

# WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



## MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 23 May 2019

### MINUTES

#### GOVERNORS

		Present
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sam White (HT)	✓
<b>LA</b>	Ms Georgia Gould (GGO)	✓
<b>Parent</b>	Ms Sophie Jenkins (SJE)	✓
<b>Staff</b>	Ms Jennifer Meechan (JME)	✓
<b>Foundation</b>	Mr Richard Ault (RAU)	✓
	Ms Ronke Coote (RCO)	✓
	Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)	✓
	Dr Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)	✓
	Prof Conor Gearty (CGE) <b>Vice chair</b>	✓
	Mr Omar Harmon (OHA)	✓
	Ms Fiona Millar (FMI) <b>Chair</b>	✓
	Prof Daniel Monk (DMO)	✓
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK)	✓
	Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)	✓
	Ms Imogen Sharp <sup>1</sup>	✓

#### ASSOCIATE

Mr Abdi Ahmed (AAH) x

#### ATTENDING

Mr Martin Cresswell (MCR) **Camden Learning**  
Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) **Assistant head**  
Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) **Clerk**

#### 1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

FMI welcomed everyone to this meeting of William Ellis School's Governing Body, which began at 5.05pm. She particularly welcomed MCR, who was to lead governors in safeguarding training, and JME, the newly-elected staff governor. For their benefit, all present introduced themselves. No apologies for absence were necessary, as all governors were present, and thus a quorum. KDU and CGE apologised for early departures. There were no apologies from AAH. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers had been circulated in advance.

<sup>1</sup> As of item 4.

## 2. Chair's report Part 1

**2.1** For various reasons, FMI proposed taking part of her report out of agenda order.

**2.2 Appoint ISH as associate** FMI noted that the previous, inquorate FGB meeting had been unable to appoint ISH as an associate of the Governing Body, as planned. However, there was – and had been for some time – a vacancy for a co-opted governor. HT took up the narrative: by custom and practice, the role was usually offered to staff. However, only one member of staff – JME – had volunteered in the process which had resulted in her becoming staff governor. That left the co-opted vacancy available. FMI and other governors agreed: ISH could be co-opted, if she were willing, when she arrived.

**2.3 Appoint SJE to P&R Committee** Governors **AGREED** to appoint SJE to the governors' Personnel and Resources Committee.

**2.4 Parent governor vacancy** FMI noted that there was currently a parent governor vacancy. HT said that parents had been alerted to it but that the deadline for expressing interest had not yet expired.

**2.5 Co-opted governor vacancy** This would hopefully be filled by ISH.

## 3. Safeguarding training

**3.1** FMI again welcomed MCR, who has a long association with the school, and invited him to lead safeguarding training. MCR stressed that safeguarding was everyone's responsibility at a school, but particularly governors'.

**[ISH joined the meeting at 5.14pm.]**

**3.2** In the context of the psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, MCR asked governors to identify the needs of a Y9 William Ellis boy and how the school met them. Among the suggestions regarding the latter were a safe and secure environment, both inside and outside the school; awareness of children's emotional needs; and compensating for ever-reducing external support.

**3.3** A key concern was that schools were increasingly expected to compensate for society's failings. MCR thought that schools were in a natural position to do this for young people which other agencies did not or could not offer.

**3.4** KDU noted that that self-fulfilment, at the pinnacle of Maslow's pyramid of needs, had been probably the most important goal identified by governors at their awayday earlier in the year.

**3.5** MCR asked governors to identify what kind of safeguarding issues might occur at the school on a day-to-day basis. Suggestions included inappropriate use of social media, including sexting; risky behaviour beyond the school gates; persistent or out-of-the-ordinary absenteeism; and boys arriving at school angry or distressed.

**3.6** JME, as staff governor, asked how far staff should go in investigating potential safeguarding issues. BLA, as the school's designated safeguarding lead, identified a balance between confidentiality and the need, for safeguarding reasons, to probe.

**3.7** CGE noted an assumption that just a few boys had safeguarding issues: this was a fiction in Camden, where physical and emotional needs were widespread. At a time of austerity, schools appeared to be expected to take on extra responsibilities for the children in their care. Was this a reasonable expectation?

**3.8** FMI was clear that governors felt responsible for pupils flourishing even if that meant undertaking other non-statutory responsibilities.

**3.9** LEM was particularly worried about gangs in the neighbourhood, who menaced all William Ellis boys. SJE asked about knives in school. BLA thought that this was extremely rare and the consequences for possessing a knife in school were well understood, but that some boys carried them outside school.

