

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 23 March 2023

MINUTES

GOVERNORS		Present
Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓
Co-opted	Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)	✓
	Ms Imogen Sharp (ISH)	✓
Foundation	Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)	✓
	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)	✓
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) Chair	✓
	VACANCY	N/A
Local authority	Mr Hanad Mohamed (HMO)	x
Parent	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✓
	Mr Stuart Taylor (STA)	x
Staff	Mr Rob Yurchesyn (RYU)	✓
ASSOCIATES		
	Mrs Ronke Coote (RCO)	x
	Prof Lee Elliot Major (LEM)	x
ATTENDING		
	Ms Diane Moss (DMS) ¹ Observer	
	Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) Deputy head	
	Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) Senior assistant head	
	Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) Clerk	

¹ By video conference.

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

SSK welcomed all present to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.03pm. She particularly welcomed DMS, who was undertaking a review of governance. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, HMO and various members of the senior leadership team: attending a parents' evening were senior assistant head Matthew Scott and assistant heads Karl Altmann, Crispin Germanos and Sam Nunnery. DMO and FWI had apologised for late arrivals. There were no apologies from RCO, LEM or STA. All other governors were, or would be, present, and thus a quorum. SHA declared an interest in the T levels section of IJO's headteacher's report, in that he has been tasked by Camden with taking forward its post-16 offer. There were no other declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers had been circulated in advance.

2. Receive chair's report

SSK reported that she had attended a Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust meeting on Monday, which had bid farewell to three trustees who had between them, in various capacities, logged more than 100 years' service to the school. She had attended a Camden Project Board meeting in February with SJE and IJO and, earlier this month, a Camden Learning session on system leadership change, at which the organisation's CEO Stephen Hall had discussed partnerships and federations in the first of three such meetings this academic year. Her diary included a further Project Board meeting; a meeting with Martin Pratt, executive director of Camden Supporting People, to reviewing Project Boards to date; and a mid-year headteacher's review.

[RYU joined the meeting with apologies at 5.06pm.]

3. Receive headteacher's report (1)

3.1 SSK thanked IJO for her report and asked her to introduce it.

3.2 School Development Plan progress review IJO noted that progress in implementing the plan had been RAG-rated (red, amber, green). Given that the half-way point of the school year had only just been reached, much was amber.

3.2.1 SSK thanked IJO for her introduction and called for comments and questions, to which IJO responded as follows.

3.2.2 What is the relationship between the Project Board and SDP actions [CHO]? The Project Board actions and those in the second half of the School Development Plan were focused on Ofsted-inspired improvement areas, so there was overlap. Other actions ranged more widely in order to head off future Ofsted improvement points.

3.2.3 Isn't it disappointing that some "process" actions are still RAG-rated amber, particularly those related to behaviour [SHA]? Amber didn't mean that progress had not been made: it was more that, for instance, behaviour was not yet where the school wanted it to be. Observation and surveys of students themselves demonstrated marked improvement in corridor behaviour. This year's behaviour was better than the previous year's, and the year before that, but it was still not perfect.

3.2.4 Can governors expect behaviour to be RAG-rated green by the end of summer [SHA]? Staff would like it to be green but, as in all schools, there was a not insignificant group of students struggling to meet the school's expectations. Much professional development time had been spent explaining the school's behaviour policy and procedures to staff, and supporting them in administering them. This work was ongoing.

3.2.5 How much confidence have you that good behaviour will be embedded and won't revert year after year, after each summer break [SHA]? September 2023 would be different from September 2022. Behaviour had improved already.

3.2.6 Are you confident that students know how to behave, know the consequences of poor behaviour, and that staff know how to deal with lapses [SHA]? Yes, but did students always know how to behave, and behave accordingly? No.

3.2.7 RYU, as staff governor, observed that staff spent too much time on ensuring a calm and collected atmosphere. Focusing on a single aspect of behaviour, such as behaviour in the corridor, was useful. For him, a green RAG-rating would reflect "the Thursday morning feeling" – when it was always calm. He asked a question.

