

# WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



## MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 24 March 2022

### MINUTES

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| GOVERNORS              |  | Present |
|------------------------|--|---------|
| <b>Headteacher</b>     | Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)  | ✓       |
| <b>Co-opted</b>        | Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)   | x       |
|                        | Ms Imogen Sharp (ISH)  | ✓       |
| <b>Foundation</b>      | Mr Richard Ault (RAU)  | ✓       |
|                        | Ms Ronke Coote (RCO)   | ✓       |
|                        | Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)   | x       |
|                        | Prof Daniel Monk (DMO) <b>Vice chair</b>   | ✓       |
|                        | Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)  | ✓       |
|                        | Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)  | ✓       |
|                        | Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) <b>Chair</b>  | ✓       |
|                        | VACANCY  | N/A     |
|                        | VACANCY  | N/A     |
| <b>Local authority</b> | Mr Hanad Mohamed (HMO)   | x       |
| <b>Parent</b>          | Ms Sophie Jenkins (SJE)  | ✓       |
|                        | Mr Stuart Taylor (STA)   | ✓       |
| <b>Staff</b>           | Mr Rob Yurchesyn (RYU)   | ✓       |
| <b>ASSOCIATE</b>       |  |         |
|                        | Prof Lee Elliot Major  |         |
| <b>ATTENDING</b>       |  |         |
|                        | Camillo and Jack (Y7); Christopher and Hugo (Y8); Adam, Hennock and Thiago (Y9); Felix and Maceo (Y10) |         |
|                        | <b>Members of the Student Council</b>  |         |
|                        | Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) <b>Senior assistant head</b>   |         |
|                        | Mr Jeremy Pratt (JPR) <b>School Council co-ordinator</b>   |         |
|                        | Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) <b>Clerk</b>  |         |

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

SSK welcomed everyone to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.02pm. She particularly welcomed members of the School Council, who were to present to governors. For their benefit, governors introduced themselves. For governors' benefit, members of the School Council introduced themselves. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, KDU, HMO and JWO. NSI had apologised for a late arrival. No other apologies were necessary, as all other governors were, or would be, present, and thus a quorum. JPR apologised for the Y11 members of the Student Council, who were currently sitting mock exams. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. With the exception of one paper – on university applications for item 4 – all papers had been circulated in advance.

## **2. Receive presentation from School Council**

**2.1** SSK welcomed members of the School Council again and invited them to present to governors, which they did as follows, displaying a PowerPoint presentation entitled More in Common.

**2.2** In all there were 70 members of the Student Council, inspired by the vision of the late Jo Cox MP, footballer Marcus Rashford and local rapper and activist Akala. Two old Elysians were also inspirational: Camden councillor and international trade consultant Awale Olad and *Peaky Blinders* actor Kingsley Ben-Adir.

**2.3** Five More in Common pledges focused on the environment, extracurricular activities, fundraising, community action and challenging prejudice and hate.

**2.4** The Student Council's campaigning issues had included the school's outdoor spaces, the toilets, and the school's "see it, hear it, take it" policy on students' mobile phones. Fundraising activities had included a Fun Run, which had raised £4k for the school.

**[ISH joined the meeting with apologies at 5.08pm.]**

**2.5** Non-uniform days had raised three-figure sums for the British Legion's Poppy Appeal, the Alone in London homelessness advice service, and LGBT+ young people in Camden. A group for LGBTQ+ students and friends was being set up.

**2.6** As part of its More in Common work, members of the Student Council had addressed school assemblies about equalities and diversity issues, including International Women's Day, toxic masculinity, sexism, misogyny and homophobia. One aim was to make it normal to challenge discriminatory behaviour and attitudes.

**2.7** Finally, the members of the Student Council asked governors what they did.

**2.8** SSK explained that governors had collective responsibility for the school's finances and its students' education, ensuring that every student had opportunity. They also ensured that the teachers and staff were doing a good job. Some governors had special areas of responsibility, which she listed.

**2.9** SSK thanked the members of the School Council for their question and presentation and called for questions from governors, which members of the School Council answered as follows.

**2.10 How do you become members of the School Council [DMO]?** Candidates put themselves forward, gave a speech and then there was an election.

