

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 5 December 2019

MINUTES

GOVERNORS

		Present
Headteacher	Mr Sam White (SWH)	✓
LA	Ms Georgia Gould (GGO)	✓
Parent	Ms Sophie Jenkins (SJE)	✓
	Mr Stuart Taylor (STA)	✓
Staff	Ms Jennifer Meechan (JMN)	✓
Foundation	Mr Richard Ault (RAU)	✓
	Ms Ronke Coote (RCO)	x
	Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)	✓
	Dr Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)	✓
	Prof Conor Gearty (CGE) Vice chair	✓
	Mr Omar Harmon (OHA)	x
	Ms Fiona Millar (FMI) Chair	✓
	Prof Daniel Monk (DMO)	✓
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK)	✓
Co-opted	Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)	✓
	Ms Imogen Sharp (ISH)	✓

ATTENDING

Ms Izzy Sharp (ISH) **Deputy head**
Mr Matthew Scott (MSC) **Assistant head**
Ms Zora Laattoe (ZLA) **Head of science and biology**
Mr Ray Davenport (RDA) **Head of chemistry**
Mr Simon Fuller (SFU) **Head of physics**
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 RDA, SFU and ZLA, who were to present to the Governing Body. Apologies for absence were received from, and permission for absence granted to, RCO and OHA. RAU apologised for an early departure. DMO and SSK had apologised for late arrivals. A quorum was present. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. All papers had been circulated in advance.

2. Receive report on quality of education: science

2.1 FMI welcomed RDA, SFU and ZLA again to the meeting, and asked ZLA to present, which she did as follows, answering questions as she did so.

2.2 In biology, chemistry and physics, between 32 and 40 per cent of GCSE entrants had achieved grade 7 or above, with 100 per cent achieving grade 3 or above in all but chemistry, due to a couple of boys being absent for the exam.

2.3 The Progress 8 (P8) measures for each subject were +0.11 (biology), -0.3 (chemistry) and +0.28 (physics).

2.4 Combined science was not as strong. Just five per cent of GCSE entrants had achieved grade 7 or above, and 68 per cent had achieved grade 3 or above. P8 was -1.17. The subject had to engage students more, perhaps with more practicals.

2.5 In science, students had to know scientific theories and apply them in different contexts; plan and carry out investigations; and interpret, and evaluate, evidence. How science related to everyday life – and what had been learned in KS3 – was key.

[GGO joined the meeting with apologies at 5.08pm.]

2.6 ZLA outlined the essential subject-specific skills in each of the three science subjects, and science generally. Science encouraged scientific thinking and reasoning, interpreting everyday events in a scientific context, and rigour in investigation and planning.

2.7 Strategies to embed key concepts in students' long-term memories and develop subject-specific skills over time included revisiting and developing concepts at KS3 and KS4.

2.8 An adapted curriculum addressed the specific needs of William Ellis students, especially those of disadvantaged students, by focusing on literacy, pupil engagement (aided by a link with the Crick Institute) and – to address a renewed focus on exams rather than coursework – an early start on the subject at KS3.

[MSC and ISH joined the meeting with apologies at 5.13pm.]

2.9 Mixed ability sets encouraged students to have higher aspirations, given that they had not chosen the subject. To be in a set without aspirations could be demoralising.

2.10 What proportion of Y11 took two or more science subjects [FMI]? Three sets took double science and two took three sciences. Many students wanted to take three sciences. Some schools restricted their numbers. William Ellis did not.

2.11 ZLA continued: science contributed to students' cultural capital, as a lot of the topics were relevant to everyday life. Careers links included visits to and work experience with the Crick Institute; CAVE (Career and Vocational Education) Week; and visits to, and Skype interviews with employees of, London Zoo.

2.12 More opportunities were being sought. Student engagement with the climate change debate was encouraging. The GCSE syllabus had to be covered but an even spread of alternative activities was also important.

2.13 STA encouraged ZLA and her colleagues to make full use of the resources of Camden's Knowledge Quarter. GGO urged the same with regard to Camden's STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) hub.

[JMN joined the meeting with apologies at 5.26pm.]

2.14 In order to accommodate the curriculum and additional activities, Y8 students were currently taking their final KS3 exam, and would begin their KS4 course in January 2020.

2.15 Of those students who progressed to KS5, 28 per cent took science courses within the LaSWAP sixth form consortium of which William Ellis was a member, and 16 per cent took a BTEC in applied science. At A level, six per cent took biology, eight per cent took chemistry, and five per cent took physics.

2.16 Could students progress to A level if they had only previously taken double science [KDU]? Yes, they had sufficient content but they might find the course was more challenging.

2.17 Assessment was used to inform teaching, develop and check understanding, and to embed knowledge. Students peer-marked and self-assessed, which embedded knowledge and ensured teachers were not overburdened.

