

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 21 March 2024

MINUTES

GOVERNORS

		Present
Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓
Foundation	Mr Sean Harford (SHA)	✓ ¹
	Mrs Sophie Jenkins (SJE) Vice chair	✓
	Ms Mona Kadhum (MKA)	✓
	Mr Hugh Matheson (HMA)	✓
	Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)	✓
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	✓
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) Chair	✗
	VACANCY	N/A
	VACANCY	N/A
Local authority	Mr Hanad Mohamed (HMO)	✗
Parent	Prof Jelke Boesten (JBO)	✓
	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✗
Staff	VACANCY	N/A

ATTENDING

Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) **Deputy head**
Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) **Acting deputy head**
Mr Matthew Scott (MSC) **Senior assistant head**
Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) **Clerk**

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

SJE welcomed everyone to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.02pm. She explained that she was chairing the meeting as SSK had given apologies. Further apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, CHO and HMO. No other apologies were needed, 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. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers had been circulated in advance, including a useful summary of papers (paper 1).

[NSI joined the meeting with apologies at 5.05pm.]

¹ By video conference.

2. Confidential item – students

This item is confidentially minuted elsewhere as item 13

3. Confidential minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

This item is confidentially minuted elsewhere as item 14

4. Receive headteacher's report

4.1 SJE thanked IJO for her report and invited her to introduce the various papers which accompanied it, which IJO and MSC did as follows, responding to comments and questions from governors as they did so. IJO explained that many of the documents circulated had been reviewed in detail at the previous (14 March 2024) meeting of the School Improvement Committee. She urged governors to familiarise themselves with the various briefing documents, which were intended as quick reference for them and staff when Ofsted inspectors came calling.

ACTION *Item 4.1* **All governors** to familiarise themselves with one-page summaries in advance of anticipated Ofsted inspection.

4.2 School self-evaluation This was the first document that IJO would share with Ofsted inspectors. She had made minor amendments to it, including a summary of areas for improvement, since review at the previous (14 March 2024) School Improvement Committee meeting.

4.2.1 Where possible, could the document more positively stress that actions have been addressed, rather than that they “are being addressed” [SJE]? IJO to amend.

ACTION *Item 4.2.1* **IJO** to amend school self-evaluation to more positively stress that actions have been addressed.

4.2.2 Similarly, can you positively stress that teachers “do” articulate the usefulness of student tasks, rather than that you “ensure that they do” [SJE]? IJO to amend.

ACTION *Item 4.2.2* **IJO** to amend school self-evaluation to more positively stress that teachers do explain tasks to students.

4.2.3 Why the drop in boys taking EBacc subjects [HMA]? Numbers were down due to curriculum design. Elsewhere, there was good news on progress in English, maths and modern languages, though humanities and “open” subjects within the Progress 8 (a progress metric) framework were of more concern. Data was not the only measure of quality of education, and not enough alone for a “good” judgement.

4.3 Quality of education: detailed self-evaluation This detailed self-evaluation of one of the key areas for improvement identified by Ofsted in its May 2022 inspection was not intended to be shared with Ofsted but set out the school's thinking in detail.

4.4 Behaviour and attitudes: detailed self-evaluation This document served the same purpose as the previous self-evaluation with regard to a second key Ofsted concern.

4.4.1 As before, could you positively stress that the quality of cover staffing and work set for longer staff absences were rigorously reviewed, rather than that there was merely an ambition to do so [SJE]? IJO to amend.

ACTION *Item 4.4.1* *IJO to amend detailed behaviour and attitudes self-evaluation to more positively stress that cover staff actions are in hand, rather than being merely ambitions.*

4.5 Science department development plan This more detailed document developed the summary of actions following departmental reviews which had been laid before the previous (14 March 2024) School Improvement Committee.

4.5 Formative assessment This briefing document had been reviewed at the previous (14 March 2024) School Improvement Committee but was being shared here for completeness' sake. SHA urged IJO to ensure that staff could articulate the content of this and the other summaries: would they be shared with inspectors? IJO replied that they would be shared with Ofsted during an inspection, but not before.

