



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL

Name of School:	William Ellis School
Headteacher/Principal:	Izzy Jones
Hub:	East London Hub
School phase:	Secondary
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	The school's leadership team elected not to have estimates on this review.
Date of this Review:	16/11/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	17/01/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires Improvement
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	18/05/2022



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Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels N/A

Quality of provision and outcomes N/A

AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of excellence Not submitted for this review.

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** N/A

Overall peer evaluation estimate N/A

***The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is
developmental not judgmental.***

1. Context and character of the school

William Ellis School is a large boys' comprehensive school in the borough of Camden. It forms part of a local partnership with Parliament Hill School, Acland Burley School and La Sainte Union Catholic School. The sixth form is co-educational, enabling boys and girls from the partner schools to attend post-16 education at the different institutions that offer the courses best suited to them. This collegiate approach broadens the curriculum significantly for sixth form students and is very successful. The school is very popular in the area and the sixth form has doubled in size over the past three years.

The school serves a diverse community, which includes students of quite affluent parents while the majority of students are from very socially deprived backgrounds. This is reflected in the proportion of students in the disadvantaged group, where nearly half of the boys in the main school fall into this category. This is more than double the national average. A similar proportion of students have English as an additional language (EAL) and over 70% are from minority ethnic groups. Somali and Congolese are the largest groups and the school has recently welcomed refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line with the national average although those with an education, health and care plan is just above.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The senior leadership team is very experienced; its members have been at the school for a considerable time. They know the demographic of their students well which enables them to devise a curriculum that suits the needs of all students. They are flexible in their approach to curriculum design and recognise the need to expand the offer. For example, the Key Stage 3 curriculum has recently been extended to include food technology, adding breadth.
- The school's motto, 'Rather Use Than Fame' is promoted by some staff, linking this quotation with the five Rs school values - Responsible, Reflective, Resilient, Respectful, Resourceful. This is aimed not just at students during their journey through William Ellis but also to instil those personal qualities for when they leave. As one senior leader commented, 'It is important for our boys to see the application of this motto in all walks of life.' A Year 8 assembly used role models such as Marcus Rashford, who undertake their various roles for reasons other than just wanting to be famous. This is further reinforced through the school's vision of 'Nurturing successful students and citizens through strong relationships.'
- All senior leaders have received training in coaching so that this is now a key aspect of line management discussions. This is seen as a new development in providing additional support rather than the previous 'top-down' model. It has encouraged more leaders across the school to undertake national professional

- qualifications to upskill their leadership knowledge and understanding.
- Middle leaders have increased autonomy for their subject areas which aligns with greater accountability. Work with subject colleagues in other Camden schools has been supportive in sharing and disseminating strong practice. Senior leaders are now examining consistency in the quality of subject leadership.
 - Fortnightly line management meetings enable senior leaders to closely monitor the actions of the middle leader group. Subsequent discussions between senior and middle leaders follow up on focus areas, thus middle leaders are held to account for the areas they lead on.
 - Staff use the teaching and learning policy as a framework for monitoring and assessing the depth and quality of learning. This is then evaluated by middle leaders through learning walks, work scrutiny and 'drop-ins'. The policy, and subsequent approach, is a relatively recent strategy and progress is already being seen.
 - Formative assessment has been a whole school focus to ensure that colleagues were more consistent and effective in checking and measuring progress. In the classroom, the use of "hinge" questions is another key strategy that is impacting on outcomes. A large proportion of disadvantaged students, when surveyed, found this tool particularly helpful in supporting their learning.
 - The praise and reward system at the school is focused on boys developing the 5 Rs and teachers are expected to focus and remind students of their consistent application. Greater impact is being seen as a result.
 - Shared agendas linked to the school development plan ensure that governors are well-informed and involved in discussing strategic issues. They are frequent visitors into school and hold leaders to account effectively.

