



Get in touch: williamellispa@gmail.com Twitter: @WESparentsassoc • Instagram: [william_ellis_school_pa](https://www.instagram.com/william_ellis_school_pa)

Dear WES Parents and Carers

Welcome to the February edition of the WESPA Newsletter. Read on for the latest news, how to get the most out of life at WES, dates for the

diary and more. If you would like to contribute, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing us at williamellispa@gmail.com.

Team WESPA

Spotlight

We caught up with **Evie Bown**, WES Head of Modern Foreign Languages, following her trip to Andalucia with the Year 10 students

Who are you and what do you do at WES?

I am Evie Bown, Head of Modern Foreign Languages at WES and I teach French and Spanish. This term I have also enjoyed taking on additional responsibility as part of the SLT team as one of the Associate Assistant Headteachers. I'm also a Year 13 tutor.

What does a regular day for you involve at WES?

No two days are the same at WES, but for me they always start with the same thing, coffee! Most of my time



WES students teaching in a local primary school

during the school day is spent with my classes, teaching. When I'm not teaching, or on duty, the rest of my time will really depend on the demands of the day. Most of the strategic work that I do happens

before or after the school day as it's a little more peaceful then.

What fun things have happened recently or are coming up for the department?

I have just returned from La Cala del Moral in Andalucia, Spain. Miss Yianni and I took our Year 10 Spanish students with help from Mr Pomeyie (Head of Geography) who is also a keen Spanish speaker. We had an incredible time; the boys were lucky to watch and take part in flamenco, meet local Spanish students, try traditional tapas, play beach sports... and much more!

We also have a trip to Boulogne, France, planned

for Year 7 in March when they will visit a chocolate factory and a snail farm.

Languages at WES are very popular, why do you think that is?

Languages are for all at WES. It really is as simple as that. The legacy of the school being a Languages College in the past has carried forward a strong sense of the value of learning languages, meaning that we are able to continue with such high numbers all through Year 7-13.

Our Double Linguist programme which allows students to take two GCSE languages without having to

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PE Extra Curricular Timetable Jan - Feb					
Before School 7:30 – 8:25	Basketball Team Training Mr Bossinga	Basketball Team Training Mr Bossinga	Basketball Team Training Mr Bossinga	Basketball Team Training Mr Bossinga	Basketball Team Training Mr Bossinga
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
After School 3:20pm – 4:20pm	Fitness Mr Szymanski	KS3 & KS4 Basketball Mr Bossinga	Table Tennis Coach Rachel	GCSE PE Practical Mr Szymanski	Trampolining Mr Court
	PE Club Mr Keeshan	KS3 Football Mr Levitt	Year 7 & 8 Rugby Mr Levitt & Mr Szymanski	GCSE PE Homework/catch up session Mr Levitt	

If you want to attend a club, come to the PE changing rooms after school and register with the lead teacher
You must wear your full William Ellis PE kit to take part in a club
Make sure you tell your parent/carers that you will be staying in school until 4:20

Spotlight

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drop another subject is also a big factor in our results and high uptake. We work hard to make languages accessible for all students and inspire a love of learning them. The opportunities that languages bring you are endless, we make sure the boys know this.

What is the best way for our boys to get involved with languages at school?

There is extra-curricular Mandarin club on Wednesdays at lunch time and after school. We also encourage them to take part in competitions for European Day of Languages and the Spelling Bee practice in Year 7. We have plans for a foreign language film club... watch this space!

We will be restarting the Language Leaders pro-

gramme in the new year – it’s a fantastic opportunity for Year 10 students to practise their skills by teaching at local primary schools.

