

# WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



## MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 17 October 2024

### MINUTES

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#### GOVERNORS

		Present	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓	
	<b>Foundation</b>	Mr Sean Harford (SHA)	✗
		Mrs Sophie Jenkins (SJE) <b>Chair</b>	✓
	Ms Mona Kadhum (MKA)	✓	
	Mr Hugh Matheson (HMA)	✓	
	Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)	✓ <sup>1</sup>	
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	✓ <sup>2</sup>	
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) <b>Vice chair</b>	✓	
	Mr Ian Stanlake (IST)	✗	
		VACANCY	N/A
<b>Local authority</b>	Mr Hanad Mohamed (HMO)	✗	
<b>Parent</b>	Prof Jelke Boesten (JBO)	✗	
	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✓	
<b>Staff</b>	VACANCY	N/A	

#### ATTENDING

Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) **Deputy head**  
Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) **Acting deputy head**  
Ms Lisa Smith (LSM) **Assistant head**  
Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) **Clerk**

#### 1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

SJE welcomed all present to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.06pm. She particularly welcomed new Foundation governor IST in his absence, and congratulated DNE on his reappointment as a Foundation governor. She also welcomed LSM: for her benefit, all others present introduced themselves. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, JBO, SHA, HMO and IST. No other apologies were necessary, as all other governors were present, and thus a quorum. There were no declarations of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in respect of any items on this agenda. All papers had been circulated in advance.

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<sup>1</sup> By video link.

<sup>2</sup> By video link.

## 2. Elect FGB chair for 2024-25

MHU apologised that this agenda item was redundant, SJE having been appointed FGB chair as from 2 September 2024 at the previous (4 July 2024) FGB meeting.

## 3. Elect vice chair for 2024-25

MHU apologised that this agenda item was redundant, SSK having been appointed FGB vice chair as from 2 September 2024 at the previous (4 July 2024) FGB meeting.

## 4. Appoint members of committees and chairs

**4.1 Ian Stanlake** SJE to ask IST to attend School Improvement and Personnel & Resources meetings before he opts to join one or the other.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 4.1</b>	<i>SJE to ask IST to attend School Improvement and Personnel &amp; Resources meetings before opting to join one.</i>
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**4.2 Members of committees and chairs** Governors **AGREED** to retain the current membership of committees, with SHA continuing to chair the School Improvement Committee, and CHO chairing the Personnel and Resources Committee.

## 5. Agree committee terms of reference

**5.1 Personnel and Resources Committee** Governors **AGREED** the terms of reference of the Personnel and Resources Committee as circulated.

**5.2 School Improvement Committee** MHU apologised that he had not included review of the terms of reference of this committee on the agenda of its previous (19 September 2024) meeting but would do so for its next (14 November 2024) meeting. He would schedule approval of the terms of reference of the committee on the agenda of the next (5 December 2024) FGB meeting.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 5.2</b>	<i>MHU to schedule review of the School Improvement Committee's terms of reference on agenda of its next (14 November 2024) meeting, and approval on agenda of the next (5 December 2024) FGB meeting.</i>
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## 6. Agree link governor arrangements

SJE to canvas governor opinions on potential changes to link governor responsibilities.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 6</b>	<i>SJE to canvas governor opinions on potential changes to link governor responsibilities.</i>
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## 7. Declare business and other interests and safeguarding update for 2024-25

MHU complimented all governors – with the exception of IST, who had only recently been appointed – on updating their business and other relevant interests on the dedicated school governance platform GovernorHub, as they were annually obliged to do. All had also confirmed that they had read the September 2024 edition of the Department for Education's *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

## 8. Agree to log individual training and development activities

SJE encouraged all governors to undertake appropriate training and development activities in 2024-25. MHU urged all governors to log activities on GovernorHub.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 8</b>	<i>All governors to undertake appropriate training in 2024-25 and individually log activities on GovernorHub.</i>
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## 9. Review key governance documents

**9.1 Instrument of Government** Governors **AGREED** the current Instrument of Government as circulated.

**9.2 FGB standing orders** Governors **AGREED** the current FGB standing orders as circulated.

**9.3 Governors' Code of Conduct** Governors **AGREED** collectively and individually to abide by the Code of Conduct as circulated. SJE to sign on governors' behalf.