3.2.8 Will the outcomes of January's student survey be shared [RYU]? IJO committed to sharing the full final results of the staff behaviour survey with governors. She reminded governors that the following Monday would see another Camden behaviour review, which ISH would be attending, and which would feed back to the Camden Project Board.

ACTION *Item 3.2.8 IJO to share final results of staff behaviour survey with governors.*

3.2.9 How consistent are staff in, for instance, giving out detentions [HMA]? Visits to lessons suggested that some teachers were not using the behaviour policy as consistently as they could. Consistency was a challenge.

[DMO joined the meeting at 5.36pm.]

3.2.10 ISH thought that the inconsistencies between development documents made them difficult to navigate. She asked four questions, which IJO answered in a single reply, but which are disaggregated here for ease of reference.

3.2.11 Is there a way to cross-reference the two development documents (SDP and Project Board), particularly with regard to behaviour, and perhaps put the two SDP sections on behaviour together [ISH]? The structure of Project Board reports was Camden's, not IJO's. The documents were each a compromise, with different objectives.

3.2.12 One of the columns of the School Development Plan is "Implementation – how and who?" but the who is missing - could it be helpful to allocate responsibility [ISH]? Responsibility was allocated in various, more detailed development plans which implemented the strategy.

3.2.13 Do the eight teachers logging 52 per cent of level 2 behaviour concerns need to be more discerning or could other teachers be using the concerns system more effectively [ISH]? SHA suggested that if just eight teachers were logging more than half of level 2 behaviour concerns, that could be because they used the system and others didn't: more experienced teachers may not be issuing concerns as they should. IJO agreed that the eight were generally new and inexperienced. They could be issuing concerns to establish themselves.

3.2.14 Will future reports cover transition periods between breaks and classes [ISH]?

These had been covered under corridor behaviour.

3.3 Camden Project Board and wider support The Project Board report showed continuing progress resulting in measurable improvements in most priorities but that there was still a risk that at the end of year not all outcomes would be met.

3.4 T levels Given that FWI was not yet present, this item was deferred to later in the meeting.

3.5 Roll numbers, projections and implications For September 2023's Y7 the school had received applications on behalf of 375 boys, of whom 130 had been offered places; seven were on the waiting list. Some 120 families had accepted those places. However, that number could fall if families opted for the independent sector or left London. If so, a smaller Y7 roll and one fewer class next year could be an option: governors **AGREED** to monitor this as numbers of Y7 pupils recruited became clearer. Recruitment to LaSWAP – the sixth form consortium of which William Ellis is a member – was strong.

3.5.1 When will you decide on the Y7 roll [KDUJ]? Over the May half term, following the next deadline for resignations. Numbers of teachers would then be clear.

3.5.2 How effective had marketing been [JWO]? It was difficult to say as it had coincided with the disappointing Ofsted report. The immediate focus had to be on retaining the 120 boys whose parents had accepted places. SJE noted that she had attended one of the two face-to-face open evenings, which had been excellent.

3.5.3 Are the accepting students from familiar feeder schools [NSI]? That level of detail was not yet available.

3.6 SSK thanked IJO again for her report, and for answering questions.

4. Review Assessment, Feedback, Recording and Reporting Policy

4.1 SSK invited BLA to introduce this policy, which he did as follows.

4.2 Previously this policy had also covered teaching and learning, but in the interests of clarity and brevity those elements had been transferred to a separate policy.

4.3 The remaining elements had been simplified to encourage their use in practice. The focus was mostly on summative assessment – that is, at the end of learning.

4.4 The real work would be how the policy was implemented within departments: the summer term would address this so that students benefited swiftly.

4.5 BLA noted that “feedback” had replaced the previous concept of marking.

4.6 SSK thanked BLA and Crispin Germanos for their hard work on this exceptionally clear policy. She called for comments and questions, to which BLA responded.

