

# WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



## MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 30 November 2017

### MINUTES

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GOVERNORS		Present
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sam White (SWH)	✓
<b>LA</b>	Ms Georgia Gould (GGO)	x
<b>Elected parent</b>	Ms Imogen Sharp (ISH)	✓
	Mr Jonny Woolf (JWO)	✓
	VACANCY	N/A
<b>Elected staff</b>	Mr Richard Whitenstall (RWH)	✓
<b>Foundation</b>	Mr Richard Ault (RAU)	✓
	Mrs Ronke Cooté (RCO)	✓
	Dame Karen Dunnell (KDU)	✓
	Ms Julie Eccleshare (JEC)	✓
	Dr Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)	x
	Prof Conor Gearty (CGE)	✓
	Mr Omar Hamon (OHA)	x
	Ms Fiona Millar (FMI) <b>Chair</b>	✓
	Prof Daniel Monk (DMO)	✓
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK)	✓
	VACANCY	N/A
<b>Co-opted</b>	Ms Laura Concannon (LCO)	x
	Ms Pandora Kay-Kreizman (PKK)	x
	VACANCY	N/A
<b>ASSOCIATE</b>		
	Mr Abdi Ahmed (AAH)	x
<b>ATTENDING</b>		
	Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) <b>Assistant head</b>	
	Mr Matthew Scott (MSC) <b>Assistant head</b>	
	Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) <b>Clerk</b>	

### 1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and declarations of interest for this meeting

1.1 FMI welcomed everyone to this FGB meeting, which began at 5.08pm. She particularly welcome RWH, the new staff governor. For his benefit, all present introduced themselves. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence given to, LCO, LEM, GGO, OHA and PKK. A quorum was present. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers had been distributed in advance.

1.2 FMI noted with pleasure that Camden had been in the top ten of a recent social mobility survey.

**[JWO joined the meeting with apologies at 5.12pm.]**

1.3 She reported that she and ISH had attended a successful governor focus group with students and staff on the subject of SEND provision. She urged link governors to conduct similar focus group meetings.

1.4 Two parents' evenings would be taking place shortly, on 7 December for Y7 parents and on 11 January for Y8 parents. Governors were invited to attend and meet parents.

**[DMO joined the meeting with apologies at 5.14pm.]**

## 2. Review Instrument of Government

FMI reminded governors that at their previous FGB meeting, they had agreed to reconstitute to become a Governing Body of 16 members, with two parents (rather than the current three) and two co-opted governors, one of whom could be a member of staff. As a result of the reconstitution, this would be JEC's last meeting after seven years as a governor. FMI thanked her for her service. Governors **AGREED** the new Instrument of Government, to apply from the following day (Friday 1 December 2017).

**[ISH joined the meeting with apologies at 5.19pm.]**

## 3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 12 October 2017 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record. FMI to sign them after the meeting. There were a number of matters arising.

3.2 **Item 2.2** OHA would be attending the next FGB meeting to present on fundraising for The Mill. In advance of that, KDU said she would research the potential to maximise its value. RAU urged governors to look at all possibilities.

**ACTION Item 3.2** *KDU to research potential to maximise value to the school of The Mill.*

3.3 **Item 4.3.1** RAU reported that, following the previous week's Personnel and Resources Committee, the budget was looking slightly healthier than previously but was still in deficit. FMI noted that schools finance consultant Sam Ellis would be attending the school for two days after Christmas to review the school's finances, particularly in the light of the forthcoming curriculum review. She would invite members of the committee to attend a session with him on the second day of his visit, Friday 12 January 2018.

**ACTION Item 3.3** *FMI to invite members of the committee to attend a session with schools finance consultant Sam Ellis on Friday 12 January 2018.*

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

#### **4. Receive headteacher's termly report**

**4.1** FMI asked SWH to introduce his termly report, which he did section by section, answering questions as he did so.

**4.2 Progress on the School Development Plan** SWH noted that various aspects of the SDP had been RAG-rated to reflect progress since the beginning of term. Red denoted actions not started or with no progress. Green denoted actions completed. Amber actions had been started, with limited progress or impact at this stage. Additionally, yellow actions were in hand, on schedule and making good progress.

