORK AT THE SCHOOL ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Promote the highest achievement in our students
- Be committed to excellent teaching in a well-ordered, stimulating learning environment
- Build strong relationships with students and each other
- Continuously evaluate the progress learners are making
- Demonstrate and articulate social and moral values and respect for others
- Challenge fixed mindsets because we believe that through focused effort and constructive feedback individual (and collective) capability develops
- Listen to student voice and act on it
- Celebrate a broad range of achievements: academic, creative, artistic, sporting, leadership

History of the School

William Ellis School was first established in 1862 in Gospel Oak and catered for girls and boys. In 1889 it was reconstituted as a boys' secondary school. The school moved to its present site, backing onto Hampstead Heath, in 1937.

The school has been fully comprehensive since 1984. We have been part of the highly regarded LaSWAP consortium for more than 30 years. The school has a long history of success and in 1997 became one of the three boys' schools in the country to earn specialist Language College status.

William Ellis is unusual in being a non-denominational 'Voluntary Aided' school. There are not many of these schools, and they are mostly attached to the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, a Jewish community or a Livery Company. We stand on our own, supported by the William Ellis and Birkbeck Schools Trust, a registered charity whose funds are solely for the purpose of assisting the school. The Trustees work closely with the Governors and appoint the Foundation Governors.

"The headteacher is widely respected throughout the school community and provides good leadership. He is supported by some able senior leaders. Teaching, learning and assessment are led particularly well."

OFSTED 2017

William Ellis: the School's Founder

The school's founder, William Ellis, was born on 27th January 1800. He was respected in the City as a man of outstanding business ability and acumen and he combined this with a gentle manner and perfect politeness.

Not only was William Ellis successful in business, he was also distinguished in two fields of learning: education and economics. He espoused intellectual truth and upheld political liberalism, religious tolerance and legal reform. He became absorbed in the ways and means to promote 'progression of the human race in the career of improvement' and the need for a national system of education.

He founded his first school in 1848. By 1852 he had founded four more, all at his own expense. They were named after George Birkbeck, a man greatly admired by Ellis, the founder of the Mechanics Institute (now called Birkbeck College, University of London).

Our school was the last he founded but unlike all the others it bore Ellis' name. This was in October 1862.

William Ellis stood out as an innovator on a grand scale in founding schools where the sciences, including social sciences, formed the main basis of tuition and the development of the faculty of reason was regarded as the basic function of education. He valued, as he himself said, his conscience and his feelings for human wellbeing above all else.

The link between Birkbeck College remains and it has representation on the school's governing body.

Pastoral Care

On entry to the school students are placed in a tutor group where they usually remain until Year 11. The Form Tutor is the key person in the pastoral system, knowing each student best through daily contact and links with home. Our Pastoral Leaders and Heads of Year lead the tutor teams and are key links for parents and carers, they have oversight of students' academic progress and personal development.

Smooth transition from primary to secondary school is seen as vitally important and we place great emphasis on this. We have close links with our main primary schools. In the last term of primary school, every new student is visited in his primary school, their parents and carers have an interview with the Headteacher or another senior member of staff, and our new students are invited to spend a day at William Ellis School with their new class and form tutor. We have an annual summer school for our new Year 7 students.

The school's support team includes a professional counsellor, parent support worker, lead learning mentor, student engagement officer, two student engagement assistants, English as an additional language coordinator, special educational needs coordinator and senior staff. They work closely with Pastoral Leaders and Heads of Year to ensure we are providing targeted support to students who need it.

The School's Houses

To facilitate strong and constructive relationships between students of different ages and between staff and students the school is divided into five houses: Burgh, Fenton, Keats, Lauderdale and Willow. They are named after local buildings or houses of historic interest. Every student and member of staff belongs to one of the five houses. Each House is led by the House Leader (staff), House Captain and House Vice Captain (students), who work with staff and students to develop and establish the House identity and to seek opportunities for House competitions and challenges which may include social, academic, fund raising and sporting activities. The Houses provide opportunities for healthy competition and friendly rivalry and engender loyalty and a sense of belonging to a wider group than a form or year. The Houses and the School Council are interlinked; both provide leadership opportunities for students. It is through the School Council that students inform school decisions.

Behaviour

We expect the best from all members of the school community. High standards of citizenship and courtesy are expected at all times so that the school is a safe and pleasant place to be. These expectations are reflected in assemblies, displays and awards. We have a clear code of conduct and students are required to behave and work properly. We ask parents to support the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour.

The school aims to offer a purposeful and well-ordered learning environment, believing that the most effective discipline is self-discipline. Where poor behaviour does arise the school has a consequences system which stresses the need for students to take responsibility for their actions and to understand how their actions affect others. The needs of the individual are balanced with those of the community, and discipline is set within the context of support for the individual and pastoral care.

Our rewards system celebrates the positive impact of good behaviour on learning, on individual students and on the community as a whole.