**3.10** MCR listed the vast range of issues covered by safeguarding, from bullying and knife crime to FGM and radicalisation. To counter the latter, the 2015 Prevent Duty placed a statutory responsibility on schools to give "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

**3.11** A case study illustrated a young person's journey from trauma and neglect in their early years to becoming a victim or perpetrator of serious youth violence in adolescence.

**3.12** FMI thought that the key stage here was pre-secondary school. GGO praised Camden's significant early needs offer, with effective interventions. FMI thought Camden safeguarding audits were extremely helpful; she and RCO had been present when MCR had reported back to HT on the latest safeguarding audit. HT noted that the Camden Safeguarding Board was widely recognised as excellent.

**3.13** ISH called for primary schools to pass on information about troubled individual children; HT thought this could be problematic for confidentiality reasons.

**3.14** MCR listed questions on safeguarding which governors might ask of students. FMI asked whether any schools in Camden searched for knives. MCR thought no school maintained by Camden did so. LEM thought the practice misguided, as the problem was mostly outside school. MCR cited an example of a girl who had brought a knife into her school with the intention of self-harming: excluding her had been policy but inappropriate. BLA thought security measure could damage trust.

**3.15** SJE asked whether the presence of the school's on-site police officer "damaged trust". HT praised the school's police officer as invaluable. He and past officers had set an excellent example to the students; they were a resource for young people tempted to the wrong side of the law; they helped to manage students' entry to and exit from school; and they provided intelligence on boys and families at risk.

**3.16** BLA said he had had eight officers as safeguarding colleagues over a period of 15 years, all of whom had worked collaboratively to resolve problems rather than rigidly enforcing the law. Those whom MCR had spoken to had considered that working in schools had been the most rewarding part of their career.

**3.17** FMI thanked MCR for an excellent presentation which had prompted some fascinating discussions. Camden was lucky to have him.

**[MCR left the meeting at 6.12pm.]**

#### **4. Chair's report Part 2**

FMI at this point suggested co-opting ISH to the Governing Body. SSK nominated her, seconded by GGO. Governors **AGREED** to co-opt ISH to the Governing Body.

## 5. Notes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The notes of the inquorate meeting of 28 March 2019 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record of the meeting. FMI to sign them after the meeting. There were no matters arising which were not to be dealt with under the current agenda. All actions had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

## 6. Minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2019 and matters arising

FMI reminded governors that they had been unable to agree the minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2019 at the previous meeting as it had been inquorate. Governors **AGREED** the minutes of the FGB meeting of 18 January 2019 as a full and accurate record. FMI had previously noted that there were no matters arising from these minutes; there had been no actions.

## 7. Receive report on school self-evaluation and risk areas

**7.1 School self-evaluation** HT explained that that the school's self-evaluation was based on the new Ofsted framework, which had been published days previously. Staff had RAG-rated (red, amber, green) each aspect of the new framework, resulting in a 36-page document which he would bring to the next (4 July 2019) meeting of the Governing Body in the form of a two-page summary.

**7.1.1** HT focused on feedback from staff on those areas which could be "even better if..." (EBIs), which coalesced into seven common themes:

- Cohesive collective identity and purpose
- Need to celebrate the many things we do well
- Impact of resource constraints - what, how, who?
- Collective vs individual responsibility and leadership at all levels
- Reading
- Consistency
- Clarity and prioritisation

**7.1.2** On quality of education, staff identified the following EBIs:

- Is there enough collaboration and interconnection?
- Broaden PSHE, e.g. Environment, healthy eating
- Is there enough emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills & what are they?
- Better preparation for GCSE skills at Key Stage 3
- Could there be further use of opportunities to strengthen students' skills across the school?
- There is a lack of breadth for some e.g. drama, food tech, media – subjects that might harness enthusiasm of individuals/groups
- SEND – needs identified but not necessarily met
- Could we have an "off-curriculum" afternoon, once a fortnight?
- Who is going on trips? Mandatory enrichment for all?
- We do not evaluate "soft outcomes"
- Learning environment: are all classrooms fit for purpose and inviting? Less litter!

- Feedback being part of process and more standardised
- Consistent behaviour for learning implementation – what to do. Low level disruption is sometimes a barrier to learning
- Additional specialist support in certain areas e.g. PSHE.

**7.1.3** HT noted that staff had done well in taking on the teaching of PHSE, although sometimes lessons were better externally delivered. In a sign of the school's far-sightedness, PHSE would become compulsory for all schools in 2020.

**7.1.4** The following paragraph from the Ofsted framework was RAG-rated red:

*Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer. A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. At all stages, reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils. Reading books connect closely to the phonics knowledge pupils are taught when they are learning to read.*

**7.1.5** This had prompted the following EBIs:

- Clear school policy for **reading** - expectations which are followed up
- Consistency of expectations in form periods especially in relation to **reading**
- Greater support for form teachers to guide/support **reading**
- A librarian.