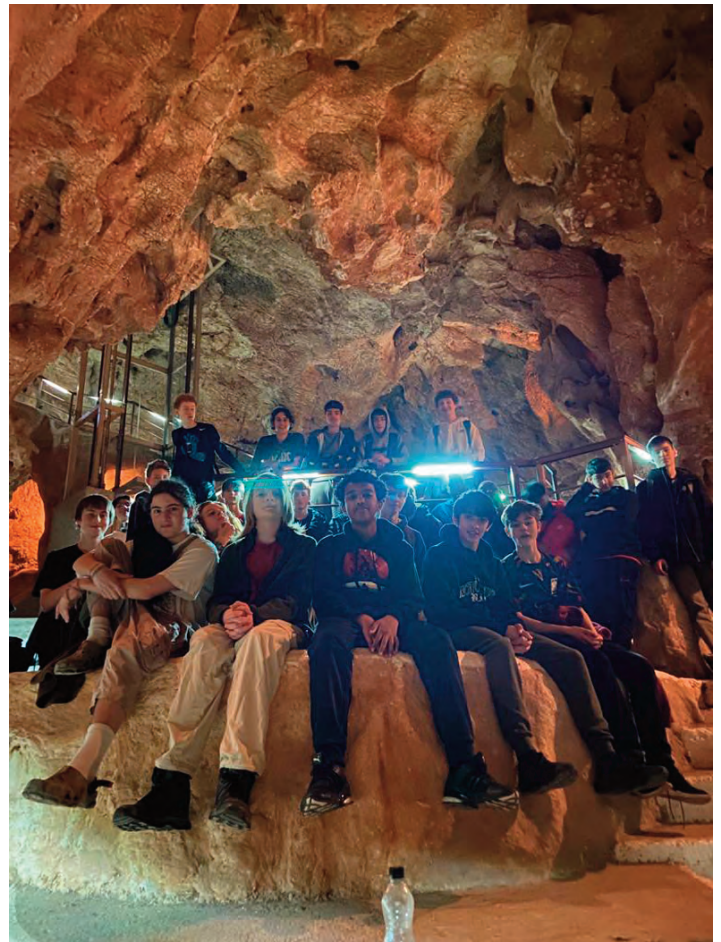
Tell us something fun we might not know about you!

Through the WES staff football team, I have recently re-found a keen interest in football (having abandoned it for netball for many years!). I once scored the winning penalty to take my primary school onto winning the Hampshire County U12 tournament. Yet to score a winning goal for WES but I’ll keep trying!

Thank you Evie, it’s great to hear about the trips and to hear such palpable enthusiasm for languages at WES! We will look out for your first winning goal...



Our Escuela la Playa group with their course certificates



Above & below: Scenes from La Cala del Moral in Andalucia



"Behaviour is always a talking point in the school community. I was really pleased to see that as part of my son's homework this week he had been asked to review his experience of school. (I am pleased to report it was positive!) And it is great to hear from Evie Bown in the Spotlight section about our sons' mentoring primary school children in modern languages. For this edition I spoke to **our Chair of Governors Selina Skipwith** to find out a little bit more about how William Ellis promotes a positive approach to life at school." — **Al Mobbs, WESPA Chair**

For the new parents reading who haven't met you yet, please can you tell me a little bit about your path to becoming Chair of Governors?

Accidental! I never planned to be a governor let alone Chair. I work in the arts and had curated an exhibition which had a number of free school workshops and I asked Mr White, the previous headteacher, if they would be of interest to WES.

My elder son at the time was in year 8 (now finished LaSWAP). Ms Oskaya, the School Development Officer at the time, persuaded me to apply to be a Foundation Governor with responsibility for the arts.

The school has always been very committed to offering a rich and rounded curriculum including art, music and drama, and with arts education in decline across the country I felt it was important to make sure there was someone on the governing board to champion them and make sure all boys had access to them.

The governing board then decided I should become Chair and I accepted the role during Covid in 2020. It can be a lot of work as a volunteer but it is very rewarding and never dull.

My favourite part is coming into school to hear the views of the boys and I love it when the School Council comes to present to governors. It is important that we hear directly from the boys on what they think the school does well and where they would like improvement.

As Chair of governors, one of

CHALLENGE PARTNERS is an education charity, led by practitioners, through which schools collaborate to improve each other and the education system as a whole, so all children benefit. The Review is a three-day rigorous peer evaluation of teaching and learning, curriculum and outcomes, and leadership at all levels. The report can be found on the school site and includes some very encouraging feedback on all areas of the school:

"Students have many leadership opportunities in the school. These add to their responsibility and maturity. A notable example can be seen in a Deep Learning Day which was planned and led by students to tackle misogyny and derogatory language."

"Positive relationships are a strength of the school. The atmosphere of mutual respect is palpable in most classrooms, which also contributes to encouraging productive learning behaviours."

your responsibilities is behaviour. It is a many faceted thing – how do you approach this area?

Governors are assigned link roles where we take the lead on a specific area. Mine is behaviour and safeguarding. We provide the school with support and challenge and then report back to the rest of the governing board.

In October, along with other governors, I came into school to take part in a behaviour review conducted by independent education professionals.

During the day we spoke to different groups of boys and staff, sat in lessons, walked the corridors, observed lunchtime routines in the canteen and playground and spoke to the senior leadership team.

It is very helpful and essential that we have first hand experience and we will be repeating this process after half term.

