

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 23 May 2024

MINUTES

GOVERNORS

		Present	
Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓	
	Foundation	Mr Sean Harford (SHA)	✓
		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	✓ ¹	
	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

Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) **Acting deputy head**
Mr Matthew Scott (MSC) **Senior assistant head**
Ms Sam Nunnery (SNU) **Assistant head**
Mr Horace Parry-Coleman (HPA) **Careers lead**
Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) **Clerk**

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and declarations of interest

SJE welcomed everyone to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5pm sharp. She particularly welcomed HPA, who was to present to the FGB. For his benefit, all others present introduced themselves. SJE explained that she was chairing the meeting as SSK was attending remotely. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, HMO. There were no apologies from NSI. 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.

¹ By video conference.

2. Receive report on careers

2.1 SJE welcomed HPA to the meeting and invited him to report on careers at William Ellis, which he did as follows, screening a presentation.

2.2 The aim was for careers at William Ellis to be a key part of the curriculum. The school was signed up to achieving the Quality in Careers Standard (QICS), a national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) which was fully aligned with the eight Gatsby benchmarks of good career guidance².

[KAL, MSC and FWI joined the meeting with apologies at 5.03pm.]

2.3 The careers programme covered specific themes at each year stage. Information on future study options and potential career opportunities were key. Individually tailored career guidance was offered from Y9. Linking careers to curriculum learning – the fourth Gatsby benchmark – was challenging.

2.4 Students had annual opportunities to meet one or more potential employers. Workplace experience was developing. Some 60 per cent of students found their own work experience; others were supported through professional partners. Five of the eight Gatsby benchmarks had been wholly achieved.

2.5 SJE thanked HPA for his presentation and called for questions, which HPA answered as follows.

2.6 Who are most likely to find their own work placements [SHA]? Y10: the London education charity Inspire sourced placements for others, though their contacts tended to cluster in Hackney, and travelling could be a problem.

2.7 Is every student offered a session with a Camden Connexions careers service consultant [SHA]? Yes.

2.8 Are general further education colleges such as Westminster Kingsway invited into school to present to the boys [SHA]? Rather than invite colleges to the school, the school organised student visits to the colleges. SHA warned that legislation stipulated that schools had to allow colleges and training providers access to every student in Years 8 to 13 to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Selecting students to visit FE colleges could be construed as favouring LaSWAP, the sixth form consortium of which William Ellis is a member.

2.9 Are parents invited into school to describe the work they do [JBO]? Parental engagement of that kind needed further development.

2.10 Are mock interviews undertaken by staff or employers [HMA]? Employers, of whom plenty volunteered.

[SNU joined the meeting with apologies at 5.23pm.]

2.11 How do you inspire teachers to integrate careers into their curriculum [SJE]? This was not easy; they needed to be encouraged.

2.12 How can governors help you to progress the careers agenda [CHO]? They could helpfully encourage parents to support the programme as guest speakers, and to offer work experience for Years 10, 12 and 13, particularly to those who found it difficult to access opportunities in banking, finance and medicine.

² A stable careers programme; learning from career and labour market information; addressing the needs of each pupil; linking curriculum learning to careers; encounters with employers and employees; experience of workplaces; encounters with further and higher education; and personal guidance.

2.13 SJE thanked HPA again for his presentation, and for answering questions.

[HPA left the meeting at 5.24pm.]

2.14 CHO, who is link governor for careers, pointed out that HPA's time to develop careers was limited, given that he was also Y11 pastoral lead and a languages teacher. Even with the support of two part-time staff, he faced challenges.

2.15 Investment in careers to be reviewed at next (28 June 2024) Personnel and Resources Committee (PRC) meeting.

ACTION *Item 2.15* **MHU** to schedule review of investment in careers on agenda of next (28 June 2024) PRC meeting.

3. Receive headteacher's report

3.1 IJO noted that governors on the School Improvement Committee would be familiar with earlier iterations of the circulated papers on self-evaluation and specific aspects of the school.

3.2 The **summary self-evaluation** now considered the school as meriting an Ofsted "Good" rating overall. It also newly highlighted areas for development.

3.3 Detailed self-evaluations on **quality of education** and **behaviour and attitudes** had informed positive discussions at a recent Camden Project Board meeting.

3.4 The one-page documents on **quality of education, formative assessment, literacy, KS4 and KS5 outcomes** and **personal development** were intentionally short summaries for internal use of the school's current progress in each area.

3.5 SJE thanked IJO for her introduction and agreed that the tone of the recent Camden Project Board, which she had attended, had been appreciative, if still challenging. The hard work of the school's senior leaders had been noted.

