

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 13 October 2022

MINUTES

GOVERNORS		Present
Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓
Co-opted	Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)	✓
	Ms Imogen Sharp (ISH)	✓
Foundation	Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)	x
	Mr Sean Harford (SHA)	✓
	Mrs Sophie Jenkins (SJE)	✓
	Mr Hugh Matheson (HMA)	✓
	Prof Daniel Monk (DMO) Vice chair	✓
	Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)	✓
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	x
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) Chair	✓
	VACANCY	N/A
Local authority	Mr Hanad Mohamed (HMO)	x
Parent	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✓
	Mr Stuart Taylor (STA)	✓
Staff	Mr Rob Yurchesyn (RYU)	✓
ASSOCIATES		
	Mrs Ronke Coote (RCO)	✓
	Prof Lee Elliot Major (LEM)	x
ATTENDING		
	Mr John Clark (JCL) Observer	
	Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) Deputy head	
	Mr Matthew Scott (MSC) Senior assistant head	
	Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) Senior assistant head	
	Mr Karl Altmann (KAL) Assistant head	
	Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) Clerk	

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and declarations of interest

SSK welcomed all present to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.03pm. She particularly welcomed new governors SHA, CHO and HMA to their first FGB, as well as JCL, who is a national leader in school governance. For their benefit, all others present introduced themselves. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, KDU, LEM and NSI. There were no apologies from HMO. BLA had apologised for a late arrival. No other apologies were necessary, as all other governors were 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.

2. Elect FGB chair and vice chair for 2022-23

2.1 Elect chair MHU took the chair and called for nominations for chair. DMO, seconded by SJE, nominated SSK. There being no other nominations, and SSK having indicated that she was prepared to stand, MHU declared her reappointed as chair.

2.2 Elect vice chair SSK nominated DMO as vice chair, seconded by DNE. There being no other nominations, and DMO having indicated that he was prepared to stand, SSK declared him reappointed as vice chair.

3. Appoint members of committees and chairs

3.1 SSK proposed committee membership and chairs of committees as follows.

3.1.1 School Improvement Committee SSK proposed that SJE remain as chair and RCO remain as vice chair: governors **AGREED**. Members were **AGREED** as:

- Ronke Coote
- Karen Dunnell
- Lee Elliot Major
- Sean Harford
- Sophie Jenkins
- Izzy Jones
- Daniel Monk
- Daniel Needleman
- Imogen Sharp
- Nicola Sinclair
- Selina Skipwith
- Rob Yurchesyn

3.1.2 Personnel and Resources Committee SSK proposed that KDU remain as chair and JWO remain as vice chair: governors **AGREED**. Members were **AGREED** as:

- Karen Dunnell
- Izzy Jones
- Sophie Jenkins
- Hugh Matheson
- Hanad Mohamed

- Daniel Needleman
- Selina Skipwith
- Stuart Taylor
- Jonny Woolf

3.1.2a CHO to attend School Improvement and Personnel and Resources committees before opting to join one or the other. SSK invited HMA and SHA to attend the School Improvement and Personnel & Resources committees respectively to gain a greater understanding of the workings of the Governing Body.

ACTION *Item 3.1.2a* **CHO** to attend School Improvement and Personnel & Resources committees before opting to join one or the other; **HMA** and **SHA** to attend committee of which they are not a member to greater understand governors' work.

3.1.3 Admissions Committee Members were **AGREED** as SSK and DMO.

3.1.4 Headteacher's Performance Review Panel Members were **AGREED** as KDU, SJE and SSK.

3.1.5 Pay Committee Members were **AGREED** as HMA, DNE and JWO.

4. Agree committee terms of reference

Governors **AGREED** the committee terms of reference of reference as circulated.

