



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL

Name of School:	William Ellis School
Headteacher/Principal:	Izzy Jones
Hub:	East London
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	17/01/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	27/01/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	28/02/2017

1. Context and character of the school

This is a smaller than average, voluntary aided, secondary 11-18 boys' school. Girls are admitted to the sixth form, which operates as part of a consortium with three other schools. There are currently 904 students on roll which includes 286 students in the sixth form.

Almost three-quarters of students are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Black African origin. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is more than double the national average. Over half the students on roll are disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly average. A tenth of students enter William Ellis on the basis of a musical aptitude test. These students are given additional support to enhance their musical abilities. Disadvantaged pupils involved in the programme are subsidised.

Since the last review a number of changes have been made that strengthen the overall leadership and management of the school.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- William Ellis's motto 'Rather Use Than Fame' permeates its curriculum that champions equality and diversity and underpins its trauma-informed approaches to relationship building.
- Leaders share a clear vision for raising standards and student aspirations. This is reinforced in policies, assemblies, displays and daily routines.
- Governance changes have built on previous strengths. Governors know the school well and offer constructive challenge, such as in responding to a recent report on careers education.
- With a slight expansion of the senior leadership team since 2020 roles are now rationalised and manageable. Senior leaders collaborate fully in meeting their collective, complementary responsibilities.
- Each year group now has its own leader and the accountabilities of heads of department have been sharpened. Most middle leaders have a clear understanding of the expectations of them, helping to increase the consistency of planning, the quality of monitoring and the impact of these on learning.
- Governors, staff, students and parents systematically contribute to William Ellis's self-evaluation. Consequently, there is a strong sense of ownership of the school's strengths and areas for development. These are set out in the Strategic Development Plan with appropriate priorities for improvement and timescales for action.
- Leaders' decisions about course choices are guided by students' needs rather than Progress 8 or EBacc scores. This ensures provision best serves students now and in preparation for their futures.

- Students benefit from comprehensive enrichment and character-building opportunities. Key Stage 3 boys affirm that trips to The Mill outdoor centre help them develop positive relationships and teamwork. Elsewhere students develop leadership skills as student council representatives and foreign language leaders in primary school.
- There is a strong focus on students' personal development. Through weekly personal, social and health education lessons and Deep Learning Days, students learn to respect and tolerate others. Boys reflect readily on the value of 'More in Common' assemblies about gender and LGBTQ+ equality, mental health and preparation for future employment issues.
- Other leaders in school - such as the School Counsellor, the attendance and behaviour officer and the recently appointed Head of Outdoor Adventure - offer additional expertise that complements the work of academic and pastoral leaders. Students recognise their value. One shared, 'I know who to go to if I am worried'.
- Rigorous arrangements support students joining the school to ensure they get off to a good start. Comprehensive career advice prepares students well for their next stages of education. Numerous links with external groups provide students with work experience and inform their future life choices. For example, following a visit by a group from the Royal Academy of Music, one student has composed a piece for the players to perform on their return.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

- ...senior leaders built on the refinements recently made in leadership structures to embed management skills and further support inclusive practice in teaching, learning and curriculum.
- ...curriculum leaders reviewed their responsibilities as managers and shared them with staff to cement understanding of their impact in improving provision and outcomes.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The academically ambitious curriculum is aligned to the national curriculum and the school's ethos with a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Students appreciate its richness, proudly sharing, 'We get involved in lots of extra clubs here'.
- With EBacc at its heart, leaders have taken a knowledge-rich approach to curriculum planning aiming to ensure that facts are not disconnected. Humanities and arts subjects and personal development programmes are shared with the wider community, underpinning the school's commitment to these issues.
- The sixth form consortium curriculum offers a significant range of academic and vocational options to meet the needs of all students. High progression and future

employment rates confirm its attraction and impact.

- Provision is well sequenced. Departments have revised provision following internal reviews and in response to changes in post-2016 examination specifications. Key Stage 3 students in mathematics and geography, for example, are pre-taught Key Stage 4 concepts. Reflecting the Rosenshine principles adopted by teachers, students shared how this helps them to retrieve and recall previous learning.
- The school gives high priority to developing reading skills. Robust testing on entry diagnoses students with reading challenges. Middle leaders build regular opportunities to focus on reading skills in lessons. Form time reading has been extended for Year 7 to 10 students. These developments have a significant impact on improving reading skills and enhancing a love of reading. Year 7 were engrossed in a 'Drop Everything Now and Read' activity as a result of the lively and stimulating reading modelled by their tutor.
- Staff training is closely matched to the school's development plan priorities. This is reviewed regularly to incorporate teachers' emerging individual and collective needs. Research based initiatives have been applied to strengthen individual support adopting a growth mindset approach to development.
- Teachers' expectations are generally high. Most affirm the school's routines by adopting 'do now' engaging starters that immediately engage students in learning. A Year 9 student who was distracted initially quickly applied himself to the engaging algebra task.
- Showing strong subject knowledge and developing pedagogy, the best teaching ensures students build on their learning well. In Year 10 geography, students consolidated their understanding with the teacher's probing questions that enabled misconceptions to be quickly addressed.
- Students' work and the most effective feedback from teachers affirm the school's aspirations and impact of provision. A Year 13 student's art project powerfully illustrated gender issues based on the Red Riding Hood story. Similarly, the violin concerto being composed by a Year 10 boy showed exceptional understanding of tonal colour in orchestration and compositional techniques.
- The school's trauma-informed approach supports students in behaving well in lessons and elsewhere in the school. Relationships between students are positive and mutually respectful approaches are modelled by staff.
- Historic data show students achieve better than the average for boys nationally on a number of indicators. The vast majority of students make strong progress in Key Stage 4. Typically, a high proportion of students move into education, employment or apprenticeships on leaving Key Stage 4. Outcomes based on teacher assessed and robustly moderated grades during the pandemic, affirm that students make strong progress overall.
- Attendance and punctuality rates are above average. These are maintained by clear monitoring and follow up to absence procedures which have been refined following the start of the pandemic.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

- ...leaders and staff revisited all forms of formative assessment to ensure that all students make progress, with teachers responding to student needs while using their own time efficiently and effectively.
- ...senior and middle leaders further disseminated the school's strongest teaching to ensure levels of challenge provided and the pace of learning are appropriate for all students.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Provision has been adapted well to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with additional needs. In English, mathematics and humanities in Year 7 and 8, for example, teachers incorporate the information in students 'passports' when planning learning. In Year 10, students who do not study a modern foreign language have additional support in English and science to gain qualifications.
- Sessional tutors provide bespoke help for individual or small groups of students with low levels of attainment in English and mathematics on entry. This accelerates their progress from the earliest point in school.
- Students with a low reading age follow a phonics-based programme with 1:1 adult support. Staff gain from speech and language support to build their confidence and skills in helping students who speak English as an additional language.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported in accessing the curriculum where appropriate, such as in participating in cultural and sporting activities and in the additional financial support available for students who join William Ellis with a music bursary.
- Strong links with families and multi-agencies, such as local authority multi-agency safeguarding hub teams and the local virtual school, ensure William Ellis staff act speedily to address issues for disadvantaged students where necessary. Training for all new heads of year in working with multi-agencies has equipped them well in addressing these responsibilities.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

- ...leaders ensured that information about students' needs, which are clearly set out in their 'passports', is communicated more comprehensively to all staff.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted as part of the review.

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Leaders would like Challenge Partner support to develop the taught curriculum for computing.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.