3.6 SHA pointed out that some limited progress in KS3 and KS4 could be explained by a solid, and highly successful, EBacc curriculum.

3.7 However, sixth form progress was poor – worse than LaSWAP, Camden and nationally – and attainment at A level was weak: one in ten grades was a U.

3.8 IJO was confident that the high percentage of U grades was due to retaining vulnerable students on roll during the pandemic, for safeguarding and wellbeing reasons. Ofsted inspectors would respect that.

3.9 FWI added that last year LaSWAP, in the aftermath of the pandemic, had decided to continue to enter all students for exams. William Ellis students at LaSWAP were more vulnerable and disadvantaged than others, so the school's results had been disproportionately affected. This issue had been highlighted as of concern at the recent (25 April 2024) School Improvement Committee meeting.

3.10 SHA pointed out that the self-evaluation's claim that most KS5 students "make good progress" did not adequately reflect the fact that average William Ellis A level grades were more than a grade lower than those of other LaSWAP students.

ACTION *Item 3.10* **IJO** to amend self-evaluation to clarify shortcomings in A level attainment and explain how these are addressed.

3.11 SJE thanked IJO again for the reports and for answering questions.

4. Receive reports on attendance and approve Attendance Policy

4.1 SJE thanked SNU for her reports on attendance and for the revised Attendance Policy and invited her to introduce them, which she did as follows.

4.2 All year groups with the exception of Y7 and Y9 attended in line with national data; Y11 exceeded equivalent attendance nationally.

4.3 Y7 and Y9 students in receipt of free school meals would be the next cohort to be invited to join the 100 Club, which aimed to encourage selected students to achieve 100 per cent attendance. The club had had some success so far.

4.4 Low attendance figures for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) were often skewed by a single particularly poorly-attending student. There had been some successes in addressing persistent absence.

4.5 Supported by Camden, attendance surgeries were having some success.

4.6 At least two William Ellis students would be invited to write scripts for and film a promotional video for Camden's 2024-25 "Back to School" campaign.

4.7 One challenge was to move from punishment for absence to encouragement for improved attendance, with more incentives and praise. Many students were improving in their own ways, by small increments.

4.8 An updated Attendance Policy had been approved by Camden.

4.9 SJE thanked SNU for her introduction; she had attended a break-out session on attendance at the recent Camden Governors' Conference and none of the initiatives cited were being neglected by SNU and William Ellis. The incremental benefits of school – relations with adults, role models, friendship groups – had been stressed, as had the phenomenon of "in-school truanting" i.e. apathy in lessons.

4.10 JBO suggested that, where attendance figures were significantly lower due to the persistent absence of one or two students, the school should highlight this.

ACTION *Item 4.10* **SNU** to clarify in one-page summary on attendance where significantly lower attendance figures are due to the persistent absence of one or two students.

4.11 SHA urged SNU to continue to focus on students with 80-90 per cent attendance, perhaps with a prize per tutor group for 10 or 15 per cent improvement.

ACTION *Item 4.11* **SNU** to continue to focus on students with 80-90 per cent attendance, perhaps with a prize per tutor group for 10 or 15 per cent improvement.

4.12 Governors **AGREED** the revised Attendance Policy as circulated.

4.13 SJE thanked SNU again for her report, recognising that any improvements were due to considerable efforts by her and her team.

4.14 IJO warned that, in common with secondary education around the country, attendance was unlikely to be a strength of the school in the short term. Hopefully Ofsted inspectors would recognise the challenges involved.

[SNU left the meeting at 5.55pm.]

5. Receive reports on safeguarding and behaviour

5.1 SJE thanked KAL for his reports on safeguarding and behaviour and invited him to introduce them, which he did as follows, answering questions as he did so.

5.2 Safeguarding KAL explained that he had circulated two safeguarding documents. The Excell sheet tracked individuals' safeguarding data: even formerly vulnerable students were included. The second was a case study, with all information relevant to a particular vulnerable individual, covering all aspects of learning, attendance, mental wellbeing, behaviour and safeguarding.

5.2.1 IJO added that the case studies were used to support academic development and to better evaluate interventions.

5.2.2 How many of the individuals on the Excel sheet also feature as case studies [SHA]? Not all, because the spreadsheet predated the case studies and many students on it were historical cases.

5.2.3 Who are the case studies for [SJE]? The school and Ofsted inspectors, who would ask how the school approached safeguarding. They often reviewed the case of a single student as an example.