**9.4 Governing Body workplan 2024-25** In answer to a question from HMA, IJO explained that items in red could potentially move or change. SJE and HMA to discuss where and when HMA should have the opportunity to report back on issues at The Mill, the school's outdoor education centre in the Surrey Hills, for which he is link governor. With that proviso, governors **AGREED** the workplan for 2024-25.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 9.4</b>	<i>SJE and HMA to discuss where and when HMA should have the opportunity to report back on The Mill.</i>
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## 10. Agree governor protocols

**10.1 Naming governors in minutes** Governors **AGREED** to be named in minutes as a matter of course, with the right for their name to be redacted on request.

**10.2 Approving policies** Governors **AGREED** that, on the principle of subsidiarity, all policies should be approved at committee if possible, or by an individual or the headteacher if guidance permitted and the committee wished.

## 11. Agree Admissions Criteria 2026-27

CHO pointed out that one of these criteria gave precedence to boys with sisters at La Sainte Union, but not, as previously agreed, to those with sisters at Parliament Hill. IJO thought that the version published on the website included both, but would ensure that it did. With that proviso, governors **AGREED** the Admissions Criteria 2026-27. IJO noted that issues for future discussion included considering a reduction in the number of Y7 forms from five to four, and revisiting the musical aptitude element.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 11</b>	<i>IJO to ensure Admissions Criteria 2026-27 includes criteria regarding sisters at La Sainte Union and Parliament Hill.</i>
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*Specific FGB items*

## 12. Receive update from chair, including chair's actions

SJE reported that, on advice from Camden, she had taken chair's action to approve the school's updated Safeguarding Policy, which governors **AGREED**. She thanked CHO for the introduction to IST, who had been approved at an earlier meeting of the trustees of the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust as a Foundation governor. She had also begun National Governance Association chair's training.

## 13. Receive headteacher's report

**13.1** SJE thanked IJO for her report, which she introduced as follows.

**13.2 Ofsted** The outcome here had been welcome. IJO was pleased that the end-of-inspection feedback from inspectors had confirmed that their report would reflect the spirit and ethos of the school and its strengths, including its ambitious curriculum and inclusive principles. Inspectors had also noted its work on toxic masculinity.

**13.2.1** They had been very thorough, particularly on safeguarding, and how the school assured quality of education for William Ellis sixth formers learning within the LaSWAP consortium. They had spoken to students in all KS3 and KS4 years, including at least one student with special educational needs in each year.

**13.2.2** They had asked challenging questions of many staff, and listened intently to the answers. Staff questioned included Sarah Little, who leads a vocational art course, and whose responses to questions had been truly inspiring.

**13.2.3** The inspectors said that they considered that progress since the 2022 inspection, which had concluded that the school required improvement, had been significant enough to be able to judge the school as good in each area of the Ofsted framework, from personal development to student behaviour and attitudes.

**13.2.4** The latter had been deemed a significant area for improvement in 2022; this current judgement was a tribute to the hard work of assistant head Karl Altmann.

**13.2.5** The two main areas for improvement in quality of education were better use of formative assessment, and better support for students' literacy.

