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Dear WES Parents and Carers

Welcome to our July 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'd like to contribute, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing williamellispa@gmail.com.

Team WESPA

For all previous issues, please visit sites.google.com/view/williamellispa/news

Spotlight

Further on in this newsletter you will read news of various events and in particular the success of the WES Culture Day & International Evening. This was in no small part down to the energy and enthusiasm of **Mariana Danova-Balabhadra**.

The rich cultural diversity of our school community is something to be celebrated and Al Mobbs wanted to find out a little more about Mariana's work within school.

Who are you and what do you do at WES?

I am the EMA (Ethnic Minority Achievement) Coordinator at the school. My role at William Ellis School is to ensure that all students whose first language is not English have full access to the curriculum and achieve to the best of their abilities.

This is a highly heterogeneous group of students, some of whom were born in the UK but grew up using other languages at home, who have arrived throughout the academic year with varying levels of proficiency in English, who have had limited or interrupted schooling, or have come from conflict zones.

To make sure newly arrived EAL (English as an Additional Language) learners have a smooth start and settle in well at WES, I carry out initial assessments of their level of English and assign them buddies who look after them in the transition period and help them form friendships.



Marina Danova-Balabhadra with WES winners at the Bengali Workers Association Awards

I also put together induction programmes for those EAL learners who have had little experience of schooling where they are introduced to key skills and key concepts in different

subject areas. Besides teaching English as an additional language, I devise and adapt resources which aid EAL learners to take part in lessons across the curriculum in a meaningful

and rewarding way.

I wholeheartedly advocate for students to continue practising their home language and encourage all EAL students to take GCSE exams in their mother tongue. In the past few years we have entered candidates for GCSEs in Arabic, Bengali, Mandarin, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Greek, Polish, Russian, and Turkish.

As parents can play an important role in students' education, I try to engage and make parents of EAL learners active participants in their child's school life by providing them with information about the education system in the UK, expectations for learning and conduct.

For parents who do not speak English or have limited proficiency in English, we aim to provide translation and interpreting by our sixth form students who share the same language. In this way, parents feel empowered to continue to guide their

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Spotlight

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children making the right choices about education.

Working collaboratively with external organisations like SYDRC (Somali Youth Development and Resource Centre), we have been able to provide awareness workshops for parents of certain communities and to put in place mentoring for students to enhance their engagement, wellbeing and aspirations for the future.

What does a regular day for you at WES involve?

As I am also a Year 11 form tutor and a Humanities teacher to Year 8, my day is busy revolving around pastoral duties, teaching History or Geography lessons, providing individual or group ESOL sessions for beginner EAL learners and offering in-class support in subjects which prove of most challenge to these students.

My responsibilities as an EAL teacher take into account every possible aspect of pupils' complex lives and therefore involve continuous liaison with form tutors and subject teachers of the EAL learners as well as their parents.

Morning, lunch or after school support with reading/phonics sessions and support for homework is also part of my working day.

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



The summer term started with a celebratory event at Surma centre in Camden where the Bengali Workers Association presented awards to the highest achieving Bangladeshi students across Camden Borough in the GCSE exams in summer 2022.

Sabbir Yousuf, Yamin

Kashim, Muhainnul Islam and Ijaj Ahmed were among the recipients of awards, with Sabbir taking the first prize and Yamin third prize.

We recently held an International Evening event which proved to be a great success as it was the first since before the pandemic. It was amazing to see a long-standing tradition at WES being revived and everyone – students, staff and parents coming together to celebrate the many cultures represented at the school.

This was definitely a testimony of how proud we

all are of the school's diversity.

What is the best way for our boys to get involved in events like International Evening at school?

At William Ellis School we encourage students to be proud of their ethnic

background and to maintain the fluency in their mother tongue.

Keeping their cultural identity alive through their own music, dance, poetry and spoken word can be a great way to showcase their roots and diverse backgrounds.

From setting up informative stalls with cultural displays, to bringing in delicious foods from their country, or performing national dances and poems – WES boys can pick anything that represents 'home' to them and teach their peers about it.

Tell us something fun we might not know about you!

Not sure about a fun thing but maybe something that makes me different – I love spring more than summer and like dark chocolate more than ice-cream.

Thank you Mariana. Hearing about how William Ellis School is able to include everybody and how 6th Form students are able to help younger students is heartwarming – it brings into sharp focus our motto 'Rather use than fame'.

School News – Out and About ...