5.3 Behaviour KAL cautioned that apparent rises in behaviour incidents were often due to more consistent sanctions. Student behaviour was improving.

5.3.1 Two years after Ofsted inspectors said student behaviour was not good enough, how will we know when it is actually better or worse [SHA]? When school leaders and external observers observed consistently good behaviour in class.

5.3.2 If you are witnessing good behaviour, why is the data on behaviour deteriorating [SHA]? The school's Camden professional partner Anne Hudson (AHU) had assessed it as good, though still with room for improvement. Observation and data together were used to demonstrate improving behaviour in the school.

5.3.3 Are comparisons to previous years useful [JBO]? Comparison to 2022-23 was not necessarily helpful. Pupil and staff voice feedback confirmed improvements.

5.3.4 To be clear, comparison to 2022-23 figures is unhelpful because fewer kinds of misbehaviours were logged [JBO]? Yes: for instance, non-verbal disrespectful behaviour such as ignoring staff was not logged. It is now a category, so it is logged.

5.3.5 Are all staff engaging in the Behaviour Policy [SJE]? They were engaging more consistently. For instance, now that all staff were expected to be in the corridors when the bell went, they were logging any poor behaviour they witnessed.

5.3.6 Aren't 3,000 logged incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons over the spring term high [SHA]? More consistent application of behaviour systems led to the recording of more incidents, but behaviour was still improving. Over a whole term, 3,000 low-level incidents was not high.

5.3.7 Are you measuring too many low-level incidents [JBO]? The point was to ensure that staff were applying the system consistently. If staff applied the system consistently, there would inevitably be more incidents logged, at least initially. It was not necessarily that behaviour was poor. Teachers were tackling potentially persistent disruptive behaviour by nipping it in the bud.

5.3.8 IJO pointed out that every student attended 300 lessons in the spring term; even if that meant that a quarter of lessons were disrupted, as SHA suggested, it was still the case that one student minimally disrupted one lesson in four.

5.3.9 SHA was not convinced: the 7,000 incidents of disruptive behaviour suggested that the policy was not yet working.

5.3.10 SJE thanked KAL again for his reports, and for answering questions.

6. Receive reports on SEND

6.1 SJE thanked SENDCo (SEND co-ordinator) Ann Charalambos Clarke (ACC) and adaptive teaching lead Sel Pomeyie for their reports on SEND and adaptive teaching respectively and invited FWI to introduce them, which she did as follows.

6.2 FWI noted that external consultants had endorsed the school's success in implementing a range of SEND strategies. They had also complimented staff's depth of knowledge when it came to individual students. Quality First and adaptive teaching were bearing fruit. Student feedback was positive.

6.3 IJO added that the majority of SEND students had no funding for teaching assistant support, so staff were trained in their needs and strategies to support them.

6.4 SJE thanked FWI and IJO for their comments and called for questions, of which there were two, which FWI and IJO answered.

6.5 Do you follow certain children through the day to ensure that provision matches the expectations implicit in adaptive teaching [SHA]? Yes, ACC and external consultants often did this. Seating plans were useful here.

6.6 What feedback has there been from parents [SHA]? This was mixed. Working with a range of parents could be challenging, especially when their expectations were high, due to historic commitments.

7. Discuss strategic vision and planning for 2024-27

7.1 SJE thanked CHO and IJO for their paper summarising the conclusions of the Strategy Day held on 6 July 2023. Given its late arrival, she proposed a brief initial discussion, to be followed by a more strategic discussion later.

7.2 CHO reminded governors of the school's five-year ambition to deliver leading state education for boys in London; to create advantage through diversity; to deliver superior pastoral care and real progress for all; all while building foundations through successful futures, delivered through LaSWAP and the careers programme.

7.3 IJO added that she and senior leaders were working to reflect that vision in a draft School Development Plan for 2024-25 and subsequent years.

7.4 In answer to a question from JBO, IJO anticipated no end to fire-fighting, partly because young people were by their nature spontaneous and unpredictable. But the strategy would helpfully inform senior leaders on how they fought fires.

7.5 In answer to a question from SJE, IJO anticipated presenting the "spirit" of the draft strategy to the Student Council.

7.6 SHA approved the allocation of school leaders to actions linked to aspects of the strategy: they were teams in waiting who would reliably drive progress towards quality provision within a credible timeframe.