[DMO joined the meeting at 5.31pm.]

2.18 The academically-rigorous curriculum needed to be better structured to meet the needs of lower-attaining students. Whole-school development priorities such as literacy, and behaviour for learning, supported the curriculum, and vice versa.

2.19 FMI thanked ZLA for her presentation, and called for questions, which she, RDA and SFU answered as follows.

2.20 How much of the curriculum was now practical [FMI]? A third of questions in science GCSE exams were about practical work. Although there is no longer any practical coursework, students had to complete required experiments.

2.21 How did this affect the quality of students' education [FMI]? Poorly, because there was little underlying explanation of why practicals were being undertaken.

2.22 How had changes to the curriculum affected students' enjoyment of, and engagement in, science [GGO]? Badly, which was why teachers had to be creative in offering opportunities to engage in "real life" opportunities beyond the school.

2.23 How motivated were less able students [GGO]? They now had the opportunity to actively choose science, which was very motivating.

2.24 Was there a danger that the tension between a reformed curriculum and more exciting external activities encouraged the boys to dread exams [CGE]? They were constantly urged to reflect on, and keen to be reminded of, the curriculum, because it gave them the confidence that they could tackle final exams effectively. Students recognised that there was a lot of curriculum content to get through.

2.25 How engaged were the teachers [SJE]? They were hugely motivated. They did a lot, but always strove to offer added opportunities to students. They had whole-heartedly addressed the challenges of the reformed curriculum. IJO agreed: short staffing had had an effect, but teachers had risen to the challenge.

2.26 Given the range of PB figures, from -0.3 in chemistry to +0.28 in physics, could teachers usefully study each others' practice and benefit from learning across subjects [LEM]? SWH answered this question: progress over the past three years had been similar in each of the subjects. There had been some particular staffing issues in chemistry over the last year. The teachers of combined science were also the teachers of biology, chemistry and physics.

2.27 ZLA added that staff met frequently as a whole department rather than individual subject teams.

2.28 FMI thanked ZLA again for her presentation, and her, RDA and SFU for answering questions.

[RDA, SFU and ZLA left the meeting at 5.50pm.]

3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 3 October 2019 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record. FMI to sign them after the meeting. There were no matters arising. All actions had been fulfilled.

4. Receive headteacher's report

4.1 FMI invited SWH to present his report, which he did selectively as follows, answering questions as he did so.

4.2 Challenge Partners review William Ellis was now a member of this peer-review organisation, a feature of which was an annual review of provision in each member school, led by recent Ofsted inspector and senior leaders from other member schools.

4.2.1 SWH had been part of teams which had reviewed provision in two schools, both of them academies, and found the process very useful for professional development, and to collect best practice. IJO had undertaken two reviews; Bernard Lane (assistant head) was currently away reviewing; and MSC would shortly be joining a review team. William Ellis itself would be reviewed in February 2020.

4.2.2 IJO added that the review process offered an ideal balance between support – with advice on development – and external, objective scrutiny. It complemented the day-to-day support that the school receive from Camden Learning.

4.2.3 Was there scope for other members of staff to join the programme [JMN]? IJO answered this and the next two questions: part of the work of Challenge Partners involved engaging middle leaders. This was still to come.

4.2.4 Would there be a report for governors to review [DMO]? Yes, in time.

4.2.5 How comprehensive were reviews [JMN]? Their main focus was the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for disadvantaged students, which meant that issues such as safeguarding and behaviour were not reviewed.

4.3 Staffing SWH was delighted to report the permanent appointment of a physics teacher after a vacancy of a year, as well as a head of PE.

4.4 LaSWAP building The term had been challenging. The building programme had overrun, disrupting the school, and the LaSWAP building had been closed due to damp. The repercussions had disrupted sixth form private study, which was now taking place in Parliament Hill School's new library. The split lunch period required because of the building programme had meant that Y7 had not had the positive influence of older boys at lunchtime.

4.4.1 Staff were positive, but the school had been told that it would not be able to return to the LaSWAP building until at least February 2020, following major repairs to walls and flooring.

4.5 Budget There was little to report here; more to come in January 2020.

4.6 Alternatives to external exclusion Reinstating an Internal exclusion room would cost in the region of £50-60k a year in admin, support and senior staff time, some of which was admittedly already being utilised.

4.6.1 Proposals were being considered and would be submitted to the next (23 January 2020) meeting of the Personnel and Resources Committee (the imminent scheduled meeting on 12 December 2019 having been cancelled).

4.7 Y11 progress SWH highlighted the grid of November 2019 Y11 data, ranking progress in each subject. The main risks continued to be computing, English, geography, PE and combined science. To be considered in detail at the next (16 January 2020) meeting of the School Improvement Committee.