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

- ... senior leaders continued to increase the depth and rapidity of improvements in curriculum leadership at middle leader level.
- ... middle leaders more clearly understood, and were able to articulate, the impact of their actions to better evaluate the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Improvements in the quality of provision at William Ellis can clearly be evidenced. Strategic changes have ensured that the learning environment is more positive, and students' outcomes have improved commensurately.
- Engagement in lessons has increased because students are stimulated by the exciting learning experiences their teachers plan. Attitudes to learning are more conducive to increased interaction between students whilst reducing low-level

disruption. High levels of motivation in a Year 7 English poetry lesson were observed because the teacher made the learning fun and interesting.

- 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.
- The work teachers and leaders have based around oracy is coming to fruition. By giving students increased opportunities to speak about their learning with their peers and staff, this has enhanced their confidence to verbalise their learning. In a Year 11 business studies session, students clearly spoke about the learning intention and took great delight in explaining it to others. In some lessons, the student takes on the role of the teacher to help their peers understand more.
- Teachers exhibit strong subject knowledge and pedagogy linked to their specific areas. Teachers expertly challenge misconceptions and support students by using clear and helpful interventions. This helps students to know more and remember more.
- In many lessons, questioning is used purposefully to probe and extend students' understanding. The whole school focus on the use of 'hinge' questions was observed frequently throughout the review, for example in a Year 10 chemistry lesson where the time the teacher spent on asking students about carbon bonds added to their bank of knowledge. Teachers also commonly use 'cold-calling' questioning, which heightens engagement because students are on constant alert that they may be asked the next question.
- Scaffolding and resources are used effectively to support learning. In addition, teachers routinely introduce extended subject-specific vocabulary into their teaching and highlight the need for students to understand and use complex terminology. For example, in a Year 13 music technology lesson, the teacher's reference to digital and analogue effects during the starter activity was impressive.
- 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. This had a significant impact because it was student led rather than being organised by teaching staff. This also added to students' cultural capital and is to be built on this academic year. As a result of this initiative, instances of the use of derogatory language have reduced and restorative work is adding to the success of this strategy.
- Retrieval tasks are becoming embedded in teachers' everyday practice and quizzes are now forming more of a role in home learning. While this is still a work in progress, data is indicating that this method is helping students know and remember more. Students themselves state how valuable they find this as a learning resource.

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

- ... teachers heightened their expectations of students by stipulating the means of participation, and used explicit praise (and concern), to reduce any low-level disruption.
- ... teachers planned scaffolding and differentiation to ensure that all students were able to work independently with minimal reliance on teacher input.

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

- Disadvantaged students perform well from their starting points. The quality-first teaching these students benefit from is the key to their success. Literacy is a core theme across the school and enhancing these skills for this group has had significant impact. In addition, attendance has improved for disadvantaged students and is currently above the national figure.
- Saturday sessions for this group are well attended. These have centred around areas such as art and mathematics. This has made a difference in results for disadvantaged students. Parental engagement has also improved and activities to encourage involvement in their son's education have gained success. The school went the extra mile to ensure that all students in this group had laptops or 'dongles' to support their learning during the pandemic. The use of online resources has continued post-Covid, and this has continued to enhance learning.
- There are no barriers to any disadvantaged students in terms of participation in extra-curricular activities. Funding subsidises some activities if necessary, and take-up is considerable. As one senior leader stated, 'There is no reason why these students should be excluded from any activity, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award.'
- The identification of the needs of students with SEND is a key feature of the transition process from their feeder schools. Parents are fully engaged in this process to ensure that everyone gives them the support they need. The resulting student profiles inform teachers of how to meet students' needs to reduce barriers to learning.
- The SENDCo is refining the referral process so that increased contact to all staff has improved. There is a clear channel of communication to the different leaders who need to have vital information about these students. Fortnightly meetings with pastoral leaders ensure that the provision for these students is under continuous review. This enhanced monitoring of their progress has increased the support for this group.

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

- ... staff refined strategies linked to supporting disadvantaged students to maximise impact.
- ... teachers made more effective use of the information they receive to enhance learning for students with SEND.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, 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 (SLP) 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. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)