4.6 KS4 outcomes 2023 SJE thanked MSC for this report, which governors noted.

4.7 Adaptive teaching This briefing document on how the school supported students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through adaptive teaching had been reviewed at the previous (14 March 2024) School Improvement Committee. At SJE's suggestion, IJO agreed to ask its author, Sel Pomeyie (SPO) to more positively rephrase the statement that there had been no continuous professional development (CPD) prior to 2023, and that compliance was "moving towards" quality. Initiatives, where appropriate, to be firmly in place rather than in prospect: for instances, seating plans "are" being produced for every class, not merely "to be produced".

ACTION *Item 4.7* *IJO to ask SPO to more positively rephrase aspects of briefing document on adaptive teaching to stress that initiatives are in place rather than in prospect.*

4.8 Curriculum This briefing document on William Ellis's curriculum had been reviewed at the previous (14 March 2024) School Improvement Committee. NSI urged senior leaders to highlight admirable statistics, such as the 90 per cent of students who study at least one modern foreign language up to GCSE. In answer to a question from HMA, IJO explained that many bilingual students could speak in, but not read or write, a language. SHA suggested stating that the teaching of computer science – currently in Years 7 and 8 but not Y9 – was "under review" to support students who wished to progress to studying it at the more demanding GCSE level.

ACTION *Item 4.8* *BLA to amend briefing document on curriculum to state that timing of teaching of computer science is "under review" in order to prepare students for GCSE in the topic.*

4.9 Attendance SJE thanked assistant head Sam Nunnery (SNU) for this briefing document on attendance. NSI urged SNU to identify reasons, where possible, for dips in attendance, for instance due to Eid. SJE questioned the realism of a target of 97 per cent attendance in 2026: NSI suggested retaining the target, but without a date. SHA wanted a firmer definition of success in reducing persistent absence. DNE asked for more assessment or analysis of the impact of successful “next steps”.

ACTION Item 4.9 *IJO to ask SNU to identify reasons for dips in attendance; look again at 97 per cent attendance target; define success in reducing persistent absence more firmly; and define what success in “next steps” looks like.*

4.10 Behaviour and attitudes SJE thanked assistant head Karl Altmann (KAL) for this briefing document on student behaviour and attitudes, though she thought that the list of aspects of the “state of play” varied widely from the generic to the specific. She also queried the omission of any mention of the school's Seclusion and Reflection Centre: IJO explained that she had asked KAL to draft a separate paper.

4.11 Safeguarding SJE thanked KAL for this briefing document on safeguarding. IJO assured her that KAL, as designated safeguarding lead, received regular monitoring reports on websites blocked by the school's filtering arrangements. In response to a suggestion from NSI, KAL to report to governors on inappropriate websites.

ACTION Item 4.11 *KAL to report on websites blocked by school's IT system.*

4.12 Project Board report IJO explained that she had included this March 2024 report from Camden's Project Board for completeness. The detailed self-evaluations considered earlier on quality of education, and behaviour and attitudes, were in response to concerns raised in this report.

4.13 Operational update IJO noted that this paper addressed any specific matters that had been previously raised by governors but had not been addressed in earlier papers, including the impact of extended staff absences in some departments.

4.14 SJE thanked IJO again for her report, and for answering questions.

5. Receive report on curriculum planning for 2024-25

5.1 SJE thanked FWI for this report on curriculum planning for 2024-25 and invited her to introduce it, which she did as follows, tabling A3 copies of the spreadsheets, which had been previously circulated in a lesser format.

5.2 FWI explained that changes from previous years included the introduction of economics GCSE; changes to funding of GCSE resits at KS5; and a delay in introducing the new T levels.

5.3 Staffing was stable, though there were questions around replacing some staff who were expected to leave. Early career teachers (ECTs) were an option. Reduced demand for computer science A level could release staff to teach elsewhere.

5.4 The PSHE (personal, social, health and economics) curriculum could be taught by the drama department.

5.5 With no dedicated teacher, RE would continue to be taught by humanities teachers. Non-specialists would teach some other classes.

5.6 SJE thanked FWI for her introduction and called for questions, which FWI and IJO answered as follows.

5.7 How can PSHE be taught by the drama department [JBO]? The strong drama team was well-suited to deliver PSHE. Current teaching by non-specialist tutors was not as good as the school would like. The curriculum map would need to be secure. Deep learning days, for some content, would continue.

5.8 Who will lead the team [SJE]? The current head of drama was willing to take the lead, but would be consulting with all drama staff.

