



WILLINGTON PREP

WIMBLEDON



Exciting Changes at Willington



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Headmaster Keith Brown MA, BSc (Hons), PGCE

13th June 2019

On behalf of the Board of Governors, I am writing to announce exciting plans we have unanimously approved for the future of Willington.

As a Board of Governors we continually evaluate the environment in which we operate and have, over the past year, undertaken internal and external assessment of the local market. Working with the Headmaster, we have listened to parents, spoken to Headteachers of Senior Schools and have engaged experts in the field.

In response to this:

- From September 2021, we will become an 11+ school with all pupils leaving at the end of Year 6 to their Senior School.
- The boys in our current Year 5, 6 and 7 will continue to have the option of staying at Willington to age 13.
- From September 2020, Willington will open a co-educational Nursery and will introduce girls into Reception.
- By September 2026, we will be a fully co-educational school for pupils aged 3 to 11.

The educational landscape is rapidly changing. The vast majority of schools which Willington feeds, now take increasing numbers of pupils at 11+. This trend within Senior Schools looks set to continue as the number of places at 13 are declining. In order to give our pupils the best opportunity, the Governors have decided to change to 11+ to continue our outstanding success at this age (including 12 scholarships this year alone).

With the introduction of girls, we are taking the opportunity to enhance our strong family ethos by creating a fully co-educational community at Willington. Girls will benefit from our broad curriculum and dedicated preparation for 11+ examinations, within the nurturing environment that the boys currently enjoy. The Governors are responding to the needs of our parents by providing a unique, independent co-educational experience in the heart of Wimbledon.

Our belief is that these developments will ensure that we maintain both our ethos and strong record of success into the future. We look forward to working in partnership with our parents, staff and the Headteachers of Senior Schools, to offer our pupils a seamless transition to the next stage of their education.

We will be holding a drop-in information afternoon on Thursday 20th June, from 3:00pm to 7:00pm, where all parents are welcome to come and speak with Governors, the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster and other members of the senior leadership team about these exciting changes. It is inevitable that some of the finer details will need to be clarified in due course and we have created the attached FAQ Guide, designed to answer some of your questions.

Yours sincerely

Rob Stewart
Chair of Governors

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Frequently Asked Questions

June 2019

Why is Willington making these changes to the school now?

As a forward looking school, and having evaluated the current market conditions, we feel that this is the perfect time to make these exciting changes. We place the needs of the pupils at the heart of all our decisions, as the school continues to evolve and adapt. The move to 11+, the introduction of co-education and a Nursery is a natural development for the school that we feel will bring positive benefits to the Willington family.

Is Willington in financial trouble?

No, the school is not in financial difficulties. As with all good independent schools we constantly review our financial position in order to remain commercially viable. The prep school sector is currently experiencing a number of external influences that we cannot ignore. By making these decisions now we can adapt our provision and future-proof the excellent education we offer.

Will we have the same Senior School options at 11+?

Yes, virtually all our feeder schools now admit at 11+. The Headmaster will continue to work with all families to find the best school for their child.

Will Willington prepare pupils for 11+?

Yes, Willington will actively prepare pupils for all examinations and testing at 11+. Pupils will have preparation in English, Mathematics, Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning. Pupils will also be given experience of interviews, public speaking skills and revision techniques.

How will the curriculum change?

The curriculum will remain broad with subjects such as Modern Languages, Science, Geography, History, Religious Studies, Sports, Art, Drama, Music, Personal Social and Health Education (including Life Skills and Wellbeing).

Will the school become an academic ‘hot house’?

The pupils have always performed well in external examinations with staff nurturing and supporting each pupil as an individual. Small class sizes, excellent teaching, a broad curriculum and a strong partnership with parents has helped maintain our ‘Green House, not a Hot House’ ethos. There are no plans to alter this highly successful formula.

Will there still be leadership opportunities for the pupils?

Yes, these are important roles within the school and they will be retained.

When will the boys leave Willington for their Senior Schools?

Current Year Group (June 2019)	Leaving Date
Year 7	End of Year 8 in July 2020
Year 6	End of Year 8 in July 2021
Year 5	Either end of Year 6 in July 2020, or end of Year 8 July 2022. The Headmaster will meet with every family to discuss future schools.
Reception to Year 4	Will all leave at the end of their respective Year 6

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When will Willington become fully co-educational?

Girls will begin to be admitted into Nursery and Reception in September 2020. Thereafter, girls will move through the school year on year. Willington will be fully co-educational by 2026. There are no plans to admit girls to any of our current year groups.

Is Willington expanding?

Our policy of providing small classes will continue, incorporating boys and girls. There are no plans to increase the numbers within the school.

What will be the co-educational provision for music and sport?

The standard of music and sport is very high at Willington, as is the opportunity of involvement for all pupils. Being a co-educational school, Willington will offer sports to boys and girls as appropriate. Other activities such as orchestra, choristers, learning a musical instrument and dance will be offered to all.

Will the school uniform change?

The school uniform will not change. We will be working with Schoolblazer to create the girls' uniform.

Will children in the Willington Nursery automatically be offered a place in the Willington Reception class?

Yes, Willington Nursery pupils will be offered a place in the Reception class, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

What will the children be taught in the Willington Nursery?

As a minimum, all children will follow the Early Years Curriculum which is the Government curriculum for this age. Nursery pupils will also enjoy Art, Drama, Sport, Science and Modern Languages, and clubs appropriate to their age and abilities.

How will these changes affect the site?

Our excellent Early Years facilities are already in place, and the site will be developed to accommodate co-education in due course.

We will continue to be an outstanding prep school providing an excellent academic, broad and creative learning experience for all our pupils, within a nurturing environment.