Prize vids

Keen readers of the Camden New Journal will have seen the article celebrating the success of our students in Camden Youth Safety Week.

Students from William Ellis School and Parliament Hill School were presented first prize in the Camden Youth Safety Awards by Sir Keir Starmer for their joint film *What It Means to Be a Teen* in 2023.

This follows the Counter

Don't Cancel project made in collaboration with Middlesex University that also received a prize and has been praised by the DfE. You can watch both films here:

What It Means to Be a Teen:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN0Yo98jSBA&t=2s>

Counter Don't Cancel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oka5QB3Qlc>

CNJ article:

<https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/school-sets-out-to-beat-online-misogyny>



Year 10 art show at Lauderdale House

Ninety-five Year 10 students from Parliament Hill and William Ellis Schools spent six weeks during the spring term working with artists Alison Lam and Vicky Hussein to create ceramic, bronze and Gelli prints. These pieces were inspired by the collections of plants and artefacts of James Yates, a Victorian resident of Lauderdale House as well as the natural environment of Waterlow Park. The private view that took place on June 12 was a lovely community event, celebrating the work of the students. The exhibition was opened by Islington's new Mayor, Nazma Rahman (pictured below). More information and pictures here:

<https://www.lauderdalehouse.org.uk/whats-on/curiosities-exhibition>



League champs

Huge congratulations to both our Year 7 boys and Year 8 boys for topping both the football and basketball leagues this season – a huge achievement.

Congratulations also to Corey (8L) and Idriss (7K) who represented Camden in the London Athletics Championships. Idriss came home a double medal winner and both set new school records.



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.

The Inside Track

Each edition we interview one of our boys to get under the hood of life at the school – from the inside. This edition, Al Mobbs spoke to **Monty Booi** (Y10) to find out a little more about music life at school.

What instruments do you play and how did you get started?

I play alto saxophone and I got started when I joined a youth orchestra (<https://www.platformislington.org.uk/about>).

I was playing ukulele and I sat next to two brothers who were a lot older than me. They both played the saxophone.

I wanted to play too but I was eight years old and the instrument was really big for me. But I managed to get a good sound out of it, even then.

I really enjoyed your performance at the International Evening – it was great to hear you playing with your younger sister in front of a packed hall. Can you tell me more about all the different ways you can

perform at William Ellis School and beyond?

Whether you want to perform in or out of school, I would advise talking to any of the music teachers at school. Maybe you could consider joining one of the music groups.

There is something for everyone! (Many of the WES music teachers are involved with Camden and Islington Music Services and are a great source of knowledge for other music going on locally).

How do you get involved in music groups at school and do you have any personal favourites?

I really like Big Band, I play jazz and I really enjoy improvising. The WES Big Band Group rehearses

after school and the repertoire is varied.

As a musician, I am a little biased but the music GCSE course looks really fun. Monty, I know you have chosen this as a subject, how do you find it?

Music is one of my favourite subjects in school because of all the variety and choices you can make in the subject. It is technical and creative at the same time.

(See the news box on this page for more information on the visit by professional musician Tom Piggott-Smith.)

What tips would you give to any boys wanting to get involved with music at WES?

If you want to get involved in Music with

WES, talk to any of the music teachers. You can ask about using the practice rooms at lunchtimes for your own music or joining a group.

And finally, in a future vision of music at WES, what would you love to see happening?

In the future I would like to see more opportunities to perform in school. Maybe some students would like to do a little performance before an assembly or for a more formal event in front of teachers and parents.

Thank you Monty, it's always great to hear from students themselves and on your last request – watch this space. I know that our Head of Music Mr Singleton has lots of ideas!

Musical feedback

In May our music department welcomed violinist and arranger Tom Piggott-Smith to speak to GCSE and A-Level students.

Tom, a former scholar at the world leading Royal College of Music is one of the UK's busiest musicians, working across all genres from the concert platform, the National Theatre, to recording studios like Abbey Road where he regularly leads orchestras for Hollywood blockbuster films and television.

Students received feedback on their compositions, got to hear about his personal journey in music, his current projects, what motivates him, and perhaps most inspiring of all, Tom was able to give a lot of advice on how to succeed in the industry.



Our global families

Last month also saw the return of the International Evening and what a night it was too. It was heartwarming to see so many families celebrating together in school and to taste, watch and listen to the amazing array of cultures within the extended William Ellis School family. Thank you to everybody who came, contributed and shared – it will long be remembered!



CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY
William Ellis School speaks 40 languages but together with one voice speaks these five words: Responsibility, Resilience, Respectfulness, Resourcefulness and Reflectiveness.

'If we continue to think and live as if we belong only to different cultures and different religions, with separate missions and goals, we will always be in self-defeating competition with each other. Once we realize we are all members of humanity, we will want to compete in the spirit of love.' - Muhammad Ali



On a new note

International Evening was also the first gig for our brand new WESPA Choir.

Under the baton of WES Head of Music, Ollie Singleton, parents and teachers joined our boys to perform a beautiful rendition of an Icelandic folk song.

The choir will return to support our boys at the Summer Concert at Lauderdale House.

For anybody interested, the choir is welcome to all parents, teachers and friends of the school. If you'd like to join in, please get in touch.



WESPA News



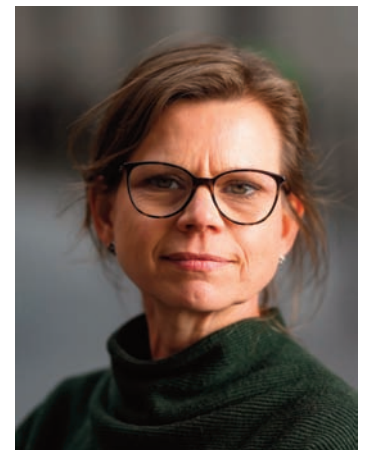
All fired up

The Year 11 Celebration was our first chance to fire up the new WESPA BBQs. It was a lovely way to round off the awards ceremony and a chance for our Year 11 boys to unwind with their teachers. We wish them the best of success with their results this summer and look forward to seeing many familiar faces in the LaSWAP programme next year.

New Parent Governor: Jelke Boesten

Congratulations to Year 8 parent Jelke on being elected parent governor. Here is what Jelke had to say:

“I am keen to contribute to the good governance of our school to ensure all children get the best possible experience socially, academically, and individually out of their years at WES. I am a university professor (King's College London) with close to twenty years of experience of teaching young adults, as well as experience in university governance. I have ex-



tensive experience in and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. I believe I can make a good contribution to, as well as learn from, the William Ellis community. ”

Dates for the Diary

New Year 7 Parents' Evening – 10th July

WESPA General Meeting – 13th July, 6pm. School Library

Summer Concert – 18th July at Lauderdale House

WESPA Awards – 19th July at WES

Working Weekend at The Mill – 28th-30th July. Let the Warden of The Mill know if you would like to volunteer:

<https://themillforestgreen.co.uk/volunteers>

Uniform consultation

As promised in the last newsletter, there has been significant movement on the uniform consultation.

The form went out to all parents earlier in the month and we look forward to compiling results to feedback the opinions of parents to

school. Thank you to Alex, Judeen and Jane for preparing this and for the continued open mindedness of governors and senior leadership team in discussions around this topic and others that help keep our school relevant and progressive. We hope

William Ellis would be proud.

The consultation has also been the catalyst for the formation of the new WESPA Eco Group. Environmental concerns, green spaces in school and local issues are all high on the agenda and if anybody would like to get involved, please get in touch.

Summer courses

Looking for things to do over the summer? Check out Camden Summer University. CSU are offering a wide range of FREE ACTIVITIES during all five weeks of the summer. There are courses ranging from Documentary Film to Vegan Cooking;



Creative Writing, Spoken Word, Journalism to Introduction to Archery, Vocal Performance and Manga Self Portrait. To get involved, you must be eligible. Young people must

be aged between 13 to 19, and live the London Borough of Camden or study at a Camden Maintained School. More information here: <https://www.cmdn.co.uk>

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.

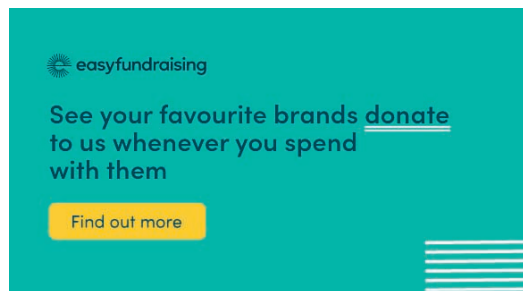
Just email williamellispa@gmail.com

■ 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 here: https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/williamellispa/?invite=1KH7PM%26referral-campaign=c2s%26utm_campaign=admin-trigger%26utm_content=srt

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