**4.2.1** In the first section, "teaching that enables excellent learning", there were pleasing swathes of actions which were already RAG-rated green and yellow, largely driven by assistant head Izzy Jones (IJO).

**4.2.2** Action T5a, to carry out a curriculum review, was now RAG-rated amber, with today's curriculum item on the agenda and SWH's planned meeting with Sam Ellis.

**4.2.3** In the second section, "Pastoral care which supports excellent learning and personal development", there had been no movement yet on mental health awareness or adapting the curriculum offer to support nurture provision and vulnerable students. The three other actions were RAG-rated amber.

**4.2.4** In the third section, "Leadership at all levels that secures excellent learning", all actions were RAG-rated red or amber. There had been an example that morning in a staff briefing by two English teachers of data being employed to inform interventions. ISH reported that a data focus had been evident in the SEND meeting attended by her and FMI. MSC noted that data could not just enhance greater understanding of academic progress: it covered safeguarding issues such as behaviour and attendance, too.

**4.2.5 Were SWH and MSC finding their audience receptive [CGE]?** MSC replied that it was work in progress but he and SWH were working on how to present data so as to make it easier to understand. At the moment it highlighted students of concern.

**4.3 Headteacher's performance management objectives** SWH drew members of the committee's attention to his objectives for 2017-18. They focused on key outcomes for the school. Additionally, there had been a discussion about data and how governors themselves used data, as presented by senior leaders.

**4.3.1** He had also been tasked with a teaching objective: to carry out a disciplined inquiry, a research-based piece of work, in his case focusing on interventions for a particular group of students and their success or otherwise.

**4.4 Teaching, learning and assessment** This part of report was by IJO. The section on "deep and consolidated learning" included an example of a disciplined enquiry question. Teachers had chosen their own questions: it was heartening that most had chosen to focus on student groups of concern at the school. He urged governors to read the remainder of the report. IJO may attend the next meeting.

**4.5 Pastoral care** The main risk here was attendance. Hence, the first part of this section of his report summarised the interventions in place for the 20 students – here anonymised – with the poorest attendance record across Years 7-11. A graded response was key.

**4.5.1** BLA, as the lead member of staff for safeguarding, noted that more than 20 students attended poorly but those highlighted presented with extreme persistent absence. Many raised safeguarding issues.

**4.5.2** On these, the school and external services were working together: he would be meeting Camden's educational welfare services after Christmas. Some students' records were improving but lack of attendance was still frustrating.

**4.5.3** A Camden Learning audit of the school that day had verbally confirmed that the school's safeguarding was "effective". A written report was awaited.

**4.6 Sixth form** Attendance here was being addressed by a determined and diligent volunteer who spent two hours a morning phoning absentees and their parents. This was making a difference, and not only, as MSC remarked, to the number of phone messages left by students to say they would not be coming in to school that day.

**4.6.1** Improvement teams were addressing Y13 progress risks in maths, politics, computer science, economics and business.

**4.7 Outcomes at KS4** MSC noted that Y11 progress was looking stronger but Y10 progress was still weak. Areas identified for focus included: disadvantaged white British; SEN K; subjects such as English language; the open element of the Progress 8 measure; and Y10 students with high prior attainment.

**4.8 Appendix A: School context – data** MSC noted that the current Y8 was a small year group (currently 116 students) which could have an impact on their Y10 options if the number of students in the cohort did not increase over the next two years.

**4.9 Appendix B: Events and trips autumn 2017** SWH noted an impressive list of events and trips for which he thanked colleagues.

**4.10 Appendix C: Letter from Student Council about fundraising for charity** This was a request for permission to hold a non-uniform day at the end of every half term in order to raise money for a wide range of charities.

**4.10.1** CGE noted that the range of charities chosen was an impressive reflection of the students' philanthropic instincts.

**4.11** FMI thanked SWH and asked whether it was useful to have such a detailed report. SWH thanked his senior leaders for their significant contributions and noted that the school was under an obligation to report on much of the document's contents in any case.

**4.12** FMI thanked SWH again for his report, and thanked him, MSC and BLA for answering questions.

## **5. Review unvalidated ASP report**

Given that the school's Analyse School Performance report, the successor to the national benchmarking report RAISEonline, had not yet been published, this item was deferred to a later date.