5.9 What about aspects of PSHE such as careers [SHA]? Currently careers was the sub of a fortnightly period; the sessions would remain in the curriculum.

5.10 How do you ensure quality remains high [SHA]? The school had good relations with the PSHE Association. The school's Camden professional partner, Anne Hudson (AHU), had been consulted and was positive about the initiative.

5.11 With the reduced number of chemistry teachers, is science adequately covered [SJE]? The assumption was that teachers would be replaced like for like. If ECTs stepped in, the school may have to re-evaluate the numbers of periods they taught.

5.12 SJE thanked FWI and IJO for answering questions.

6. Receive report on safeguarding

BLA reported that KAL was currently drafting a spreadsheet based on data supplied by the school's safeguarding monitoring software, CPOMS: SJE to review with KAL. Chris Roberts, Camden's senior adviser on safeguarding, had confirmed that all previously-suggested actions to tighten up on student safeguarding had been fulfilled. Prompted by SHA, IJO to chase him for a statement that safeguarding at William Ellis was effective. CHO and HMO to provide documents for their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates to school business manager Fiona Fraser (FFR).

ACTION	Item 6	<i>SJE to review KAL's safeguarding spreadsheet; IJO to pursue Chris Roberts at Camden for statement that safeguarding at William Ellis is effective; CHO and HMO to provide documents for DBS certificates to FFR.</i>
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7. Receive reports on behaviour

IJO introduced the three papers circulated: raw behaviour data with commentary, and student and staff feedback. The three documents had been summarised in the previously-reviewed briefing document. Student feedback was slowly improving. Staff feedback was more mixed, though support staff were increasingly engaged in behaviour management. SHA recommended asking the question Ofsted inspectors would pose: is student behaviour good in this school? IJO to address.

ACTION	Item 7	<i>IJO to add key Ofsted question "is student behaviour good in this school" to staff questionnaires.</i>
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8. Receive report on attendance

SJE thanked SNU for her report on attendance, which IJO summarised. It was early days for the three initiatives on which the report focused: the 100 Club of students with perfect attendance; a fortnightly attendance competition; and Y7 attendance surgeries. The 23 students with less than 50 per cent attendance were all supported by external agencies. In answer to questions from NSI, SJE and HMA, IJO explained that students taught online were not marked absent; parents who kept their sons at home due to a dispute with the school were being encouraged by Camden to move their children to education elsewhere; and the Breakfast Club had been operating for so long it was hard to say what impact it had on student attendance.

9. Receive report from School Improvement Committee

SHA, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 14 March 2024. Draft minutes are on GovernorHub. Topics under discussion had included the progress of the School Development Plan; departmental reviews; support for disadvantaged Y11 students; and the curriculum, including computer science. In the absence of CHO, who chairs the Personnel and Resources Committee, SJE reminded governors that this committee had not met since the previous (8 February 2024) FGB meeting.

10. Receive updates on governor training and visits to school

10.1 Training SJE urged governors to log any training undertaken on GovernorHub.

10.2 Visits to school SJE urged governors to visit the school in their capacity as link governors.

11. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

11.1 The minutes of the meeting of 8 February 2024 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign after the meeting. A number of matters arose.

11.2 Item 10 FWI to approach members of sixth form Student Council to fill two vacant Foundation governor posts.

ACTION	Item 11.2	<i>FWI to approach members of sixth form Student Council to fill two vacant Foundation governor posts.</i>
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11.3 Item 11.2 FWI to ascertain whether KAL has amended the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to clarify why early years children are referenced.

ACTION	Item 11.3	<i>FWI to ascertain whether KAL has amended Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to clarify why early years children are referenced.</i>
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11.4 Item 12.1 CHO, HMA, HMO, DNE and NSI to log 24 January 2024 Ofsted training with AHU on GovernorHub.

ACTION Item 11.4 CHO, HMA, DNE and NSI to log 24 January 2024 Ofsted training with AHU on GovernorHub.

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

12. Any other business

There was no other business in this part of the meeting.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 23 May 2024 at 5pm

There being no further business in this part of the meeting, SJE thanked all present for attending and closed this part of the meeting at 6.46pm. BLA, MSC and FWI left the meeting at this point.

Signed.....

23 May 2024

Mrs Sophie Jenkins
Vice chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School

Actions listed on following page...

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

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