Rewards

We believe in celebrating and rewarding effort and achievement as the most effective way to motivate students towards success. Excellence and endeavour are important in whatever the students at William Ellis are involved, be it in the classroom, the creative and expressive arts or the sports. Students are awarded praise, electronically recorded, for demonstrating positive attributes, namely: being responsible, being reflective, being resourceful, being creative and taking risks with learning, showing persistence and resilience; being respectful; working well with others; communicating clearly as well as for good homework, extra-curricular participation and representing the school.

"Social inclusion is at the heart of the school's ethos and culture. The school makes good efforts to nurture all pupils, regardless of their background."

OFSTED 2017

Curriculum

William Ellis is a comprehensive school which aims to provide each student with the opportunity to develop their full potential; we seek to create an environment where everyone can flourish. There is a solid academic core to the curriculum and we combine the traditional values of hard work and academic learning with up to date methods and content. We believe that students achieve their full potential when they enjoy their work and find it stimulating and challenging. The school has the advantage of a stable and well qualified staff, all of whom are focused on teaching and learning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides all students with a series of educational experiences which will form the basis for further development. It is increasingly personalised with a variety of pathways offering acceleration as well as additional support. In 2017 we introduced an enhanced Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education programme delivered through dedicated lessons, cross-curricular learning days, tutorials and the outdoor learning programme. It equips students with a sound understanding of risk with the knowledge and skills to make safe and informed decisions preparing them for successful adult life and active citizenship.

Across the school the curriculum is underpinned by a framework which develops the skills and attributes that, together with the functional skills of English, mathematics and digital technology, are essential to success in learning, life and work. It is skills and attributes such as organisation; teamwork; taking responsibility; persevering and managing own learning, performance and work that will enable young people to enter work and adult life as confident and capable individuals.

Key Stage Three

All boys follow a broad and balanced curriculum which includes mathematics, English, the sciences, music, art, craft and design, computing, drama, PE, modern foreign languages, history, geography and RE. Courses are designed to assist each boy to achieve his personal best in terms of progress and academic achievement. Many boys study two foreign languages in Years 8 and 9.

Years 7 to 9

Key Stage Four

In Year 9 boys and their parents have the opportunity to discuss with the staff the courses for Key Stage 4. The aim is for each student to have a curriculum pathway that continues to extend and challenge, and enables development of skills and knowledge in subjects that interest the student and fits with his future sixth form and career plans.

There are normally two years of the GCSE course. All boys follow courses in mathematics, English and the sciences, which may be taken for double or triple certification depending on interest and aptitude.

Students continue with at least one foreign language (French, Spanish or German) and many pursue two. In addition boys have up to three additional options in a variety of academic and vocational courses. Options at Key Stage 4 include: art, graphics, business and enterprise, computer science, drama, geography, history, computer science music and PE. We keep the curriculum under review - for example catering will be taught when the new facilities are completed.

Religious education is taught as part of the statutory curriculum and broadly considers contemporary moral issues and complements our Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education programme. All courses provide a sound basis for progression to post 16 courses. A large number of our students stay on in our thriving sixth form.

Years 10 to 11

Sixth Form

"Music, sport and outdoor learning are important areas of the school's life. These all play an important part in developing pupils' confidence and resilience."

OFSTED 2017

Years 12 to 13

Our co-educational sixth form with Parliament Hill School is now based in the fabulous new joint sixth form building on Highgate Road. The joint sixth form is part of the LaSWAP consortium that includes two other local schools La Sainte Union and Acland Burghley. The four schools work together to offer a wide range of courses and enrichment opportunities; across the consortium there are over 40 A and AS level courses as well as a comprehensive range of vocational options. Students benefit from continuing contact with teachers who have known them for five years, but enjoy the excitement of a new beginning in what many of them see as a more adult environment.

Students have a tutor, responsible for their academic and personal development. We see individual guidance as vital to success, and this begins early in Year 11 as we help boys choose their sixth form courses. Parents are kept well informed and, in addition to the scheduled Parents' Evenings, tutors are encouraged to make contact by telephone or email whenever necessary.

Most students who complete their education with us progress to higher education. Our long tradition and experience in preparation for university entrance means that we are able to guide each individual through the selection process.

In addition to the academic work there is a full programme of enrichment courses in the sixth form covering sport, music, drama, current affairs and health education. Community involvement and leadership is encouraged within and beyond the school. Sixth form students have every opportunity to take on responsibility and involve themselves in the work of the whole school; some assist at games, others help with paired reading, others in clubs and activities. All gain enormously from doing so.

For further information please contact the Director of Sixth Form and visit the LaSWAP website www.laswap.camden.sch.uk

Three areas where William Ellis stands apart

MODERN LANGUAGES

In 1997, the school gained Language College status under the Specialist School Programme. It is one of only three boys' schools which gained this specialism. Although the Specialist School Programme has now finished we are continuing to look at ways of developing the learning opportunities in this important area. Languages are skills for life, promoting understanding, trade and employment. Languages help us be better world citizens. William Ellis School seeks excellence in languages for all.