## **6. Discussion item: curriculum review**

**6.1** FMI invited SWH to speak to a PowerPoint presentation on the curriculum, noting that there was a clear relationship between the curriculum offered and academic outcomes achieved which governors would do well to bear in mind.

**6.2** SWH began with the observation that there was no universal understanding of what curriculum was, so he had limited himself to what governors needed to know.

**6.3** The first substantive page of his presentation summarised the four main philosophies of education:

- Preparation for life/personal empowerment
- Preparation for effective citizenship
- "Cultural transmission"
- Preparation for work

...although there was often conflict and tension between these four strands.

**6.4** Every school was preparing its young people for the future, but it was impossible to predict what that future would look like: to illustrate, he highlighted changes in skills demanded by the jobs market in the last 30 years of the 20th century.

**6.5** Curriculum was in Ofsted's spotlight: it realised that some schools gamed their curriculum to hit targets, at a cost to students. Its focus was also more becoming more research-based.

**6.6** However, schools lacked expertise in curriculum design. The introduction of the national curriculum had deskilled schools here. They needed to think more clearly about what they taught and how.

**6.7 Was this a definite shift in government policy [ISH]?** Certainly in Ofsted policy.

**6.8 How prescriptive was the national curriculum [KDU]?** It required schools to teach certain subjects, such as design technology at KS3 and KS4, although many opted out of this without being rigorously held to account.

**6.9** SWH shared the key points for schools from an ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders) conference on curriculum which he had attended the previous day:

- Shared understanding of curriculum purpose
- Rationale for what you teach and when
- Comprehensive curriculum planning – subject specialists – building blocks of curriculum
- Rationale for approach to KS3 – breadth, wider impact of curriculum experience, challenging culture
- Equality of access for all groups
- Best interests of students - progression

**6.10** Referencing "rationale for approach to KS3", he noted the need for some challenge in the curriculum: was poor progress a teaching and learning issue, or a curriculum issue?

**6.11** The following page, on "evaluating our curriculum" would be key in informing governors' discussion:

- What – and who – is our curriculum for?
- What is **distinctive** about our curriculum for our context?
- How is our curriculum helping to deliver social justice?
- In what way does our curriculum exemplify our vision and values?
- Does our curriculum enable all groups of pupils to make progress? Does it motivate and engage pupils? How do we know?
- Does our curriculum provide stretch and challenge for all groups of learners?

- Are we concerned about the narrowness of the curriculum in any key stage or for any group of pupils?
- Does our curriculum inspire a love of learning?

**6.12 Given the need to stretch and challenge, how many GCSEs could students take [RCO]?** MSC replied to this: nine, or 10 if they took double language. Parliament Hill limited GCSEs to eight. SWH queried whether every subject studied should lead to a qualification: the risk of overloading the curriculum with content was that it could damage students' love of learning.

**6.13** SWH turned to UK educationalist Dylan Williams' principles of curriculum design. A good curriculum should be:

- Balanced
- Rigorous
- Coherent
- Vertically integrated
- Appropriate
- Focused
- Relevant

**6.14** KDU pointed out that some subjects were good to learn even if you were not good at them: everyone had to learn to read, write and add up, for instance. Others provided balance.

**6.15** SWH covered various aspects of a "good" curriculum, though he noted cultural variation. Vertical integration, for instance – the sequence to teach things so that students learned best – was viewed differently in Japan, where the emphasis was on teaching understanding rather than the "how to" of learning.

**6.16 How much autonomy did an individual UK school have in this [FMI]?** Some, compared to previously. For instance, the school could decide how to teach maths because the KS3 exam had been scrapped. The problem was that teachers may no longer be skilled in designing novel teaching programmes. In the end, the *how* subjects were taught was for the teachers: the *what* needed to be taught was a decision for governors. Clearly there were competing issues to consider: funding, marketing and outcomes among them.