5. Agree link governor arrangements

5.1 The following links were **AGREED**:

- **Attendance** Imogen Sharp
- **Careers and alumni** Daniel Monk
- **Curriculum development** Sean Harford
- **Equalities and wellbeing** Stuart Taylor
- **Health and safety** Vacancy
- **Homework and literacy** Daniel Needleman
- **LaSWAP** Selena Skipwith and Hanad Mohamed
- **Outdoor learning and The Mill** Hugh Matheson
- **Pupil Premium** Sophie Jenkins
- **Safeguarding and behaviour** Selina Skipwith
- **SEND** Nicola Sinclair

5.2 SSK and DNE to discuss how to rationalise his role. SSK and ISH to discuss generic link role job description; SSK then to forward to all link governors with terms of reference. A link governor for behaviour and attendance could also be a prospect. IJO urged link governors to liaise only with a single dedicated school leader. All governors to consider volunteering for vacant health and safety role.

ACTION *Item 5.2* **SSK and DNE** to discuss how to rationalise his role; **SSK and ISH** to discuss generic link role job description; **SSK** to forward it to all link governors with terms of reference; **all governors** to consider taking on health and safety role.

6. Declare any interests for 2022-23 and review of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

MHU reminded governors that these declarations – of business and other relevant interests, and that the governor concerned had read the Department of Education's (DfE's) *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSiE – September 2022 edition) – should be made on the dedicated school governance platform GovernorHub. He urged governors to ensure that their Ofsted-critical declarations were up to date. He would circulate a reminder of how to make the declarations.

ACTION *Item 6* **MHU** to re-circulate instructions to governors on how to declare any interests for 2022-23, and confirm that they had read KCSiE, on GovernorHub.

7. Agree to log individual training and development activities

SSK encouraged all governors to undertake appropriate training and development activities in 2022-23. IJO to forward NSPCC safeguarding training link to MHU; MHU to circulate with link to Camden Learning training opportunities and reminder of how to log training on GovernorHub.

ACTION *Item 7* **IJO** to forward NSPCC safeguarding training link to MHU; **MHU** to circulate with link to Camden Learning training opportunities and reminder of how to log training on GovernorHub.

[BLA joined the meeting at 5.18pm.]

8. Review key governance documents

8.1 Instrument of Government Governors **AGREED** the Instrument of Government which came into effect on 1 December 2017 as fit for continued purpose.

8.2 FGB standing orders Governors **AGREED** FGB standing orders as circulated.

8.3 Governors' Code of Conduct Governors **AGREED** collectively and individually to abide by the Code of Conduct as circulated. SSK to sign on governors' behalf after the meeting.

9. Agree governor protocols

9.1 Naming governors in minutes Governors **AGREED** that they should be named in minutes as a matter of course, with the right for their name to be redacted on request.

9.2 Approving policies Governors **AGREED** that, on the principle of subsidiarity, all policies should be approved at committee if possible, or by an individual or the headteacher if guidance permitted and the committee wished.

9.3 Digital attendance Governors **AGREED** any form of digital attendance at meetings, at the discretion of the chair of the meeting – who would expect a week's notice of requests – and in line with advice from Camden Learning.

10. Agree Admissions Policy

Governors **AGREED** the Admissions Policy as circulated.

11. Receive update from chair, including chair's actions

SSK reported that it had been a busy but productive start to the academic year. She had sat in on behaviour briefings to staff by KAL. A LaSWAP event had welcomed new families. She had chaired her first meeting of the LaSWAP Governors' Forum, and attended two meetings of The Mill Trust, and two of the Birkbeck Trust. She had attended IJO's post-Ofsted presentation to Y8-11 parents, at which every parent she had spoken to had praised IJO and her ambitions for the school – one had said that that was why their son was at William Ellis. She had also attended her first project board meeting with Camden following the Ofsted Requires Improvement (RI) grade, which gave the school a clear mandate for what it had to do, advised by the school's new Camden school improvement partner, Anne Hudson. With excellent exam results and its highest roll ever there was a lot to celebrate about William Ellis.

12. Discuss Ofsted report

12.1 SSK invited IJO to introduce a discussion about the Ofsted report.

12.2 IJO was conscious of previous governor concern about the link between the disappointing Ofsted report, recruiting students and the school's finances. However, Years 8-11 were all but full, and 128 Y7s had joined in September 2022.