**13.2.6** IJO anticipated that the report would be helpful for student and staff recruitment.

**13.2.7** SJE thanked IJO and called for comments and questions.

- 13.2.8 What accounts for the poor progress noted by inspectors [HMA]?** IJO noted that the comment referenced by HMA referred to published data, which is what Ofsted reviewed. This was now a year out of date; 2024 progress data was stronger.
- 13.2.9** CHO noted inspectors' qualms about sixth form outcomes, and that key gaps in learning generally were not being addressed early enough.
- 13.2.10** IJO highlighted research by assistant head Crispin Germanos, who had pointed out that this inspection's areas for improvement had been a recurring theme of William Ellis's inspections over the years. Previously the school had yo-yoed from judgements of "requires improvement" to "good" and back again.
- 13.2.11** It was important not to lose momentum. The challenge of getting the next few months right was not insignificant.
- 13.2.12** CHO thought IJO was too modest to note that the inspectors had praised the school's leadership and management, complimenting her and senior staff's commitment. This had reflected parents' and students' views.
- 13.2.13** Of the 94 parents who had responded – within 24 hours – to the inspectors request for their views, 87 per cent had said they would recommend the school. Students' responses could understandably be mischievous, but of the 277 pupils who commented, only ten per cent had said they would not recommend the school.
- 13.2.14** SSK agreed: some members of the parents' association WESPA had written letters to the inspectors because they considered a thousand characters online had not been enough to do justice to the school. The excellent parental engagement that this demonstrated would serve to enhance student recruitment.
- 13.2.15** CHO thought that the school could go further, and ask what it would take to achieve an Ofsted judgement of "outstanding".

**13.3 School's self-evaluation** IJO pointed out that, significantly, the Ofsted inspectors had agreed with the school's self-evaluation. This proved it was on the right track.

**13.4 Post-Ofsted plan** IJO noted that this plan, drawn up immediately following the inspection, was in three parts: actions to secure and embed which were already in the School Development Plan; "quick fixes" which could supplement the existing plan and be achieved by July 2025; and longer term planning into 2025-26.

**13.4.1** Work would continue on student behaviour, despite inspectors' judgement that it was good. As areas for improvement, actions on formative assessment and student literacy were prominent. Tangible milestones such as the Rights Respecting School and anti-bullying awards were under consideration.

**13.4.2** SJE thanked IJO and called for comments and questions. She and CHO both queried an apparent absence of actions to address Ofsted's sixth form qualms.

**13.4.3** IJO thought these were addressed in actions on attendance, assessments, and reading, but she would modify to highlight KS5-explicit actions. FWI highlighted forthcoming national KS5 reforms, which could affect any proposals for action.

**ACTION** *Item 13.4.3 IJO to tweak post-Ofsted plan to highlight KS5 actions.*

**13.4.4** CHO referenced discussion at the recent (11 October 2024) Personnel and Resources Committee on the feasibility of providing students with one-to-one digital devices, and asked whether there was any opportunity to bring in annual reading age tests. FWI replied that one issue was what was being tested. Currently, as Ofsted inspectors had pointed out, it tested comprehension: it should also test fluency.

**13.4.5 In the light of Ofsted's praise, should the school build on its extra-curricular offer, and highlight activities on its website [HMA]?** IJO promised to ask the Personnel and Resources Committee for more enrichment funding, and review how clubs and other extra-curricular activities were represented on the school website.

**13.4.6 Following the inspection, how will Camden support the school's development [CHO]?** Four more Project Board meetings were envisaged. The frequency of visits by the school's Camden professional partner would reduce to make way for a partnership with Parliament Hill, directed by Camden. This, SJE thought, meant governors must raise their game on challenge, evaluation and monitoring.

**13.5** SJE thanked IJO again for her report, and her and FWI for answering questions.

## **14. Receive report on Pupil Premium**

BLA noted that, but for Ofsted's recent visit, he would be presenting a new three-year Pupil Premium plan to this meeting. The Ofsted inspectors had praised the previous plan, particularly the move from supporting clubs to enhancing teaching and learning, but queried a lack of focused interventions for individual students. Attendance and literacy would feature highly in the new plan, which would come to the next (5 December 2024) meeting. SJE thanked BLA for his remarks.