**6.17** SWH moved on to subjects studied by Y9 students at William Ellis compared to the three other LaSWAP schools: Acland Burghley, La Sainte Union and Parliament Hill. William Ellis was unique in that it offered the opportunity to study two modern languages simultaneously. Art was prioritised over design technology (DT). Computer science and drama were offered in Years 7 and 8 but not in Y9, though the school scheduled five periods of PE, more than any other LaSWAP school.

**6.18** Governors asked a series of questions at this point.

**6.19 Did all the LaSWAP schools schedule the same number of contact hours [CGE]?** Yes.

**6.20 Was it true to say that the other schools could be more flexible in their scheduling because they were bigger [FMI]?** Yes.

**6.21 Why were a third more periods of science taught in Y9 at William Ellis compared to the other schools [ISH]?** MSC answered this: fewer period of science were taught in Years 7 and 8.

**6.22** SWH explained some of the difficulties of timetabling such a varied curriculum. The curriculum used to be delivered by principle; now it was more likely to be delivered to fit a budget. Which was the prime driver? Clearly it should be principle.

**6.23** SWH turned to KS4, and a graph of Y10 options and periods allocated to them compared to Parliament Hill. William Ellis scheduled five periods of languages compared to none at Parliament Hill; Parliament Hill scheduled two periods of RE compared to none at William Ellis.

**6.24** More importantly, Parliament Hill limited its students to eight GCSEs; William Ellis allowed its students to take nine. There were advantages and disadvantages to both.

**6.25** With eight GCSEs, Y10 PHS students had 20 more hours per GCSE subject: that is, 20 per cent more time, equivalent to an extra eight weeks of lessons. A disadvantage was that a school could not timetable double MFL and triple science, though relatively few students were affected. Twilight sessions were necessary.

**6.26** A key advantage of allowing nine GCSE subjects concerned the Progress 8 measure: a student who performed poorly in one of his nine subjects could drop it.

**6.27** Personally, SWH was loathe to drop to eight GCSE subjects: this was too narrowing and could disadvantage students, not least because it would mean that triple science and double languages could only be accommodated by more twilight sessions, which was undesirable as they interfered with extra-curricular activities and staff meetings.

**6.28** SWH talked governors through the various decisions governors had to make, including considering pathways, options, number of GCSE subjects, and compulsory subjects such as languages. Governors could decide to teach only two languages rather than three, for example – French and German, dropping Spanish.

**6.29** A slide summarised these decisions:

- Depth vs breadth
- Languages for all? And how many?
- Choice is important but what is best for our young people?
- How do we serve boys best?
- How do we serve all groups of boys well? (Middle prior attainers?)
- How brave are we prepared to be?
- What do we insist that all students do?

**[CGE left the meeting with apologies at 7.07pm.]**

**6.30** Governors asked SWH to draw up a list of curriculum options, with advantages and disadvantages, based on the above discussion; to ask school financial consultant Sam Ellis to review them with a view to highlighting any financial considerations; and to bring a report, amended or otherwise in the light of Sam Ellis's remarks, to the meeting of the School Improvement Committee on 18 January 2018.

**6.31** Given the pressing nature of the issue, governors delegated a decision on curriculum to this committee. MHU to schedule on agenda.

**ACTION Item 6.31** *MHU to schedule decision on curriculum on agenda of School Improvement Committee of 18 January 2018.*

**6.32** FMI thanked SWH for his presentation and for answering questions.

## 7. Agree LaSWAP Admissions Policy 2019-20

SWH noted some minor amendments to this, including changed A level entry criteria of four GCSEs at Grade 6 or above. Governors **AGREED** the LaSWAP Admissions Policy 2019-20.

## 8. Any other business

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

### Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 8 February 2018 at 5pm

There being no further business in this part of the meeting, FMI thanked everyone for attending and closed this part of the meeting at 7.13pm. A confidential item followed.

Signed..........

8 February 2018

**Fiona Millar**  
**Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School**

## ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

**ACTION Item 3.2** *KDU to research potential to maximise value to the school of The Mill.*

**ACTION Item 3.3** *FMI to invite members of the committee to attend a session with schools finance consultant Sam Ellis on Friday 12 January 2018.*

**ACTION Item 6.31** *MHU to schedule decision on curriculum on agenda of School Improvement Committee of 18 January 2018.*