

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 18 May 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)	✓ ¹
	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)	✓
Parent	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✓
	Mr Stuart Taylor (STA)	✗
Staff	Mr Rob Yurchesyn (RYU)	✗
ASSOCIATES		
	Mrs Ronke Coote (RCO)	✗
	Prof Lee Elliot Major (LEM)	✗
ATTENDING		
	Members of the School Council ²	
	Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) Deputy head	
	Mr Karl Altmann (KAL) Assistant head	
	Mr Jeremy Pratt (JPR) School Council co-ordinator	
	Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) Clerk	

¹ By video conference.

² Y10 – Daniel Khitarishvili Awde (DKA), Moleteng Chiloane (MCH), Arian Emad (AEM); Y9 – Yacoub Mahoub (YMA), Hugo Keane (HKE); Y8 – Camillo Costa (CCO), D’Angelo Silva (DSI), Riyad Bari (RBA), Jack Orbell (JOR), Alex Reading (ARE); Y7 – Tyrees Ngolo (TNG), Novel Kirabel (NKI).

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

SSK welcomed all present to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.01pm. She particularly welcomed members of the School Council, who were to present to governors. For their benefit, all non-staff governors introduced themselves. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, RCO and RYU. There were no apologies from LEM or STA. A quorum was present. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on the agenda. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers had been circulated in advance.

2. Presentation by School Council on equalities

2.1 SSK welcomed members of the School Council again and invited them to present to governors. They introduced themselves individually and screened a presentation, entitled "More in Common". The key points were as follows.

2.2 The students were building on the foundations of previous generations of School Council, which included five pledges, on issues including the environment and challenging prejudice and hate.

[HMO joined the meeting with apologies at 7.06pm.]

2.3 However, members of the School Council were disappointed that they hadn't been given time to discuss issues such as the state of the toilets, activity-driven zoning of outdoor spaces and library computers with the school's senior leaders.

2.4 They had asked to repeat last year's survey of students but it had not taken place. A review of the student phone policy had also been turned down. Problems with graffiti and anti-social behaviour in the toilets had not gone away. Many computers in the library were either damaged or vandalised. There had not yet been an opportunity to discuss digital homework platforms. A request for lunchtime passes for older students had been rejected on the grounds of safety.

2.5 Governors had previously encouraged the Council's initiatives. Its members wanted to help make the school a better place but – without criticising senior leaders – didn't feel their contributions were being heard or addressed. A meeting with senior staff to discuss the future of the Council had been requested.

2.6 Meanwhile, the Council supported a range of charities through fundraising and addressed aspects of equality and diversity in assemblies and Deep Learning Days. Y10 students had been working with their peers at Parliament Hill School on a project exploring gender norms, relationships and sexual harassment.

2.7 SSK thanked members of the School Council and reported that, due to their campaigning efforts, all toilets would be refurbished over the summer break. She called for questions and comments, to which various members of the Council responded as follows. Every governor prefaced their remarks with appreciation.

2.8 Is it correct that you made a film with Middlesex University [JWO]? Yes, focused on the risks and rewards of social media, and social media influencers. SSK added that the film would be screened to the whole school community in time.

2.9 Can you say more about your work with Parliament Hill School [SSK]? When the students had dug deeper into sexism, harassment, misogyny and banter, they had discovered that what underlay them were issues such as lack of confidence or poor upbringing. The film recreated a scene of sexual harassment and how to deal with it.

2.10 SJE acknowledged the School Council's frustrations because clearly they had a lot of ideas, but feeling frustrated was normal: the key was to understand the barriers to change and select priorities based on efficacy and ease of implementation. HMA suggested publicising their campaigns, on the school website and beyond.

2.11 Is the toxic masculinity identified by your predecessors getting better or worse, and what could address it [CHO]? It was no better or worse, Workshops could help.

2.12 Is equality addressed through the curriculum, and what examples of toxic masculinity have you seen [DMO]? Equality was addressed in weekly PSHE (personal, social and health education) lessons, which also tackled toxic masculinity and misogyny, as did assemblies. The most common form of toxic masculinity was banter, which ranged from the casual to the vile.

[NKI left the meeting with apologies at 5.24pm.]

2.13 What more could governors do to support you on this [HMO]? It would make a big difference if a governor could present to students, as the message didn't always get through from the School Council itself. Additionally, a cultural appreciation day more than once a year, with games and food, would help. SSK noted that an International Evening was planned on 15 June 2023: governors could attend after the Personnel and Resources Committee meeting scheduled for that evening.

ACTION *Item 2.13* **All governors** to consider attending International Evening planned for 15 June 2023.

2.14 What are your campaigning priorities [CHO]? Students variously raised the issues of uniform and the toilets, with outdoor spaces and vandalism following up.

2.15 Is there anything you can take forward without staff but with their agreement [ISH]? Litter picking equipment would be useful. The Parliament Hill site was completely without litter! There was a need to raise awareness at William Ellis.

2.16 SSK called for any further student comments or suggestions for action. They thanked governors for the opportunity to address them and asked to be able to wear earrings; to start school at 8.45am rather than 8.35am; to discard elements of the uniform in warm weather; and for a wider variety of food in the canteen.