12.3 The final report had not been published until 7 September 2022, though there had been discussion on social media. Despite that recruitment had held steady. IJO had outlined the report's findings at the Y7 parent information meeting because that was only fair, but had also highlighted key improvement plans.

12.4 The Ofsted Improvement Plan sat alongside the School Development Plan. There was tension between Ofsted's very specific improvement points and the wider, all-encompassing need to improve the school generally. Ofsted would look at the school through the lens of its entire framework and not just focus on the previous report's improvement points, with which the school largely agreed.

12.5 Interestingly, attendees at a recent conference of the school leaders' professional organisation ASCL had echoed the school's concerns about an Ofsted focus on compliance-driven behaviour systems and boys' derogatory language.

12.6 An Ofsted monitoring visit could take place this academic year, due to the requirement to improve leadership and management. That would be welcome because an experienced inspector would be able to say if the school was on track.

12.7 Staff recruitment and retention at William Ellis remained good, although recruitment to computer science and food technology was problematic, as nationally. Other schools were in more difficult financial positions.

12.8 All school leaders faced wellbeing issues. IJO urged governors to continue to be critical friends but also to advocate for wider sympathy for education professionals.

12.9 SSK thanked IJO and called for questions and comments – the more challenging the better – to which IJO responded as follows.

12.10 How is the leadership judgement linked to other judgements [SJE]? The inspector had claimed that an RI judgement for quality of education automatically followed an RI grade for quality of education. SHA, who previously worked at Ofsted, thought that it was certainly not automatic, as it had to take into account improvement initiatives. ISH noted widespread concern about Ofsted inspections among Camden schools. At least one Camden school's quality of education and leadership ratings differed.

[KAL joined the meeting at 5.41 pm.]

12.11 How much more information did you receive in person from inspectors than was in the final report [DNE]? Some of IJO's notes differed from the report.

12.12 Do you agree about the inconsistencies between year groups and subjects [DNE]? Yes, although as previously advised, the aim was to focus on improvement across the school, not just in named departments visited by the inspectors.

12.13 How did inspectors' feedback align with your analysis [DNE]? IJO deplored the criticism of lack of challenge in maths, where results had been historically strong. Inspectors' focus on a very specific area of English had been frustrating. IJO had agreed that relative strengths included history. The report as whole followed the new inspection framework. She did not think that the school was worse than in 2017. She agreed with the improvement points. The report said that the impact of Covid had been taken into account, but gaps in learning, and the impact on behaviour of complex family situations had clearly not been appreciated. The report's criticism of derogatory language suggested that the problem lay only in this school. It did not.

12.14 What had been the impact of the report on staff morale [DMO]? RYU, as staff governor, reported that it had felt like a punch in the gut for most, particularly on behaviour. IJO thought it had caused some staff to question their vocation.

12.15 With regard to Ofsted's criticism of student behaviour, can a culture of inclusivity co-exist with a disciplined behaviour code [SJE]? FWI thought that some staff felt galvanised by the report to improve student behaviour. SSK noted that headteachers across Camden – even, now, in primary schools – had reported that behaviour was worsening. The cost of living crisis would exacerbate this.

12.16 BLA noted that this was his seventh Ofsted inspection in 27 years of teaching: he had never known a school to crack student behaviour. RYU thought that schools which took Draconian measures were denying children the opportunity to be children. The school had to explore what worked for it.

12.17 HMA recommended – as he had experienced in previous school – setting up a staff self-assessment regime on behaviour, which could help morale.

12.18 ISH returned to the post-Ofsted improvement plan. It was currently too specific, focusing on specific subjects like food technology and computer science. It should be broader, with clear achievable milestones in a range of areas. Currently there were no objectives for leadership or SEND, for instance. The project board should also be in there. Governors should then track progress, taking the feelings of staff, who did a difficult job well, into account.

12.19 DMO pointed out how the link governor framework had been overhauled: reports should be logged within the post-Ofsted action plan.

12.20 IJO thanked governors for their suggestions and addressed a number of them.

12.21 Student behaviour had seen some sustained improvement but it was never a question of "case closed" because new Y7 boys arrived, experienced staff left and exogenous events like Covid-19 sprang up from nowhere.