4.7 CHO, as a parent governor, thought that the policy provided a rich, informative and helpful framework for him and his fellow parents. RYU, as staff governor, appreciated the flexibility delegated to individual departments. HMA reported that his experience of the formative assessment of his son at William Ellis was already superior to his experience in the private sector.

[FWI joined the meeting at 6.01pm.]

4.8 How do departments assess progress [SHA]? That was the challenge. There was room for variation.

4.9 SHA thought it was senior leaders' role, not that of governors, to monitor the implementation of the policy, and governors' to evaluate its impact: BLA to amend. BLA also to ensure grade descriptors of effort and behaviour are consonant, and behaviour descriptors chime with those in the school's Behaviour Policy.

ACTION *Item 4.9* **BLA** to follow up governors suggestions re Assessment, Feedback, Recording and Reporting Policy.

4.10 With those provisos, governors **AGREED** the policy.

5. Receive headteacher's report (2)

5.1 T levels SSK thanked FWI for her briefing paper on T levels and invited her to introduce it, which she did, answering questions as she did so.

5.2 FWI explained that T levels – a high level vocational qualification – were set to replace L3 BTECs, and potentially also L2 BTECs. Funding was higher for T levels, but the economics were tight because demands on teaching were higher.

5.3 Are T levels equivalent to BTECs [NSI]? No, a BTEC diploma was equivalent to two A levels and a T level was equivalent to three.

5.4 Sourcing and quality assuring the necessary two years of work experience for T levels would be problematic, as would be the logistics of setting up any new course.

5.5 LaSWAP was committed to offering a T level. Acland Burghley had planned to introduce a T level in Media, Broadcast and Production in September 2023, but the government had just announced a delay in introducing this T level of at least a year.

5.6 How will you decide what T level to offer [NSI]? The aim would be not to duplicate within LaSWAP, or indeed within Camden. So far, William Ellis was the only LaSWAP school thinking of offering an accountancy T level, although it had registered for many more, to have them in reserve. The school was vying with La Sainte Union for the option of offering a healthcare science T level.

5.7 SHA did not see overlap with other schools as a problem if a subject was popular.

5.8 How hard will it be to set up work experience [NSI]? FWI thought that depended on the subject. Large media production companies might have accountancy departments; healthcare organisations might outsource this. IJO thought that it would be difficult to source or upskill teachers for more focused subjects.

5.9 Isn't necessarily studying one subject in a single school a disadvantage compared to the LaSWAP multi-school experience, and what is the current ratio of BTECs to A levels [KDU]? The majority of LaSWAP BTECs were already taught and based in one school. A more radical change was that 16 was a very young age to be asked to specialise. Students could study an A level alongside a BTEC, but not with a T level. Numbers of A levels had recently overtaken numbers of BTECs.

5.10 Can you allay governors' concerns about the demographic breakdown of vocational subjects [DMO]? Take-up of BTECs split evenly between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students. More non-disadvantaged students took A levels.

5.11 SHA observed that no school could offer more than one T level: a consortium like LaSWAP was ideally placed in this regard. However, he was concerned that the statement in FWI's briefing that BTECs "contain no work experience – at least as we currently deliver them" could compromise funding. FWI reassured him on this score.

5.12 She added that she was keeping a watching brief on developments. The question was whether governors wanted to pursue T levels or hang fire for the time being. The subject was controversial within LaSWAP and Camden.

5.13 When will governors have to decide [SSK]? SHA warned the school to act fast if it wished to launch a T level in September 2024. FWI thought that BTEC Subsidiary Diplomas were not being defunded at the same pace; they could be a fall-back. IJO warned of a risk to Camden's Talacre Community Sport Centre's L1 sports BTEC, to which William Ellis sent students. No T level in a sports subject was planned. SSK reported that she had asked Camden Learning if SHA could brief all secondary governors on post-16 options. SJE to circulate links to briefings on T levels.