**2.11 How often do you meet [SSK]?** There were three or four full council meetings a term but also meetings of smaller groups on specific issues. IJO said she was impressed by the time student councillors were prepared to devote to planning, preparing and rehearsing presentations. It was not a small commitment. RYU noted that councillors were proactive, and integrated into the running of the school. Previously, a pupil might complain to him; now they approached a councillor.

**2.12 How will Deep Learning Days be progressed [RYU]?** The first highly successful one, for KS3, would hopefully be followed by one for KS4.

**[NSI joined the meeting at 5.24pm.]**

**2.13 How can governors and staff help you in your campaign to address toxic masculinity [ISH]?** More Deep Learning Days would help to remind students that everyone should be accepted for who they were.

**2.14 How do you raise money [RAU]?** Through a range of means, from £4k of sponsorship for the Fun Run to a £300 achievement award grant from the charitable Jack Petchey Foundation.

**2.15 How can governors support you [STA]?** JPR pointed out that the environmentally friendly and financially neutral alternative to the school blazer proposed by the School Council would have to be approved by governors. A proposal had already been put to IJO. SSK said that the council should present to the school's parents' association WESPA to get parents' views and then return to governors with a full proposal. She would set up a meeting with WESPA. DMO, an Old Elysian, pointed out the school uniform back in the 70s had included a polo neck jumper. One of the boys thought that a polo neck and shorts would be more practical and comfortable than the current uniform of blazer and trousers.

**ACTION Item 2.15** *SSK to set up a meeting between WESPA and the School Council on its uniform proposals.*

**2.16 How widespread is the issue of toxic masculinity in the school, and how can governors support you in your campaign against it [STA]?** It was definitely a problem and had been for a while, more than at a mixed school like Acland Burghley and, of course, a girls' school like Parliament Hill. The main source of the problem had to be identified and remedies perhaps patiently explained to perpetrators. Governors could support Deep Learning Days for higher years, who then could be role models.

**2.17 Would you be interested in brainstorming practical ways forward [STA]?** Yes.

**ACTION Item 2.17** *STA to liaise with School Council on brainstorming practical ways to address toxic masculinity in school.*

**2.18 Have you discussed positive – kinder and more welcoming – ways of framing masculinity [RYU]?** No, but that would definitely be a valuable part of the campaign, which should not focus on negatives. STA stressed that there were other, more positive, ways of being masculine which should be explored.

**2.19 When it is time for you to step down from the School Council, how will you know you have done a great job [STA]?** Members would have made a positive difference.

**2.20 Could involving KS5 students help [FWI]?** The School Council would certainly like to work more with KS5 and benefit from their experience. FWI added that, in her experience, other schools were unable to identify and act against toxic masculinity.

**2.21 Does the system of praise points work [RCO]?** It varied. Y7 pupils might receive seven praise points a day, while older pupils might have a great day and receive none. Teachers might think that older boys did not appreciate them, but they did. The system should be more consistent. IJO noted that previously, there had been rewards, such as trips, but rewards should recognise progress as well as attainment.

**2.22 Do you like the new homework system [SSK]?** It was really good, and easier for teachers too.

**2.23 Are you happy that lessons have returned to being in person [SSK]?** Absolutely.

**2.24** SSK thanked the School Council for their fascinating presentation, and for answering questions. She would be interested to hear of how its representatives could help to explain to their peers why good behaviour in and good attendance at school were important. IJO thanked JPR for his energy, commitment and hard work supporting the School Council. Today would not have been possible without his dedicated input.

**[JPR and members of the School Council left at 5.47pm.]**

### **3. Receive headteacher's report**

**3.1** SSK thanked IJO for her report and asked her to introduce it, which she did selectively as follows.

**3.2 Feedback from senior leaders' planning weekend** This first strategic planning weekend since September 2020, held at the school's outward bound centre, The Mill, had discussed the school's middle- and long-term development goals. The school's unique qualities were at the fore. Its aims, purpose, vision and values were summed up in the phrase: *William Ellis is a school that nurtures successful students and good citizens through strong relationships*. Nurturing was stressed.

**3.3 Sixth form** FWI would address this in the next item.

**3.4 Ofsted preparation documents** A summary of detailed answers to possible questions for governors about the quality of education in the school was now on GovernorHub. IJO urged governors to review it; they thanked her for it.

**3.5 School self-evaluation** This had been summarised in SWOT – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – form, with new additions highlighted.

