

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 9 December 2021

MINUTES

GOVERNORS		Present
Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓
Co-opted	Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)	✓
	Ms Imogen Sharp (ISH)	✓
Foundation	Mr Richard Ault (RAU)	x
	Ms Ronke Cote (RCO)	x
	Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)	✓
	Dr Lee Elliot Major (LEM)	x
	Prof Daniel Monk (DMO) Vice chair	x
	Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)	✓
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	✓
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) Chair	✓
	VACANCY	N/A
Local authority	Mr Hanad Mohamed (HMO)	✓
Parent	Ms Sophie Jenkins (SJE)	✓
	Mr Stuart Taylor (STA)	x
Staff	Mr Rob Yurchesyn (RYU)	x
ATTENDING	Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) Deputy head	
	Mr Mathew Scott (MSC) Assistant head	
	Mr Guy Forbat (GFO) Assistant head ¹	
	Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) Clerk	

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

SSK welcomed everyone to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.03pm. SJE, HMO, DNE and NSI attended remotely by video conference. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, RAU, RCO, LEM, DMO, STA and RYU. HMO apologised for an early departure. No other apologies were necessary, as all other governors were, or would be, present, and thus a quorum. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. All papers had been circulated in advance.

¹ With responsibility for attendance and professional development.

2. Receive chair's report

2.1 Lee Elliot Major SSK was delighted to announce that although LEM's term of office as a Foundation governor would come to an end at the close of this year, he had accepted an invitation to remain as an associate of the Governing Body. She would begin the process of replacing him as Foundation governor in the New Year.

2.2 Chairing course SSK thanked all governors who had filled in a questionnaire on her charring skills. She had now finished the charring course which had inspired it and hopefully governors would be able to see positive outcomes over the coming year.

2.3 Thanks to staff and governors SSK thanked all governors for their work on the Governing Body over the past strange year. She thanked IJO, senior leaders and all staff for their sterling work for the school. Governors would be hosting a social event for staff at the school on 28 January 2022.

2.4 Meetings SSK and IJO had recently met, as they did every term, with their equivalents at Parliament Hill School, Danny Silverstone and Sarah Creasey. On the day following this meeting SSK had two appointments. With KDU, SJE and the school's Camden professional partner Rob Robson (RRO), she would be undertaking IJO's annual performance review. She would also be meeting chairs of the Governing Bodies at the three other schools in the LaSWAP sixth form consortium – Acland Burghley, La Sainte Union and Parliament Hill. Among other things, the chairs hoped to share details of their lead governors in areas such as safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and curriculum planning, so that the individuals concerned could pool experiences and best practice.

3. Receive headteacher's report

3.1 SSK thanked IJO for her report and asked her to introduce it, which she did as follows. IJO echoed SSK's thanks to governors for the work that they did, and apologised for the absence of various senior school leaders, who were currently involved in the Y7 parents' evening.

3.2 School Self Evaluation Form (SEF) This document, written collaboratively by members of the senior leadership team, was positive and honest. It readied the school for any visit by an external agency, the first of which was scheduled to be from the peer-review organisation Challenge Partners on 17 January 2022. The document highlighted the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, many if not all of which would be familiar to governors.

3.3 Feedback from School Improvement Committee meeting IJO confessed herself frustrated with this meeting, on 18 November 2021, much of which had been scheduled to consist of a briefing on trauma-informed practice in schools. However, the briefing had lacked focus, and there had been little time to discuss the school-specific documentation which had been circulated. IJO added that, in response to a request at the meeting, she had included in her report in-year student mobility figures for Years 7-11 students. They were very low – just 15 left the school – and the school could account for their destinations. She would report on this regularly.

3.4 Feedback from Personnel and Resources Committee meeting IJO deferred to KDU to report on this later in the meeting.

3.5 Student progress data for KS4 Autumn teacher assessment data for Y11 (predicted grades) and Y10 (progress, or “working at” grades) were broadly in line with previous years.

3.5.1 Subjects which needed further investigation were computing, food technology and English language. The inexperienced computing teacher was being supported. Food technology was now a vocational qualification rather than a GCSE. English language was marked perhaps too robustly.

3.5.2 Intervention at KS4 were most necessary for white British disadvantaged and disadvantaged middle prior attaining students. In both cases, disadvantaged students not currently receiving free school meals made least progress.

3.6 Pupil Premium report BLA would address this under a later agenda item.

3.7 SSK thanked IJO for her summary and called for questions, which IJO, BLA and GFO answered as follows.

3.8 Can food technology students convert to a GCSE course next year [KDU]? Yes; in fact the school could have offered a hybrid course this year, but the vocational qualification appeared to offer the better course.