12.22 William Ellis had originally been built as a grammar school for 80 boys a year. Now there were more classrooms, but the corridors were no wider, though boys were – and the school was comprehensive. Parquet floors were lovely, but perhaps linoleum would more effectively muffle boys' civilised but necessarily shouted conversations. Recruiting a full-time behaviour and attendance officer had helped.

12.23 KAL agreed that behaviour could be improved, but involved changing the culture of staff as well as boys. He cited the successful policy on mobile phones.

12.24 IJO and SSK to amend post-Ofsted plan in light of governors' suggestions, but swiftly – so that next time governors would be reviewing actions rather than plans. SSK to recruit small working group of governors to review amended plan.

ACTION *Item 12.24* **SSK** to recruit small working group of governors to review amended post-Ofsted action plan.

12.25 CHO reported that his background was the heavily-regulated financial services industry, which had received some shaming reports. He advised the school's senior leaders not to dwell on the Ofsted report, but to use the subsequent improvement plan as a springboard for widespread change and improvement.

12.26 STA thought that what was missing from the post-Ofsted plan were clear and cohesive communications between governors and wider staff, to convey that change was happening. It would show respect to staff and give them the opportunity to agree or disagree with the direction of travel. The school needed everyone's engagement, involvement and participation – families too.

12.27 IJO reminded everyone of SSK's opening remarks: the school had a lot to celebrate. Among other things, KS5 Progress 8 – P8, a measure of progress – had leapt from -0.4 to -0.18. That was a significant shift for the school, which brought it into the average category for the first time since P8 was invented. For the first time also William Ellis boys' progress trumped that of boys nationally. MSC noted that disadvantaged children's progress was also the best ever. P8 rose to -0.14 if a single child in hospital school was discounted. SSK agreed there was much to celebrate.

13. Receive latest iteration of Strategic Development Plan

This had been covered earlier in the meeting.

14. Discuss Ofsted action plan

This had been covered earlier in the meeting.

15. Receive headteacher's report

Governors thanked IJO for her report, which they noted.

16. Receive safeguarding report and agree Safeguarding Policy

16.1 SSK thanked KAL, who is the school's designated safeguarding lead, for his safeguarding report and invited him to introduce the Safeguarding Policy, which he explained had been amended to reflect the updated (September 2022) KCSiE. As a result, it included advice on such issues as domestic abuse, child-on-child abuse, enhanced safer recruitment and sensitive words and phrases. He would update school contacts.

16.2 SSK added that there had been a number of safeguarding incidents outside the school which had involved William Ellis pupils.

16.3 Sixth form safeguarding issues FWI reported growing concerns that **drug and gang culture** were beginning to impinge on LaSWAP students: staff were searching bags and pockets for drugs where necessary, and liaising with the police and agencies to ensure students' safety. A **complaint following a threat of violence** had been resolved amicably, and procedures subsequently tightened.

16.4 Safer schools officer IJO reported that the school would be losing its dedicated safer schools police officer, PC Roy, at end of the following week. He would be working across William Ellis and neighbouring La Sainte Union and Parliament Hill schools, which meant his role would be largely reactive.

16.4.1 This created heightened risk, particularly at the end of the day, when he previously patrolled the Highgate Road gate. ISH to raise governor concerns with Camden cabinet member for children and families.

ACTION *Item 16.4.1* **ISH** to raise concerns about loss of dedicated safer schools police officer with Camden cabinet member for children and families.

16.5 SSK asked SJE, as chair of the School Improvement Committee, to consider undertaking safer recruitment training. SSK herself was already trained. This had been the only safeguarding question which Ofsted inspectors had asked.

ACTION *Item 16.5* **SJE** to consider undertaking safer recruitment training.

16.6 Governors **AGREED** the Safeguarding Policy.

17. Agreed governors' annual work plan

SSK and IJO to revise governors annual work plan in light of Ofsted discussion.

ACTION *Item 17* **SSK and IJO** to revise governors' annual work plan in light of Ofsted discussion.