As well as the curriculum offer, we encourage students to pass GCSEs in community languages such as Arabic, Bengali, Persian, Portuguese and Turkish. Mandarin is taught as an extra-curricular activity and students have the option to take GCSE Chinese.

MUSIC

The school has a long musical tradition and the facilities and opportunities are excellent. In terms of admissions up to 10% of places will be offered to applicants with musical aptitude.

The school has a team of visiting teachers who teach the full range of orchestral instruments as well as percussion, DJ-ing, music technology and music theory. There are six practice rooms, which can be used before and after school, and music technology suites with the latest music technology software.

Over the year there are a number of concerts in which a variety of groups and bands perform. Every week specialist instrumental tutors lead ensembles including: String and Wind ensemble, String Quartet, Symphony Orchestra, Clarinet and Saxophone ensembles, Choir, Big Band, Junior Brass Ensemble, Senior Brass Ensemble and Contemporary Ensemble Coaching.

OUTDOOR LEARNING AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

We believe that outdoor learning and physical education have particularly important roles in the education of boys and the development of the "whole person". Through sport students acquire an understanding of fair play and participate in healthy competition. Through outdoor learning we nurture an awareness and understanding of the natural environment and foster leadership, collaboration and resourcefulness. The outdoor learning programme helps mark our boys' journey from child to young adult and provides them with opportunities to gain independence and reflect on progress.

Boys have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sporting activities and they will learn to lead a healthy and active lifestyle which will benefit them throughout life.

The school benefits from excellent PE facilities. In addition to the large, well-equipped, four-court sports hall and multi gym, we are adjacent to Hampstead Heath and its extensive playing fields. Opportunities exist for students to enjoy a range of sporting activities in curriculum time as well as outside of lesson time. These include rugby, football, cricket, table tennis, badminton, basketball, cross-country and volleyball. Team games and individual sports are encouraged.

Beyond the Classroom

We believe that the learning that takes place in class is the most important part of what we do but it is not the only thing. Students are actively encouraged to get involved in a range of activities beyond the classroom. The Mill is an invaluable resource in our extra-curricular provision.

Involvement in extra-curricular activities benefits students' education; it enhances their enjoyment of school and provides ways in which students can become fully involved in school life. It is a strong feature of the school's philosophy to provide a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment activities, particularly in art, music, dance, drama, and sport, as well as residential trips in the UK and abroad.

Extra-curricular activities provide opportunities to develop leadership and team working skills as well as characteristics such as resilience and resourcefulness. We encourage all our students to fulfil their potential in whatever area of interest they have.

We have a full extra-curricular sporting programme. Clubs exist to help students who have special interests or talents, including art, drama, music, chess and computer programming. Students are encouraged to join in and help to run these activities. Our library and learning resource centre is open before and after school.

The school has a well-established tradition of organising journeys and visits. Recent journeys have included ski trips to Europe, study tours to China and Germany and visits to the First World War sites in France. Closer to home there are visits to museums, galleries, theatres, sporting events and academic institutions in London.

THE MILL

The school is fortunate in having a residential centre, The Mill, set in 10 acres of the Surrey Hills, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Mill recently celebrated 80 years of use as a school field centre with the opening of a new extension in July 2011. It began life as a watermill before being bought by St Marylebone Grammar School in 1930. When St Marylebone closed in 1981 the Trustees transferred the benefits of the trust to the students of William Ellis School. WESPA, Old Elysians and other volunteers play an important part in the general maintenance of the site.

Time spent at The Mill is a highlight of many generations of William Ellis boys' lives. Every boy in year 7 spends a week at The Mill in the summer term. On the annual Year 8 and Year 9 camps boys engage in increasingly challenging activities. Departments are encouraged to use its facilities, including a classroom, a laboratory and a games room, for residential studies.

Working with Parents and Carers

We value close links with the home, creating a partnership that supports the learning and development of our students effectively. Parents and students are kept informed through the student planner, reports, review days, profiles and parents' evenings. The student planner is used for recording homework and provides an accessible means of communication between home and school. Along with a regular newsletter, our website and letters about specific matters we use text and email to involve parents more closely with the school's life. Parents are sent annual written reports and termly progress updates; progress information can also be accessed online. There is a parent-teacher meeting and a separate parent information evening every year for each age group. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact teachers whenever they wish.

WESPA

The William Ellis School Parents Association, WESPA, is an association of parents, teachers, support staff, former students and friends of the school.

Parents form the backbone of WESPA, and the active members give tremendous support to the school community, including through fund-raising. Thousands of pounds are raised each year, some in the course of friendly social events. Members also help at school events, run a school clothes shop, and assist with estate maintenance at The Mill.

All students at the school benefit directly from WESPA's previous fund-raising activities; many of the school's facilities were built with the aid of parental fund-raising. Parents and carers are strongly encouraged to become involved in WESPA to continue their outstanding work for the benefit of their own sons and future generations of William Ellis students.

Our elected parent governors liaise closely with WESPA and its programme of activities.

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