3.9 What safeguarding checks are triggered when a parent elects to home educate their son [SSK]? That depended on the level of concerns. In the case of one Y8 student, it had been agreed that it was home education which could best support his needs. Another request had triggered safeguarding concerns. In one case, a request had been declined and the student kept on William Ellis's roll. Generally, there were few requests. When received, the school worked closely with Camden.

3.10 Is Y10 and Y11 progress, especially maths, as expected [DNE]? Y11's grades had been predicted; Y10's were grades at which they were currently working. That was not comparing like with like. Both had been affected by the pandemic, The issue for Y10 was lack of resilience more than subject knowledge.

3.11 How is that lack of resilience being addressed [DNE]? The literacy, homework and formative assessment strategies within the School Development Plan were focused on supporting students to have the best learning experience they could. Catch-up tutoring and other interventions were set to start.

3.12 Does the tutoring programme include support to develop resilience and independent learning, or does it simply focus on subject knowledge [DNE]? Online tutoring included no pastoral element. Face to face tutoring included more, but that depended on the individual tutor. Good tutors were in demand.

3.13 SSK pointed out that recent Camden feedback had been confident that William Ellis had clear plans and knew its strengths and weaknesses. The forthcoming Challenge Partners review would further test the school's self-assessment.

3.14 Why the big difference between the results of those students on roll at William Ellis and those on roll elsewhere and taught at the school [KDU]? The idealistic answer was that, within a single school, teaching and pastoral care were aligned. The LaSWAP schools were discussing how to hold each other to account here. Reasons for discrepancies could include a school's quality of teaching in a particular subject, or students' need for more resilience and independence when taught elsewhere.

[MSC joined the meeting with apologies at 5.32pm.]

3.15 How worried should parents be about the discrepancy, and are expectations high enough [KDU]? SSK noted a successful recent LaSWAP evening for parents of potential Y12 students, hosted jointly by William Ellis and Parliament Hill schools. Further parent feedback was required. IJO thought that expectations could always be higher.

3.16 SSK thanked IJO again for her report, and her, BLA and GFO for answering questions.

4. Receive latest iteration of Self Evaluation Form

This had been considered as part of the previous item.

5. Receive report on Pupil Premium spending

5.1 SSK thanked BLA for his report on Pupil Premium spending and invited him to introduce it, which he did as follows.

5.2 This had been BLA's first year with responsibility for reporting on spending £351k worth of Pupil Premium funding.

5.3 The excellent DfE template circulated provided a more streamlined reporting system. For instance, activity was subdivided into teaching (e.g. CPD, recruitment and retention), targeted support (e.g. tutoring and one-to-one support in structured programmes), and wider strategies (perhaps relating to attendance, behaviour or wellbeing). Each was allocated a dedicated sum within the report.

5.4 The report identified four key challenges on which the school was spending its Pupil Premium funding: literacy, attendance, learning behaviours and engagement, and independent learning. Filling in the form had been a very helpful process. Narrowing the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers was crucial.

5.5 SSK thanked BLA for his summary and called for questions, which were taken all at once but are disaggregated here for ease of understanding. BLA, MSC and IJO answered them as follows. SJE, who is governor with responsibility for the Pupil Premium, asked the first question.

5.6 Now that homework is set through the online Satchel system, can we see data on homework completed by Pupil Premium students in each year group, compared with their non-Pupil Premium peers [SJE]? Yes, Satchel gave lots of opportunities for this. There had been a definite uptake in students' engagement in homework.

5.7 Given the continuing debate about the value of homework, are there alternative ways to support particularly disadvantaged children, perhaps by adding an hour to the school day [KDU]? Students needed intelligent, individually-focused homework which supported them in their independent learning, at the right level for them.

5.8 Given the emphasis by the Education Endowment Foundation on the importance of having an appropriate space to undertake homework, what does William Ellis provide in terms of homework clubs [SJE]? Covid-19 had cut short the so-called "Lesson 6" after-school initiative but the school would revisit it. There were homework clubs.

5.9 Where were these homework clubs based [SSK]? In the library and various other spaces. This year, Y11 interventions had been taking place during a notional "Period 6". An extra hour of school would be very radical, though.

5.10 If the school acknowledges that some boys struggle with nine GCSEs, why force them [KDU]? The school was looking at supplementing GCSEs with other qualifications for appropriate students. It continued to offer various Duke of Edinburgh courses. One struggle was matching support to the needs of students.

5.11 What is the balance between Pupil Premium income and expenditure [JWO]? With some 60 per cent of students in receipt of the funding, allocating it was problematic. Many Pupil Premium initiatives made sense for everyone.

5.12 SSK thanked BLA again for his report, and him, MSC and IJO for answering questions.

[HMO left the meeting at 6pm.]