[KAL joined the meeting with apologies at 5.41 pm.]

2.17 SSK thanked members of the School Council for their presentation and suggestions. Before and after photographs of the toilets would be shared. Refurbishing the outdoor spaces was unfortunately not simple due to site issues: HMA, as link governor for outdoor learning, to liaise with JPR on site visit.

ACTION *Item 2.17* **HMA** to liaise with JPR on site visit of outdoor spaces with members of School Council.

2.18 On uniform, SSK said governors were open to a presentation from the Council. IJO confirmed that studs were allowed but not, for health and safety reasons, any larger earrings. SSK suggested that the Council invite a couple of governors to its meetings throughout the year. Governors applauded the School Council, who applauded JPR.

[Members of the School Council left the meeting at 5.45pm.]

3. Receive chair's report

SSK explained that she had postponed the scheduled report on careers to the next (22 June 2023) meeting of the School Improvement Committee in order to allow more time to hear from and engage with the Student Council. She and IJO had attended a helpful meeting of Camden's Project Board, where it had been confirmed that post-Ofsted support would continue into 2023-24. At a meeting at The Mill, SSK had introduced HMA. The governance review by Diane Moss of the National Governance Association was currently awaiting sign-off from Camden; following this, she would circulate it to governors. There were no questions.

4. Receive headteacher's report

4.1 SSK thanked IJO for her report and asked her to introduce it; she did as follows.

4.2 School Council IJO stressed that the School Council was genuinely consulted on relevant matters, particularly potential Y11 lunch passes and the school's mobile phone policy, two issues which had dominated meetings. The members of the Council were a credit to the school and JPR was highly skilled at supporting them.

4.3 Self-evaluation and progress against the School Development Plan 2022-23 The school's self-evaluation, following consultation with Camden and senior leaders, was now tightly focused on key themes within the Ofsted framework.

4.3.1 Behaviour remained as requiring improvement: it was progressing but progress needed validating by data. If progress continued, it could be deemed good before the next Ofsted inspection. SJE added that members of the Project Board and the school's professional partner, Anne Hudson, had approved progress.

4.3.2 SHA urged a focus on what it was that required improvement about behaviour, rather than the processes involved in addressing it.

4.4 School Development Plan IJO apologised that she had not circulated the PowerPoint slide referenced in her report, on nurturing successful students and good citizens through strong relationships. She screened and summarised it.

4.4.1 Although it was important to align the School Development Plan with the Ofsted framework, it was also crucial not to lose sight of the culture, vision and values of the school, identified in this slide. SSK pointed out that these would inform discussions at the governors' awayday at The Mill, on 6 July 2023.

4.4.2 SHA and ISH both praised the plan as a shorter, simpler, more focused improvement on its predecessors. SHA recommended more emphasis on the "how" and "who". ISH called for a baseline, in order to measure progress.

ACTION *Item 4.4.2* *IJO to emphasise "how" and "who" in School Development Plan, with baseline to measure progress.*

4.4.3 SSK assured KDU that the curriculum would be reviewed at the 6 July 2023 awayday. IJO confirmed to CHO that governors would have continuing opportunities to scrutinise progress in subjects such as maths, history and food technology. A clear coherent plan was addressing student behaviour.

4.4.4 SSK added that there would be another Project Board behaviour review in July; she had asked for a governor to be invited.

4.5 Behaviour data and behaviour and culture review KAL reminded governors that key issues here were more secure data, more visible policies – such as on praise, corridor behaviour and phone use – and consistency in applying those policies.

4.5.1 Data demonstrated that poor behaviour was declining, although KAL cautioned against too rigorous analysis: today's unsafe behaviour could be logged as tomorrow's corridor behaviour, for instance. Students and staff had confirmed progress: all had appreciated the clarity and consistency of the behaviour system.

4.5.2 Next steps included acting on staff suggestions, continuing tracking staff actions, and ensuring student attendance at detentions. The report had been positive about the school's Seclusion and Reflection Centre.

4.5.3 The review had also praised the school's use of adaptive pedagogy to drive improved student behaviour through enhanced teaching and learning.

4.5.4 SSK thanked KAL and called for questions and comments, to which IJO and KAL responded as follows.

4.5.5 ISH noted that it had been useful to take part in the review, particularly for the whole day.

4.5.6 Why deny the members of Student Council their surveys [DMO]? On uniform, the boys tended to ignore the tension between sustainability and affordability. Abolition, if demanded by the boys, would not change school culture for the better. Council members' frustration was understandable, but the school wanted to replicate Ofsted questions to track trends over time. A second Ofsted judgement of requires improvement would be an existential threat to the school the boys loved.

4.5.7 KAL noted that the data on behaviour was still insecure. SHA warned that better teaching and learning could not always be relied on to improve behaviour: the test would be students' conduct in lessons led by cover and younger teachers.

4.5.8 IJO responded that better teaching and learning did not automatically lead to better behaviour, but inferior teaching could hamper improvements in behaviour.