Before Christmas I came in

for the most recent Challenge Partners Review (see box) and last week I took part in some student voice work with a group of boys in Years 7 to 10 to hear their views on school life including behaviour. Their feedback was discussed at our governing board meeting last week.

These regular governor visits and external independent reviews mean we build up an accurate picture of how the boys experience school.

One of the pieces of work that is happening is a renewed focus on rewarding positive behaviour and the boys have been telling us their ideas on what rewards they want, some more doable than others!

Primary schools are much smaller than secondary schools and there is much more of a school gate culture. As our boys get older and take more responsibility for themselves, what advice would you give to parents, guardians and carers on their relationship with the school?

Get involved if you can. As a parent my first involvement was through WESPA and it was really invaluable to meet parents with boys in my son's year and older years.

Because you don't have the school gate culture of primary school, WESPA provides a great network where you can share views and ask each other for advice. If you can't make the meetings, come to the events.

In terms of relationship with the school, the first points of contact are your son's Form Tutor and then his Head of Year. Although William Ellis might feel big compared to primary school, it is small compared to other secondary schools. Our boys are quickly known by name and you will get to know the staff. Did you know that there is a member of staff who attended WES?

Thank you Selina, it is great to have an insight into what is going on behind the scenes and on behalf of WESPA, thank you for your time and commitment to our boys and school community. The Challenge Partners review looks very positive. Is there anything else you wanted to add?

If you want to be more involved there will be another Parent Governor election happening in May and we will also be advertising for a Foundation Governor. The school will send out details and I will also email parents who have previously expressed interest.

■ For more information on our governors visit the page on the school website here:

<https://www.williamellis.camden.sch.uk/governors>

Dear fellow parents, guardians and carers,

My name is Al and I am a Year 7 dad. It is with great pleasure that I will be taking over from Fiona as Chair of our parents' association WESPA.

Thank you to Fiona and the current Trustees Juliet, Azeb and Zehra for all their energy and time.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, their work and that of previous committee members, WESPA has raised considerable funds over the years to support our boys in all sorts of ways.

Most recently funds raised by the 3K cross country run made it possible for the school to buy a trampoline (so if you happen to see your son 15 feet in the air whilst walking past the school, do not be alarmed!). There are many other exciting initiatives underway.

WESPA is an association dedicated to supporting our boys and strengthening our community.

Anyone with a child at William Ellis School is automatically a member.

The last few years have been incredibly challenging but I believe that as a community united we can help each other.

At the beginning of the year WESPA saw a change of line up and in our January meeting we said a huge thank you to retiring Chair Fiona and welcomed Al to the role. Here is his letter to parents if you missed it



Selina Skipwith (Chair of Governors), Izzy Jones (Headteacher) and Al Mobbs (Chair of WESPA)

My son joined the school in 2022 and already William Ellis has opened up a whole new part of the community for me – from rugby coaching grandfathers in Canteloves Gardens to Old Elysian neighbours – William Ellis School, it appears, is everywhere.

There are many ways to get involved with WESPA and school life – from joining a WhatsApp group, to coming to one of the many events in school or socials outside or taking a lead role on the committee.

The WESPA initiatives are all run by volunteers so

please do get in touch if you're able to pitch in. It is really easy and fun to get involved and you can contribute as much or as little as you have time for. The more of us helping

out, the more we can do to help our boys – every contribution makes an enormous difference.

I have often heard that getting involved is much harder at secondary school but at William Ellis, this has not been my experience.

Every time I visit the school I am struck by the warmth of the teachers and staff and the positive energy of our boys.

When my father in law dropped in on a snow day last term he was greeted warmly, given a chair and brought a cup of coffee by one of our sons (thank you to whoever that was). These small acts of kindness go a long way.

I look forward to meeting lots more parents, making more friends and taking WESPA forward into its next chapter. Please do say hello at a school event, over email or even walking down the high street.

Al

Al Mobbs, Chair WESPA

williamellispa@gmail.com

What is WESPA?

WESPA is a charity (no. 1158812), run by parents, carers and friends of William Ellis School.

WESPA is open to all in our school community, and is a fun way to get involved in school life.

- We help raise extra funding for the school, to provide resources for the boys.
- We run social events for parents and children, to help facilitate the growth of our school community.

- We encourage as many people as we can to get involved, to create stronger bonds and ties between home and school.

■ If you haven't been to a WESPA meeting yet, if you think it's not for you, or you're just not sure how you can help, you can always email williamellispa@gmail.com to find out more about us and how you can get involved.

