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Dear families,

### **RE: Ofsted Inspection - May 2022**

We are writing to you following the publication of the Ofsted report for the inspection of the school which took place on 18th and 19th May. You can find a copy of the report [on our website](#).

We're very pleased to share the news that the report validates many of the core strengths of the school, in particular:

- In most subjects, leaders are clear about what they expect pupils to learn and remember in the long term. The diverse needs and interests of pupils have been considered in setting the curriculum goals.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well, with pupils' interests and needs front and centre. Leaders have set up robust pastoral systems to identify pupils who may need help.
- Leaders have established a rich curriculum offer for pupils in Years 10 and 11, as well as the sixth form. They ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make ambitious choices. At GCSE, for example, 85% of pupils take at least one language and a humanities subject. Pupils are also encouraged to opt for creative subjects, and many do.
- In the sixth form, the academic offer is matched with a range of vocational options. Students are supported to select the right courses for them. The curriculum is typically ambitious and taught well. Sixth-form students achieve highly and behave well.
- Pupils are kept safe. Most pupils trust teachers to help them if they need it, for example if they are bullied. Leaders have set up robust pastoral systems to identify pupils who may need help. They consider individual needs carefully.
- Pupils are taught about difference and the need to respect others, as well as the importance of sharing any concerns early.
- When concerns arise, leaders make well-considered decisions about how to protect and support pupils. Leaders and staff work effectively with families and ensure that appropriate help is given.

Despite this, the overall outcome of the inspection is that William Ellis is judged to be not yet "good" under the new Ofsted framework and "requires improvement". The new Ofsted framework emphasises the way that the curriculum is sequenced and how students acquire knowledge – facts and understanding that they learn and in what order. This is an important part of the 'Quality of Education' section of the framework and although there were some excellent subjects highlighted, such as Modern Foreign Languages, there are some subjects where, despite work that has taken place, there is still more improvement needed. Whilst we are pleased to receive 'good' judgements for personal development and sixth form provision, we are very disappointed that overall, the progress we have made in recent years was not recognised, especially given the challenges of the pandemic and its disruptive effects on the school across 2020, 2021 and 2022. Our GCSE results from 2022 indicated that progress has been made in key subjects, including English, Geography, PE and Computing.

The report also makes some references to derogatory language, specifically students' concerns that they have heard this being used by some of their peers. Since September 2020 we have worked hard to raise students' awareness of why this language is problematic and should not be used under any circumstances. Ways we have done this include holding student-led assemblies and Deep Learning Days with the "More in Common" focus. However, this change in culture is work that must be sustained and requires us to maintain that momentum in school, and work with families and the local community to ensure that students not only understand that hurtful, upsetting language should not be used but also practice this in their daily lives. We have already made

changes to routines and expectations of conduct such as tightened restrictions on mobile phone use, re-establishing pre-Covid uniform regulations and consistency of behaviour expectations in corridors. However, in hindsight the complexity and depth of the challenges that many of our students faced during periods of partial closure and the impact these had on their behaviour when we reopened in September 2020 and March 2021 was far more profound than we anticipated, and our response must rise to the challenge that this presents.

As Headteacher, I am committed to William Ellis's journey of improvement. I have served students and families in the local community at William Ellis and Parliament Hill School since 2005 and recognise the important role the school plays in ensuring successful futures for all students. The core purpose of the school, to nurture successful students and good citizens through strong relationships, builds upon the motto chosen by the school's founder, "rather use than fame".

I am proud of the work of the whole school community to provide a fully rounded education with a broad and ambitious curriculum for all students, regardless of their starting points. Our improvement agenda will continue its focus on the areas of development recognised by the inspection team. The best organisations in all walks of life see feedback as a chance to be even better. That's exactly what we will do with these findings and have already put in place a clear action plan which includes:

- A staged and structured approach to teaching positive behaviour. This makes renewed use of the William Ellis attributes and the Department for Education [Character Education framework](#)
- Continuing to work with students, including through their peer group leadership, to make corridor and lesson routines more consistent and ensuring that students understand why these are in place.
- A clearer approach to curriculum planning and teaching in some subjects, so that students effectively build their knowledge over time. This builds on professional development and monitoring work that we began during the last two years, modified because of the coronavirus pandemic.
- Curriculum change in Key Stage 3, to include Food Technology and amended study programmes for Computing.

I want to thank you for your overwhelmingly positive feedback given by William Ellis families in the external survey in March, and in the Parent View survey carried out by Ofsted as part of the inspection process. We are also proud of the other external reviews that have been done of the school recently, including by Challenge Partners review, a national peer review organisation for schools, from February 2022 which you can find [here](#).

I know that some parents have asked about the delay in receiving the Ofsted report. We had significant concerns about some aspects of the inspection and the judgements of inspectors and submitted a formal complaint to Ofsted about the inspection and its outcome. Some aspects of this complaint were upheld or are ongoing. This is the reason the report has taken several months to be published.

We are working towards a possible follow-up Ofsted monitoring visit which may happen before the end of this academic year. With Camden Learning and other external support we will also monitor our own progress carefully. Another full inspection should happen within two and a half years, at which point we have every confidence that Ofsted will recognise the strengths of William Ellis and judge us as "good" or better. Governors and external partners will work closely with school leaders to ensure this.

We have invited an experienced school leader to join our governing body as an associate and will also be working with a new School Improvement Partner. We are also running an election for a new parent governor, and these details will be sent to families shortly. No special qualifications are needed, and the most important thing is to have an interest in the school and be prepared to play an active part in the governing body's work.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to William Ellis. We understand that you might have questions about the report and our improvement plan, and these will be discussed at the forthcoming year group meetings in the first weeks of term.



Izzy Jones  
Headteacher

Selina Skipwith  
Chair of Governors