7.7 SJE thanked CHO and IJO again for their paper, which she proposed revisiting at the next (4 July 2024) FGB meeting.

ACTION	Item 7.7	MHU to schedule discussion of strategy paper on agenda of next (4 July 2024) FGB meeting.
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8. Review 2024-25 budget

CHO reported that this budget had been thoroughly scrutinised at an earlier (3 May 2024) meeting of the Personnel and Resources Committee. A welcome larger-than-expected surplus of £206k had emerged this year, compared with the forecast budget deficit of £288k. However, overall income for 2024-25 was projected to be £8.64m, compared with expenditure of £8.85m – the resulting small in-year deficit would be covered by the carry-forward. A £500k variation on budget was welcome, but such volatility – which could notionally result in a deficit – was unsettling. A close eye would be kept on finances. Governors **AGREED** the proposed 2024-25 budget.

9. Receive reports from committees

9.1 School Improvement Committee SHA, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 25 April 2024. [Draft minutes are on GovernorHub](#). The committee had received a presentation on art, craft and design.

9.2 Personnel and Resources Committee CHO, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 7 May 2024, at a welcome later time of 8am. [Draft minutes are on GovernorHub](#). The previously-referenced 2024-25 budget had been robustly discussed. A Fundraising Committee was now in place. The unwelcome £50k cost of new fire doors would hopefully be met by Camden. Regular reports had been received on pupil roll, partnerships, fundraising and estate management. The playground initiative would be considered at the next (28 June 2024) meeting.

10. Discuss governance

10.1 Appoint Mona Kadhum to committee Governors **AGREED** to appoint MKA to the School Improvement Committee.

10.2 Recruitment SJE and CHO were working to fill the two Foundation governor vacancies. IJO had advertised for a staff governor for September 2024, with no result so far: she would explore offering allocated time or time off in lieu.

ACTION *Item 10.2* **IJO** to explore offering allocated time or time off in lieu to potential candidates for staff governor.

10.3 Governor training and visits to school SHA visited the school in his capacity as link governor for quality of education ([visit report is on GovernorHub](#)). CHO visited the school twice in his capacity as link governor for careers. DNE and IJO met with representatives of Camden's school IT support services (SITSS) about upgrading the school's IT infrastructure. NSI undertook Camden SEND training. SJE attended Camden's Governor Conference.

11. Review policies and other documents

11.1 IJO pointed out that the majority of policies for review were based on Camden templates which she advised against amending. At SHA's suggestion, she agreed to ensure that the dates of review of each policy were clarified.

ACTION *Item 11.1* **IJO** to ensure that dates of review of policies are clarified.

11.2 Comparison of Finance Policy and Personnel and Resources Committee terms of reference CHO noted that this report proposed amendments to this policy and terms of reference to ensure that they aligned in two areas: quorum, and delegated authorities. Governors **AGREED** the amended Finance Policy and Personnel & Resources Committee terms of reference as proposed in the comparison document.

11.3 Fundraising Committee terms of reference With the addition of alumni as members of the school community in the section on objectives, governors **AGREED** the Fundraising Committee terms of reference.

11.4 Governors **AGREED** the remainder of the policies and documents scheduled for review without discussion:

- a. LaSWAP Admissions Policy 2025
- b. Safer Recruitment and Staff Conduct Policy
- c. Physical Intervention and Restraint Policy
- d. Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions Policy
- e. Online Safety Policy
- f. Children Missing or Absent from Education Policy
- g. Sexually Harmful Behaviour in Children and Young People Protocol

12. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

12.1 The minutes of the meeting of 21 March 2024 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign after the meeting. There was one matter arising.

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

ACTION *Item 12.2* **CHO, HMA, DNE and NSI** to log 24 January 2024 Ofsted training with Anne Hudson on GovernorHub.

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

13. Any other business

DBS documents IJO reported that HMO had not yet provided documents to the school in support of the issue of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

ACTION *Item 13* **SJE** to urge HMO to provide documents to the school in support of the issue of a DBS certificate.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 4 July 2024 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 7.07pm. Confidential items followed, for which all present remained.

Signed.....

4 July 2024

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

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION	Item 2.15	MHU to schedule review of investment in careers on agenda of next (28 June 2024) PRC meeting.
ACTION	Item 3.10	IJO to amend self-evaluation to clarify shortcomings in A level attainment and explain how these are addressed.
ACTION	Item 4.10	SNU to clarify in one-page summary on attendance where significantly lower attendance figures are due to the persistent absence of one or two students.
ACTION	Item 4.11	SNU to continue to focus on students with 80-90 per cent attendance, perhaps with a prize per tutor group for 10 or 15 per cent improvement.
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ACTION	Item 13	SJE to urge HMO to provide documents to the school in support of the issue of a DBS certificate.