**7.1.6** HT noted that funding a librarian was probably unrealistic for the time being. Qualms about the reading policy reflected the school's tendency to adopt rules without consistent policies on implementing them, a tendency underlined by the RAG-rating red of the word "consistently" in the following sentence from the Ofsted framework:

*The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly.*

**7.1.7** That said, HT was not sure whether such consistency was achievable, or indeed desirable. The school wanted a flexible and subtle behaviour policy in order to deal with all individuals' circumstances.

**7.1.8** Staff's EBIs on behaviour and safety were:

- Consistency of expectations from **all staff** – uniform, approach
- Conduct between lessons, student response to staff
- Punctuality needs to be better to school & to lessons
- Alternatives to fixed term exclusions and response to serious concerns.
- More coherent and robust approach to intervening with key students – restorative encouraging approach not just sanctions
- Lack of self-regulation and engagement of small minority
- More public focus on tackling "cussing<sup>2</sup>".

<sup>2</sup> Similar to "sledging", defined by the OED as to "make taunting or teasing remarks (to an opposing player, especially a batsman) in order to disturb their concentration".

**7.1.9** Staff EBIs on personal development were:

- Greater consistency across departments
- Personal Development programme needs to be less bitty & tied together with clear progression
- Link Learner Attributes into all aspects of school life
- Build community culture
- More celebration & promotion of what is good to the outside world and within school.

**7.1.10** FMI agreed with celebrating what was good about the school: following the recent congratulatory letter from schools minister Nick Gibb MP on modern foreign languages (MFL), the school should be trumpeting the quality of its MFL and music offers. LEM pointed out that universities were saying that they now looked for a broader range of subjects than might be imagined.

**7.1.11** On leadership and management, staff EBIs were:

- Not enough operational information
- Greater communication between governors and staff through staff governors
- Need to be more consistent about behaviour across the school
- Low level disruption issues need to be tackled effectively
- Access to the sixth-form centre (safeguarding)
- Disciplined enquiry and its usefulness for professional development.

**7.2 Risk areas** HT referred governors to his report, which identified the school's current risk factors as attendance from Y7 to Y11; KS4 progress and attainment in eight subjects, including English; and sixth form subjects in five subjects, including maths. He invited questions, which he answered as follows.

**7.2.1 Were history and geography at risk [RCO]?** Not as such, but there had been changes in leadership in both subjects, and tighter staffing was trying to do more with a more demanding group, with broader attainment ranges. Particularly in history, there were too few teachers for the number of students. HT hoped that both subjects would be taken off the list in time. Double-awarded science was not on the list but could be.

**7.2.2 Were there common issues among the risks [LEM]?** Apart from broader attainment ranges and changes in final assessments, the only theme was writing. Less academic students struggled with it.

**7.2.3 How did those concerned respond to their subject being on the list [CGE]?** Being listed was hardly an accolade, but it was accepted. Teams knew they were of concern and closely monitored. Outcomes were not where either the teaching team or the school wanted them to be. JME thought teachers did not take it personally and welcomed support. HT agreed: there was a clear rationale for listing.

**7.2.4 What was the concern about the GCSE English literature paper [ISH]?** HT had complained to the OCR exam board about a question comparing the set text (J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*) with an Alan Bennet monologue. Few of the boys knew what a monologue was; it was set out in a confusingly different format to *An Inspector Calls*; and although it was meant to address the theme of death, it didn't. Perhaps choice of exam board should be revisited.

**[DMO left the meeting at 6.44pm.]**

## 8. Approve budget 2019-20

FMI explained that this document had been exhaustively interrogated by the Personnel and Resources Committee. RAU noted that recent staffing changes had resulted in an improved financial outlook: despite an in-year deficit of £67k, the previously-forecast 2019-20 deficit of £66k had become a small surplus of nearly £23k, followed by a small deficit in 2020-2021. Figures for 2021-22 were as bad as ever, but the school continued to look for solutions, including possible partners. The outlook was improved but no cause for complacency. Governors **AGREED** the 2019-20 budget.

## 9. Receive report on staffing

*Given the sensitive nature of discussions at this point they are confidentially minuted separately as item 13*

*During this item two governors left the meeting:  
CGE at 6.50pm and KDU at 6.51pm*

## 10. Any other business

There was no other business.

## Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 4 July 2019

There being no further business in this part of the meeting, FMI thanked all present for attending and closed this part of the meeting at 7.03pm. Confidential items followed.

Signed..........

4 July 2019

**Fiona Millar**  
**Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School**

**THERE WERE NO ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES**