4.8 Self-evaluation The school's revised self-evaluation was based on the new Ofsted framework (Appendix B to SWH's report). The Challenge Partners Review in February 2020 would provide useful evidence for the next iteration of this document.

4.8.1 FMI praised the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and educational trips and visits, which was one of the strengths of the school.

[CGE joined the meeting with apologies at 6.29pm.]

4.8.2 SWH noted that the school roll had increased to 850, as had numbers of SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) pupils. ISH thought there could be as many as 150 SEND students – between a quarter and third of Years 7-11 – by one definition or another. SWH thought this reflected schools in Camden. There were seven Y7 pupils with EHCPs (education, health and care) plans alone.

4.8.3 SEF to be considered in detail at the next (16 January 2020) School Improvement Committee.

4.9 FMI thanked SWH for his report, and for answering questions on it.

5. Receive committee reports and agree terms of reference

5.1 School Improvement Committee FMI, who chaired the last meeting of this committee in the absence of LEM and GGO, the chair and vice chair (who had given apologies), reported that it had met on 7 November 2019. Draft minutes had been circulated.

5.1.1 STA noted in retrospect that a presentation on behaviour management had focused on sanctions and escalation pathways rather than affirmative, constructive rewards. SWH explained that the previous presentation on behaviour had had the theme of persistent disruption, which is why it had focused on sanctions rather than rewards. Rewards remained a huge part of the school's ethos.

5.2 Personnel and Resources Committee RAU, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 10 October 2019. Draft minutes had been circulated. Figures for the current financial year had improved, with a reduced in-year deficit, though the three-year outlook remained bleak. Governors **AGREED** the terms of reference of the Personnel and Resources Committee, and to delegate the power to agree the annual budget to the committee, on the assumption that the FGB had the opportunity for final review and approval.

5.3 Pay Committee RAU, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 28 November 2019 to consider SWH's recommendations for performance-related pay awards. Minutes were confidential.

5.4 Headteacher's Performance Review Panel FMI, who chairs this review panel, reported that it had met on the previous day, 4 December 2019. SWH's objectives, as agreed at this meeting, would be included in his next report to the governing body.

6. Approve statutory policies and other documents

6.1 FMI noted that all the following had already been reviewed and agreed at committee.

6.2 Safeguarding Policy Governors **AGREED** the Safeguarding Policy.

6.3 Staff Code of Conduct Governors **AGREED** the Staff Code of Conduct.

6.4 Dealing with Allegations Against Members of Staff Policy Governors **AGREED** the Dealing with Allegations Against Members of Staff Policy.

6.5 Behaviour Policy Governors **AGREED** the Behaviour Policy.

7. Receive report back on governor focus group

7.1 FMI thanked SJE and STA for their thorough report on interviews with former Y11 students who had come close to exclusion but had successfully moved on to Y12.

7.2 IJO noted that an outstanding question from the report concerned the lack of involvement of black and Asian boys. In fact, two boys – one Bengali, the other Afghan – had been slated to attend the focus group but had failed to attend. One black African boy had been a contender for review, but had continued to the sixth form in another non-LaSWAP school.

7.3 SJE urged the school to consider involving governors again in a similar study. The students had been intrigued and appreciative.

7.4 She added that the students had made it clear that they valued moments of empathy from teachers, which should be encouraged.

7.5 CGE praised the report, but suggested that students and teachers should be anonymised in future. SJE to update accordingly and forward to MHU for replacement on GovernorHub. It was agreed that SJE and STA should discuss their recommendations directly with IJO.

ACTION Item 7.5 All governors taking part in future student focus groups to anonymise subsequent report; SJE to anonymise current report and forward to MHU for GovernorHub; SJE and STA to discuss their recommendations directly with IJO.

7.6 SWH suggested that governors could consider, following the lead of focus groups like this, more informal, and potentially more powerful, behaviour panels.

8. Governor appointments

8.1 Link governor for Pupil Premium FMI nominated SJE as link governor for the Pupil Premium. As chair, her nomination needed no seconding. SJE having agreed to stand, and there being no other nominations, FMI declared her link governor for the Pupil Premium.

8.2 Link governor for curriculum development FMI nominated KDU as link governor for curriculum development. As chair, her nomination needed no seconding. KDU having agreed to stand, and there being no other nominations, FMI declared her link governor for curriculum development.

9. Any other business

There was no other business in this part of the meeting.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 30 January 2020

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 6.49pm. IJO and MSC left at this point. FMI gave JMN, as staff governor, permission to remain for Part 2 of the meeting.

Signed.....

30 January 2020

Fiona Millar
Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School

ACTION ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION Item 7.5 *All governors taking part in future student focus groups to anonymise subsequent reports; SJE to anonymise current report and forward to MHU for GovernorHub; SJE and STA to discuss their recommendations directly with IJO.*