ACTION *Item 5.13* **SJE** to circulate links to briefings on T levels.

6. Receive report from School Improvement Committee

SJE, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 9 February 2023. Draft minutes were on GovernorHub. The meeting had covered, among other things, curriculum planning, progress in Years 11 and 13, and GCSE mock results. It had also received an update on teaching and learning and the results of a departmental review of chemistry, maths and history. SSK thanked SJE for her summary.

7. Receive updates on governor training and visits to school

SSK reminded governors that they could now upload certificates of training by external organisations to GovernorHub. MHU to recirculate National Governance Association (NGA) link to safeguarding training; all governors to complete and upload certificate by 17 May, the day before the next (18 May 2023) FGB meeting; MHU to monitor. DMO reminded governors that in an email of 23 March 2023 he had asked for help with work experience for William Ellis students. All governors to consider responding; SSK to ask chair of the parents' association WESPA to email parents. She was looking to introduce a simple feedback form for link governor visits.

ACTION *Item 7* **MHU** to recirculate link to NGA safeguarding training; **all governors** to complete; **MHU** to monitor compliance; **all governors** also to contact DMO with any potential work experience opportunities; **SSK** to ask chair of WESPA to email parents with similar request.

8. Review governance issues

8.1 Attendance SSK highlighted a table of individual governors' attendance so far this school year. Recognising that governors were volunteers, she pointed out that effective governance demanded regular attendance at meetings by colleagues.

8.2 Appoint CHO to committee Governors **AGREED** to appoint CHO to the Personnel and Resources Committee.

8.3 Succession SSK noted that KDU, DMO, ISH and STA's terms of office were coming to an end this year, leaving a number of vacancies. She was proposing that, in line with Camden and NGA guidance, this was an opportunity to reduce the number of governors from 16 to 14: the school's trustees supported this. She would report back on procedure at the 18 May 2023 FGB once she had consulted Camden Learning.

ACTION Item 8.3 *SSK to report back to 18 May 2023 FGB on procedure for reducing number of governors from 16 to 14.*

8.4 FGB awayday to The Mill The summer 2 FGB – at The Mill, the school's outward bound centre in the Surrey Hills, an hour by train from London – would be an opportunity to discuss strategy and vision, with an external facilitator. Parking was available. Remote access was possible in one (not large) room of The Mill. Ideally governors to attend in person as the day would include a tour of The Mill and grounds. MHU to ascertain suitability of scheduled 6 July 2023 date (previously timing had been 11am to 4pm) or canvas alternatives.

ACTION Item 8.4 *MHU to ascertain suitability of 6 July 2023 as date for FGB awayday or canvas alternatives.*

9. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 2 February 2023 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record, with the proviso that, as CHO pointed out, he would not be replacing DMO as a Foundation governor or vice chair, but would be assuming some of his current responsibilities for alumni and careers. SSK to sign minutes after the meeting. No matters arose. All actions had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 18 May 2023 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 6.49pm. FWI and RYU left the meeting at this point. Confidential items followed.

Signed.....

18 May 2023

Selina Skipwith
Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School

Actions listed on following page...

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION **Item 3.2.8** *IJO to share final results of staff behaviour survey with governors.*

ACTION **Item 4.9** *BLA to follow up governors suggestions re Assessment, Feedback, Recording and Reporting Policy.*

ACTION **Item 5.13** *SJE to circulate links to briefings on T levels.*

ACTION **Item 7** *MHU to recirculate link to NGA safeguarding training; **all governors** to complete; **MHU** to monitor compliance; **all governors** also to contact DMO with any potential work experience opportunities; **SSK** to ask chair of WESPA to email parents with similar request.*

ACTION **Item 8.3** *SSK to report back to 18 May 2023 FGB on procedure for reducing number of governors from 16 to 14.*

ACTION **Item 8.4** *MHU to ascertain suitability of 6 July 2023 as date for FGB awayday or canvas alternatives.*