18. Review governance

JCL reported that, as a former chair of Parliament Hill School who had worked closely with Acland Burghley, he had been asked to conduct an independent review of the school's governance following the Ofsted RI judgement. The review was intended to be helpful, and in particular to encourage governors to be more of a critical friend to the school's senior leaders. He would attend meetings but remain largely silent. He had access to GovernorHub, would monitor minutes, and meet individual governors and IJO. His eventual report would include recommendations for improvements and how to improve governor effectiveness.

[KAL, MSC and MSC left the meeting at 6.55pm.]

19. Receive reports from committees

19.1 School Improvement Committee SJE, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 15 September 2022. Draft minutes had been circulated. Excitingly, the meeting had discussed positive results from the first real exams in three years. Highlights had been English results, after change of exam board, and for the first time for a while, PE results, following an excellent leadership appointment.

19.2 Personnel and Resources Committee KDU, who chairs this committee, having given apologies, the vice chair, JWO, reported that it had met on 6 October 2022. Draft minutes had been circulated but had not been available for this FGB meeting. A budget report had forecast a £190k in-year surplus, though how much of that would survive rising staff and energy costs was arguable. There was good news on the school roll, particularly in the sixth form, to which 81 per cent of Y11s had migrated. The Pay Committee – him, HMA and DNE – was due to meet shortly.

20. Receive updates on training and governor visits to school

ISH had met KAL and MSC to discuss attendance, and held four meetings with the families of persistently absent students. SHA had met IJO to discuss curriculum, planning and the Ofsted report. SSK urged link governors to submit visit reports.

ACTION *Item 20* **All link governors** to submit visit reports.

21. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

21.1 The minutes of the meeting of 17 July 2022 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SSK to sign after the meeting. There were a number of matters arising.

21.2 Item 11.3 DMO apologised that he had yet to discuss a list of potential student placements with the school's work experience co-ordinator, Horace Parry, but would chase and also circulate information to governors so that they could assist with placement contacts for 2022-23.

ACTION Item 21.2 *DMO to contact Horace Parry again and forward work experience information to governors; **all governors** to consider potential placement contacts for 2022-23.*

21.3 Item 11.5 STA apologised that he had not yet liaised with the School Council on brainstorming practical ways to address toxic masculinity but would do so.

ACTION Item 21.3 *STA to liaise with School Council on brainstorming practical ways to address toxic masculinity in school.*

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

22. Any other business

There was no other business.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 8 December 2022 at 5pm.

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

Signed.....

8 December 2022

Selina Skipwith
Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School

Actions listed on following page...

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION *Item 3.1.2a* **CHO** to attend School Improvement and Personnel & Resources committees before opting to join one or the other; **HMA** and **SHA** to attend committee of which they are not a member to greater understand governors' work.

ACTION *Item 5.2* **SSK** and **DNE** to discuss how to rationalise his role; **SSK** and **ISH** to discuss generic link role job description; **SSK** to forward it to all link governors with terms of reference; **all governors** to consider taking on health and safety role.

ACTION *Item 6* **MHU** to re-circulate instructions to governors on how to declare any interests for 2022-23, and confirm that they had read KCSiE, on GovernorHub.

ACTION *Item 7* **IJO** to forward NSPCC safeguarding training link to **MHU**; **MHU** to circulate with link to Camden Learning training opportunities and reminder of how to log training on GovernorHub.

ACTION *Item 12.24* **SSK** to recruit small working group of governors to review amended post-Ofsted action plan.

ACTION *Item 16.4.1* **ISH** to raise concerns about loss of dedicated safer schools police officer with Camden cabinet member for children and families.

ACTION *Item 16.5* **SJE** to consider undertaking safer recruitment training.

ACTION *Item 17* **SSK** and **IJO** to revise governors' annual work plan in light of Ofsted discussion.

ACTION *Item 20* **All link governors** to submit visit reports.

ACTION *Item 21.2* **DMO** to contact Horace Parry again and forward work experience information to governors; **all governors** to consider potential placement contacts for 2022-23.

ACTION *Item 21.3* **STA** to liaise with School Council on brainstorming practical ways to address toxic masculinity in school.