

Parliament Hill: Our History

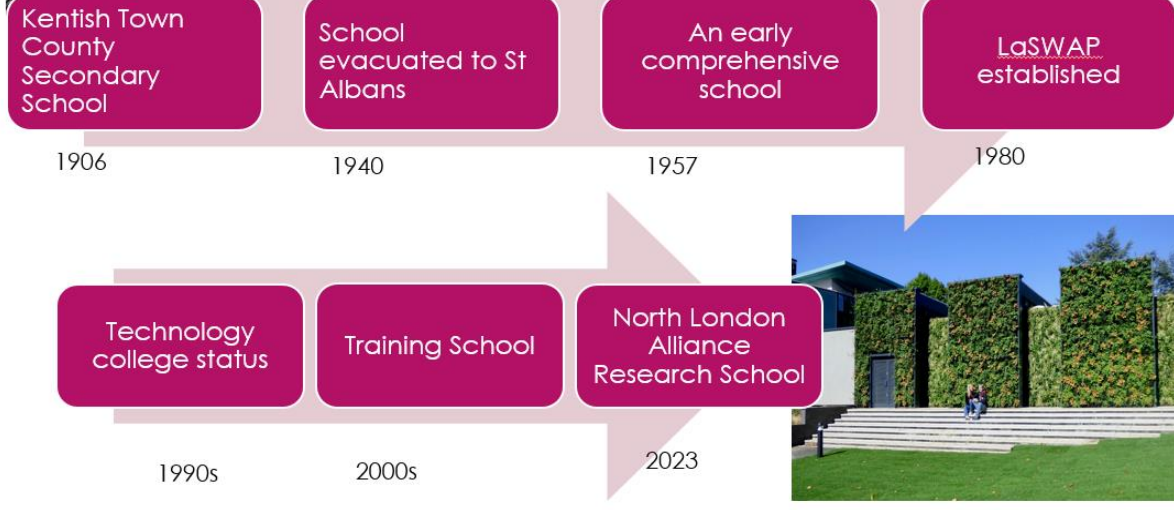


The vision of Miss Morant, Parliament Hill School's first headteacher, was that young women should be *'enabled to use their talents to the full and they should be the equal of men in education'*. Over a century later we continue to work with that feminist mission, as a centre of excellence for girls' education. It's often what students tell us they are most proud of in being a "Parli girl".

Parliament Hill School opened as Kentish Town County Secondary School in 1906. The school took over the St. Pancras Pupil Teachers' Centre, opening at first with a large number of pupils training to be teachers. The outbreak of war in 1914 meant that plans for a training college on the school's current site in Highgate Road had to be abandoned, but for the last century we have continued to grow great teachers with recognised success. We see ourselves today as actively and confidently engaged with current research, enabling us to take on a system leadership role in Camden and beyond.

The school has always had a long tradition of philanthropic and social activism and today our students campaign with confidence on issues from climate action to equalities. Our mission is to educate students as local and global citizens giving them the personal and academic confidence to be leaders of change, able to engage as empowered citizens in the future.

The quality of relationships, in what is frequently described by students, staff and visitors as a happy school, shines through records in our archive. In 1940 the entire school, including staff, was evacuated to St Albans to share the site of the St Albans County girls' school. The courage of evacuated students during the second world war came partly from their strength as a school community, their friendships and sense of belonging, which endured in their new and different surroundings. At the time, the headteacher Miss Emed commented that *'a new scarcely definable bond has been forged; the spirit of the school burns with even more than its old companionable light.'* Through a recent building programme and then the COVID 19 pandemic, it has been the quality of relationships that has been the glue that has enabled the school to flourish, whatever the obstacles. As a complex diverse community, we reflect our local context. We welcome opportunities to forge ways of strengthen belonging and inclusivity now and in the future.



In 1957, Parliament Hill School became one of the London County Council's first comprehensive schools, ceremonially opened by the stage actress Dame Edith Evans. The transition to comprehensive education meant the school became a pioneer in the development of a curriculum that was inclusive of all students, whatever their interests and strengths. In 1958 the Headteacher Iris Hogg wrote *'I do so want you all to be happy, and there are fewer deeper sources of happiness than the consciousness of having actually made or produced something good of its kind.'*

Today, the school motto *"High Achieving and Happy"* runs through everything we do. We believe that academic success and happiness are inextricably linked and that students can and should experience both. Personal development has always been a priority and over the years, responding to social change, we have developed the specialist expertise needed to support girls through the teenage years into post 16 study.

We believe that it is important to give students the space and opportunities to work out their interests and what they love doing in the classroom and beyond. We are still passionate about curriculum development and are committed to providing a broad and rich experience for our students, with outstanding outcomes in academic and creative subjects. In the latter half of the 20th century the school was given specialist status as a technology college. Design and technology remain a specialism, with product design a particular strength. We are proud of the Parli girls who each year win prestigious Arkwright Scholarships in Design and Engineering.

In 1980, we became one of the founding members of the highly successful LaSWAP consortium with La Sainte Union, William Ellis and Acland Burghley which meant boys could be taught in the school in the sixth form. The collaboration has grown stronger over time and now over 60% of students stay on at LaSWAP, while we welcome new students from other schools across London. LaSWAP is now the largest school sixth form provider in Camden and our students benefit from the breadth of curriculum and subject specialist teachers that four schools working together can provide.



Above all we are very proud of the exceptional progress that students make, regardless of their individual starting points. Committed to mixed ability teaching, our strategy ensures that there are no limits to achievement and our top grade performance is testament to that success. Despite our location next to Hampstead Heath, we serve a socially and ethnically diverse community in this part of North London. Parliament Hill takes in an above average percentage of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Provision for those girls is a key strand of our mission and is recognised nationally as disadvantaged students out-perform Non- Disadvantaged pupils across the country.



Growing great teachers continues to be a priority. For over a decade, Parliament Hill has demonstrated leading practice in professional development and learning. In the 1990s, we became a training school and in 2019 achieved accreditation by the SSAT for offering transforming practice in professional learning. We have contributed extensively to Camden Learning's Professional Development programme and currently lead on A Level Maths and Maths Studies for the Central and Northwest Maths hub at Marylebone School. The quality of our support for new teachers and trainees make Parliament Hill a place where staff want to start their careers, frequently remaining with us and progressing into leadership roles.

Despite our success in many areas, we are not complacent. The constant challenge for us is to ensure that every student, regardless of starting point, can achieve their personal best and use their talents to the full. We do this through constant reflection on our curriculum and our teaching and through our strong relationships throughout the school. This was Miss Morant's original vision. In a very different social and economic context today, we still strive to achieve it.