Sound and light

In other news a huge thank you to the newly founded music committee who have recently donated six guitars to the music department.

All our boys learn guitar basics in Year 7 as part of class music and will be able to build on this knowledge throughout their time at WES.

In our last meeting we also agreed to fund new lighting equipment for the drama department. The department will have new gels, spots, fresnels, mixer desk and cables and these will arrive just in time to help with Drama GCSE.

2023

New Parents' Evening at WES – 6th March 2023 (for incoming boys 2023)

WESPA Meeting at WES – 14th March 2023 7pm

Table Top Sale – 18th March 2023

Working Weekend at the Mill (pictured) – 31st March-2nd April 2023 (<https://themillforestgreen.co.uk>)

WESPA Quiz – April 2023

Arts and Crafts Fair – 14th May 2023 tbc

International Event – June 2023 tbc

Dates for the Diary



The Inside Track

Following our chat with Chair of Governors, Selina Skipwith, we wanted to understand a little more about the School Council. In this edition we spoke to **Pierre** (Year 10) to give us the topline on the council

Can you tell us a little bit about the school council and what it does?

The school Council gives WES students a voice and a way to express their opinion on issues like the behaviour system, praise points, play-ground management and diversity.

Why did you want to join?

I wanted to join because I want to represent my form and their views so that I can help make the school a better place for all of us.

How do you get involved with the council?

I ask my form what they

think could be improved in the school, and then talk about these issues in the council meetings.

The council is made of reps from all the forms and together we can decide a possible solution to that challenge or idea.

We then speak to Mr. Parry (Head of Year 11 and Careers) who is able to help implement our solutions with Mr. Lane (Deputy Headteacher). If you would like to suggest an idea, just let your form rep know.

What's on the Council agenda at the moment?

Making sure the toilets are used properly, zoning the playground to make it fair for both the boys that want to play sports, and the boys that want to spend break in a more quiet environment, and the mobile phone policy.

What advice would you give to get the most out of your time at WES?

There are some great facilities at William Ellis like clubs, music, sport, so make sure to take advantage of all of them.

Thank you Pierre.

It is great to hear more about the platform WES boys have to voice and take responsibility for day to day life at school.

And thank you to the School Council for the invitation to sit in on a meeting. We look forward to finding out more about how WESPA and the School Council can work together.

As Pierre points out in his last answer, there are lots of clubs at WES that run before and after school and at lunch. They are a great way to hang out with friends and try new things. All boys are welcome and they are free.

Camden Foodbank



THANK YOU for all the donations for the Camden Foodbank over the winter break. Your generosity is hugely appreciated. If you still would still like to donate, cash or items can be given directly to Camden Foodbank.

Locations and opening times can be found at <https://camden.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

6 ways to support WESPA

■ COME AND JOIN IN! –

It is always great to meet up with fellow parents and carers and meet new ones too.

■ SHARE YOUR IDEAS –

WESPA is run by parents for our boys and each other. All thoughts and ideas are very welcome.

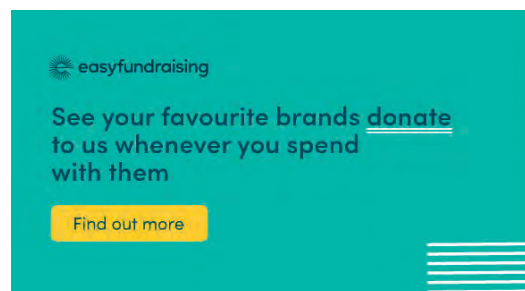
Just email williamellispa@gmail.com

■ VOLUNTEER –

The WES community is huge and diverse. Whether lending a hand at an event, joining a working weekend at The Mill, offering your professional skills to a school project, or covering one of the central WESPA roles, every contribution benefits our community and is hugely appreciated.

■ RUN A FUNDRAISER –

If you have any previous experience or want to



team up with a fellow parent and create something new, this is a great way to raise funds for the school.

■ **DONATE** – Donations to WESPA are very welcome. You can donate using the fundraising platform GIVEY at <https://www.givey.com/williamellispa-school-parents-association>. If your son has outgrown his uniform please consider donating these items to our regular uniform sales. Good condition uniform can be dropped at the

school office.

■ SHOP THROUGH

EasyFundraising – If you haven't signed up yet, it's easy and completely FREE! 7,400 brands will donate to us when you use EasyFundraising to do your everyday online shopping – at no extra cost to you! Sign up https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/williamellispa/?invite=1KH7PM%26referral-campaign=c2s%26utm_campaign=admin-trigger%26utm_content=srt

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