6. Receive report on attendance

6.1 SSK thanked GFO for his reports on attendance and invited him to introduce them, which he did as follows.

6.2 Disadvantaged white Pupil Premium students attended most poorly. They usually also had additional needs, and often received support by social workers.

6.3 Currently, William Ellis students' attendance compared well with the national average, partly due to the patchy effects of Covid-19. However, Camden claimed that William Ellis students' attendance was towards the lower end in the borough.

6.4 The most effective systems to tackle poor attendance involved early intervention and the building of strong links with parents and family.

6.5 A new system to track student attendance weekly, led by heads of year, was now in place. The next step would be better liaison between them and the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL), special educational needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDCo) and members of the school's senior leadership team.

6.6 A refreshed attendance policy would be brought to governors in time.

6.7 SSK thanked GFO for his summary and called for questions, which he and IJO answered as follows.

6.8 What additional investment is needed, perhaps to reinstate the family liaison role [SJE]? This currently vacant post, requiring a particularly skilled practitioner, would be filled in the New Year, perhaps funded by Covid-19 monies, and perhaps with some admin support.

6.9 How does William Ellis compare with other schools when it comes to particular groups [JWO]? Disadvantaged students attended better than those of any other Camden schools. Compared with other boys' schools nationally, attendance was significantly higher. The opportunity was there to achieve excellent attendance.

6.10 SSK pointed out that, before he had left the meeting, HMO had asked how the school could help to tackle food poverty, particularly over the Christmas break. SSK to invite HMO to discuss with IJO, who pointed out that a Camden Christmas holidays activities programme included meals, but it relied on families applying.

ACTION *Item 6.10* **SSK to invite HMO to discuss school food poverty alleviation initiatives with IJO.**

6.11 ISH, who is governor with responsibility for attendance, asked the final question.

6.12 What is the overlap between Pupil Premium and SEND students [ISH]? Many students in receipt of the Pupil Premium also had very challenging needs.

7. Receive reports from committees

7.1 School Improvement Committee SJE, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 18 November 2021. Draft minutes had been circulated. The bulk of the meeting, which had been open to all governors, had been dedicated to learning about the topic of trauma-informed practice in schools, although the practical focus had been on student behaviour and exclusions. Governors would need another training session to fully explore the implications of a trauma-informed approach for William Ellis specifically.

7.2 Personnel and Resources Committee KDU, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 2 December 2021. Draft minutes were not yet available. KDU summarised the committee's discussions, which had included staffing, the currently-healthy budget, and the school's outdoor learning centre, The Mill.

7.3 Pay Committee JWO, who had chaired a meeting of this committee on 3 November 2021, reported that it had discussed IJO's recommendations for performance-related pay increases. Minutes were confidential.

7.4 IJO suggested that she, SSK and the chairs of the main committees should review the increasingly-full annual work plan to prioritise agenda items.

ACTION *Item 7.4* **SSK, IJO, KDU and SJE** to review the annual work plan to prioritise agenda items.

8. Review documents for information

All present noted the Governors' Expenses Policy.

[DNE left the meeting with apologies at 6.30pm.]

9. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

9.1 The minutes of the meeting of 14 October 2021 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SSK to sign after the meeting. There was one matter arising.

9.2 Item 11.2 SSK reminded governors, if they had not already done so, to respond to her request for a selfie and pen portrait for the school website.

ACTION *Item 9.2* **All governors**, if they have not already done so, to send SSK a selfie and pen portrait for the school website.

9.3 All other actions had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

10. Any other business

10.1 Anti vax protests IJO reported that there had been no further anti-vaccination protests at the school gates, because the vaccination programme had halted. She saw unmerited abuse, from anti-vaxxers or others, as part of the job, unfortunately.

10.1.1 SSK reported that she had enquired of Camden about pastoral support for senior school leaders, particularly IJO, with no concrete response. SJE cited evidence that female headteachers were more vulnerable to abuse, particularly online.

10.2 Confidential minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising Given that no discussion was anticipated or forthcoming, the confidential minutes of the meeting of 14 October 2021 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SSK to sign after the meeting. The single matter arising had been fulfilled.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 3 February 2022 at 5pm

There being no other business, SSK thanked all present for attending and closed the meeting at 6.39pm.

Signed.....

3 February 2022

Selina Skipwith
Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION	Item 6.10	<i>SSK to invite HMO to discuss school food poverty alleviation initiatives with IJO.</i>
ACTION	Item 7.4	<i>SSK, IJO, KDU and SJE to review the annual work plan to prioritise agenda items.</i>
ACTION	Item 9.2	<i>All governors, if they have not already done so, to send SSK a selfie and pen portrait for the school website.</i>