**3.5.1** It should be read in conjunction with Camden's 2030 educational strategy, which identified threats such as a lower birth rate, funding challenges, family flight from London and student flight to private schools.

**3.5.2** Collaboration between schools would be key in future: schools' Camden Learning standards meetings would from now on cover plans to collaborate further with other schools.

**3.5.3** The launch of the Camden strategy had been timed to coincide with the government's Green Paper on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and its White Paper on education in general. The latter was anticipated to include forced academisation by 2030.

**3.5.4** SSK reported that Camden Learning had hosted a chairs' session on collaboration and governance, citing the examples of LaSWAP – the sixth form consortium of which William Ellis is a member – and the federation of Haverstock School and the borough's pupil referral unit, Camden Centre for Learning.

**3.5.5** Whatever the model, Camden HR would have to reform. Church and other faith schools were likely to be the first to be encouraged to academise.

**3.5.6 What would be Camden's role if schools academised [RYU]?** SSK pointed out that currently local authorities were not allowed to run multi-academy trusts (MATs) but that could change. As a voluntary aided school, William Ellis could have more freedom. IJO thought financial incentives could leave schools with no option but to academise. RYU identified a significant staff aversion to academisation.

**3.6** SSK thanked IJO for her summary and called for any further questions and comments, to which IJO responded as follows.

**3.7** ISH pointed out that the line "William Ellis is a school which nurtures successful students..." could be construed as the school nurturing **only** successful students – unsuccessful students were not nurtured. She asked a question.

**3.8 Post-pandemic, does attendance remain a strength [ISH]?** Yes, relative to Camden and nationally.

**3.9 How can PSHE be a strength of the school when it was such a challenge to fit it into the teaching timetable [DNE]?** Because it was timetabled at all key stages; because the key aspects of PSHE were taught before they became statutory; and because the school's PSHE teaching included the very issues of equality and diversity which had been raised earlier by members of the School Council. Excellent PSHE teaching informed their commitment to challenging social toxic issues. The school had issues around, say, toxic masculinity because the world had issues around toxic masculinity. SJE thought that governors should celebrate students' commitment to identifying social injustice and wanting to do something about it.

**3.10 When are you expecting an Ofsted inspection [DNE]?** In summer 2021! However, schools deemed to require improvement were still awaiting inspection. SSK urged governors not to be obsessed with Ofsted, but to be as prepared as they could be.

#### **4. Receive report on sixth form**

**4.1** SSK invited FWI to introduce the highlights of her report on the sixth form, which she did as follows.

**4.2** FWI reported that the results of the Y13 January mock exams would be available soon. Gender and disadvantaged gaps were being addressed. Most students would achieve the grades they needed to progress to the next stage.

**4.3** Grades would be "holistic", in that they were dependent partly on teacher judgement, but given the pandemic, many students had struggled with formal assessments, and the grades were very low. Holistic grades were a happy medium between very low assessment grades and comparatively high aspirational grades.

**4.4 Have holistic grades been used in previous years [DNE]?** Yes, because they better indicated progress. Teacher grades were benchmarked against public exams. The results were one of the indicators for subject support and intervention.

**4.5 Are girls and disadvantaged students reflected in the algorithm for awarding grades [RCO]?** The algorithm was national and girls tended to do better nationally, so weighting it would exacerbate girls' apparent performance. IJO thought that the algorithm was not factor in disadvantaged or gender performance.

**4.6** FWI continued: fellow LaSWAP schools Acland Burghley and Parliament Hill planned to launch two T level courses, in broadcast media and childcare & education respectively. William Ellis could learn from their experience.

**4.7** The school aimed to broaden its curriculum in future with regard to maths, languages and social sciences, including politics.

**4.8** The government had funded increased learning hours for full-time students from 540 to 580 hours, which meant an hour a week across the year. The time would probably be used for a compulsory core enrichment curriculum. William Ellis was a net contributor to LaSWAP's enrichment programme. Alternatives to compulsory enrichment were extra lessons in some subjects, and targeted study support.

**4.9 Why the difference in high attenders in Y12 and Y13 [DNE]?** That was down to natural variation.

**4.10** FWI tabled an addendum to her report, on university applications. It consisted of raw data, without analysis for groups such as disadvantaged students. Popular courses included business and business-related options, for financial reasons.

**4.11** SSK pointed out that the analysis resulted from LaSWAP's determination to scrutinise KS5 data in a standardised way. She called for questions, which FWI answered as follows.