4.5.9 How is good behaviour positively encouraged [SSK]? KAL confirmed that the school had listened to students. He was confident that the boys would say that praise had become more explicit in lessons, but it needed to be more consistent and linked to the school's "five Rs": Respectful, Resilient, Resourceful, Reflective and Responsible. Tangible rewards included Friday lunch passes, and staff calls home.

4.5.10 What is the school doing to reduce the higher proportion of excluded students with special educational needs and disabilities [DNE]? SEND was more over-represented nationally than at William Ellis. Sometimes a student's pattern of exclusions could be a warning sign of SEND.

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

4.5.12 She requested a report on the next Student Voice exercise in time for the 6 July 2023 awayday and looked forward to further discussions along the above lines.

ACTION *Item 4.5.12 IJO to ensure Student Voice exercise is undertaken in time for a report back to governors' 6 July 2023 awayday.*

5. Receive report on careers

As previously explained, this item was postponed to the next (22 June 2023) meeting of the School Improvement Committee.

6. Receive reports from committees

6.1 School Improvement Committee SJE, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 4 May 2023. Draft minutes were on GovernorHub. The meeting had received a very impressive presentation from Laura Madsen, the head of art, craft, design technology – and, slightly anomalously – food technology. The meeting had received further reports on KS3 progress, literacy and SEND.

6.2 Personnel and Resources Committee KDU, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 11 May 2023. Draft minutes were on GovernorHub. The impact of a diminished Y7 intake in September 2023 would be fully felt in the financial year 2024-25. A new business manager had been appointed. A full programme of premises works was scheduled for the long summer break. The 2023-24 budget had been scrutinised in detail. Draft year-end figures for 2022-23 had revealed an in-year balance of £233k, which combined with the previous year's balance had resulted in a welcome carry-forward to 2023-24 of £657k.

7. Agree budget for 2023-24

Governors **AGREED** the budget as circulated for 2023-24.

8. Discuss Instrument of Government

SSK reminded governors that the trustees of The Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust had agreed to reduce the number of governors from 16 to 14 by removing the two co-opted posts, following the end of ISH's term of office and JWO's resignation. DMO urged SSK to remedy errors in the previous Instrument of Government: the spelling of Birkbeck (not "Birbeck"!); College, the spelling of The Birkbeck (not "Birbeck") and William Ellis Schools (not "School") Trust, and mention of the Vice-Chancellor (not Master) of Birkbeck College. SSK and DMO to liaise on amendments. With those amendments, governors **AGREED** the revised Instrument of Government and asked SSK to submit it to Camden for approval and signature.

ACTION	Item 8	<i>SSK and DMO to liaise on errors in Instrument of Government; SSK to submit revised Instrument of Government to Camden for approval and signature.</i>
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9. Receive updates on governor visits to school and governor training

9.1 Governor visits to school DNE, who is link governor for literacy, had met with assistant head Sam Nunnery, who has responsibility for literacy at the school. CHO, who is link governor for careers, had liaised with staff member Horace Parry, who has responsibility for careers and had been due to report to this meeting.

9.2 Governor training With the exception of HMO, all relevant governors had completed safeguarding training.

ACTION	Item 9.2	<i>HMO to undertake safeguarding training.</i>
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10. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

10.1 The minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2023 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record: SSK to sign after the meeting. There was one matter arising.

10.2 Item 5.13 SJE apologised that she had not yet circulated links to briefings on T levels but would do so.

ACTION *Item 10.2* **SJE** to circulate links to briefings on T levels.

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

11. Any other business

11.1 Confidential minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising Given that no discussion of this item was anticipated or forthcoming, governors **AGREED** the minutes of the meeting of 23 March 2023 as a full and accurate record: SSK to sign after the meeting. No matters arose. The single action – a minor amendment to the science department reorganisation consultation document – had been fulfilled.

11.2 Farewell to governors SSK formally thanked ISH, STA, JWO and RYU for their years of service to the Governing Body and school. There had been a number of applications for STA's now-vacant post of parent governor so an election would be held. A staff governor election to replace RYU was also imminent.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 6 July 2023 awayday at The Mill

There being no further business, SSK thanked all present for attending and closed the meeting at 7.08pm.

Signed.....

6 July 2023

Selina Skipwith
Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School

Actions listed on the following page...

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION	Item 2.13	All governors to consider attending International Evening planned for 15 June 2023.
ACTION	Item 2.17	HMA to liaise with JPR on site visit of outdoor spaces with members of School Council.
ACTION	Item 4.4.2	IJO to emphasise "how" and "who" in School Development Plan, with baseline to measure progress.
ACTION	Item 4.5.12	IJO to ensure Student Voice exercise is undertaken in time for a report back to governors' 6 July 2023 awayday.
ACTION	Item 8	SSK and DMO to liaise on errors in Instrument of Government; SSK to submit revised Instrument of Government to Camden for approval and signature.
ACTION	Item 9.2	HMO to undertake safeguarding training.
ACTION	Item 10.2	SJE to circulate links to briefings on T levels.