**4.12 Why is Queen Mary University of London the top Russell Group choice [RAU]?** Its computer science offer was strong, and although it was a Russell Group university it was not difficult to get into, as it made lower offers than its peers.

**4.13 How can governors support students in applying for university [NSI]?** It would be useful for students to be able to send draft personal statements for review by governors who were expert in particular subjects.

**4.14 Are students tapping in to industry scholarships [NSI]?** They were notified of various schemes. FWI and NSI to compare potential sources.

**ACTION** *Item 4.14* *NSI and FWI to liaise on potential sources of industry scholarships for university courses.*

**4.15 What is the gender balance for university applications [DMO]?** There were slightly fewer women.

**4.16** FWI took three questions at once, disaggregated here for ease of reference.

**4.17 What other Russell Group universities are targeted, and is Leading Routes, which aims to prepare the next generation of black academics, worth approaching [STA]?** Applications to Oxbridge were high but not too successful. Leading Routes sounded interesting.

**4.18 How do numbers of university applicants compare with previous years, and could the LaSWAP schools co-ordinate applications [ISH]?** Far fewer of the 153 Y13 students had applied for university this year. Some were on vocational courses, some remained undecided, some had been offered apprenticeships, and some, who had been kept at school for safeguarding reasons, were in no position to apply to university. A pan-LaSWAP university applications co-ordinator was an aspiration.

**4.19 How do you talk to students about what they want to do when they leave William Ellis [DNE]?** The ethos was not to push them in any particular direction.

**4.20** SSK thanked FWI again for her report, and for answering questions.

## 5. Discuss Ofsted preparation

SSK to canvas dates from governors for a 45-minute Zoom call on preparing for Ofsted, led by Owen Rees, Camden's head of governor services. A list of questions asked at Camden schools which had recently received visits from Ofsted inspectors was being prepared. Restarting link governor visits to school was a key aim.

**ACTION** *Item 5* **SSK to canvas dates from governors for a 45-minute Zoom call on preparing for Ofsted led by Camden's Owen Rees.**

## 6. Receive reports from committees

**6.1 School Improvement Committee** SJE, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 3 March 2022. Draft minutes had been circulated. The meeting had discussed the science curriculum and support for the science department.

**6.2 Personnel and Resources Committee** KDU and JWO (chair and vice chair of this committee) having given apologies, former chair RAU reported that it had met on 17 March 2022. Draft minutes were not yet available, but finalised minutes of the previous (27 January 2022) meeting had been circulated. The 2022-23 budget was projected to have an in-year surplus of £33k, on top of the existing carry-forward of £200k. The school was in a strong financial position but next year could prove tough.

## 7. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

**7.1** The minutes of the meeting of 3 February 2022 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SSK to sign after the meeting. There was one matter arising.

**7.2 Item 12** Any governors still without a lanyard to inform school office.

**ACTION** *Item 7.2* **Governors without a lanyard to inform school office.**

**7.3** the three other actions, on updating the policy schedule, the School Financial Value Standard, and the anticipated Ofsted inspection, had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

## 8. Any other business

**Equalities and wellbeing** SSK thanked STA for his think piece on equalities and wellbeing which had been useful for governors to read in advance of hearing from the School Council and IJO's report on the senior leaders' planning weekend. STA asked when there would be further discussion on the subject. SJE suggested that it should be revisited in the context of responses to the parent survey. IJO recognised the lasting impact of her predecessor as headteacher, Sam White, in developing the School Council to the point of today's presentation.

**Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 19 May 2022 at 5pm**

There being no further business, SSK thanked all present for attending and closed the meeting at 6.50pm.

Signed.....

26 May 2022

**Selina Skipwith**  
**Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School**

#### **ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES**

**ACTION** **Item 2.15** **SSK** to set up a meeting between WESPA and the School Council on its uniform proposals.

**ACTION** **Item 2.17** **STA** to liaise with School Council on brainstorming practical ways to address toxic masculinity in school.

**ACTION** **Item 4.14** **NSI** and **FWI** to liaise on potential sources of industry scholarships for university courses.

**ACTION** **Item 5** **SSK** to canvas dates from governors for a 45-minute Zoom call on preparing for Ofsted led by Camden's Owen Rees.

**ACTION** **Item 7.2** **Governors without a lanyard** to inform school office.