## **15. Receive report on attendance**

SJE thanked assistant head Sam Nunnery in her absence for her report, which IJO introduced. CHO noted that Ofsted had recognised that the school was doing all it could to address high student absence, including persistent absence. IJO agreed: inspectors had forensically analysed the circumstances of those students who had left the school, particularly those who had left to be home educated. In answer to a question from SJE, IJO reported that Y7 attendance was 94.2 per cent, despite the fact that half had attended less than 90 per cent of the time in Y6. Any slippage in attendance was being monitored. The school was acting quickly with three boys who had attended for less than 50 per cent of the first few weeks of Y7. Whole-school absence was better than last year, at 91.2 per cent, with persistent absence – attending less than 90 per cent of time – of 25 per cent. IJO was optimistic that it would improve. SJE thanked IJO for her remarks. There were no questions.

## **16. Receive report on safeguarding**

**16.1** SJE thanked LSM for her report, which she introduced as follows.

**16.2** As in 2022, this year's Ofsted inspectors had concluded that safeguarding at William Ellis was effective. They had been particularly impressed that boys stayed on the "live" safeguarding list until they left the school, ensuring that they were continually monitored even if they no longer raised immediate concerns.

**16.3** Numbers of Y11 students on the register were high, but many had had their cases closed or the safeguarding issues identified lay within the family.

**16.4** Another positive was how few children with special educational needs were on the live list. The Camden average for this was 14 per cent; at William Ellis it was 2.6 per cent, though staff were acutely aware that student needs could mask issues.

**16.5** Any safeguarding issues at William Ellis mainly concerned neglect and domestic violence, compared with other Camden schools where issues could include child criminal exploitation or child sexual exploitation. It was generally a safe school.

**16.6** Two areas for improvement included monitoring errant behaviours such as name-calling and bullying which could suggest safeguarding issues, and shielding students with protected characteristics from rising antisemitism and Islamophobia.

**16.7** SJE thanked LSM for her introduction and called for questions, of which there was one, which LSM answered as follows.

**16.8 How confident are you that just 2 per cent of Y7 students should be on the safeguarding list [CHO]?** Camden primaries used the same system to monitor safeguarding issues so these Y7s had transferred straight across to William Ellis's system. That said, most information was gleaned through the transition process. Other cases may present in time.

**16.9** SJE thanked LSM for her introduction. She, and other governors, decried the lack of a more visible, dedicated, police presence at the school.

## **17. Receive report on personal development**

**17.1** SJE thanked LSM for her report, which she introduced as follows.

**17.2** Personal development had been judged good by Ofsted in both 2022 and this year. Too often, schools saw it as novel. Not all schools had the same definition of it. William Ellis's "Five Rs" – respectful, responsible, reflective, resilient and resourceful – were at the core of what a personal development curriculum should be.

**17.3** This included not just extra-curricular activities or the PHSE (personal, health, social and economic) curriculum but also pastoral care and preparation for the world of work, both within classes and beyond, for instance through placements.

**17.4** The aim was to deliver and signpost the personal development curriculum throughout the school, so that the boys understood what they were learning. A key Ofsted observation had been that the school excelled at teaching many personal development issues, such as democracy, but they were not identified as such.

**17.5** SJE thanked LSM for her introduction; governors asked a series of questions.

**17.6 Should governors appoint a new governor link for personal development [HMA]?** LSM thought that would help to develop parity of esteem with "core subjects" such as English, maths and science. HMA pointed out that many boys didn't thrive in the classroom; they thrived in school, but not in class.

**17.7 Why is it so challenging to embed the Gatsby benchmarks of good career guidance into the classroom curriculum [CHO]?** LSM thought they were often there, but not tracked. CHO added that he preferred the term "world of work" to careers.

**17.8 Should we be concerned that the Ofsted inspectors thought students hadn't enough understanding of British values [CHO]?** FWI thought they had a deep understanding, but it was not labelled as such.

**17.9 Is there a danger that everything is branded personal development [SJE]?** LSM thought that personal development was the core of the school's mission.

**17.10** SJE thanked LSM again for her report, and for answering questions.

## 18. Discuss joint working with LaSWAP

SSK reported that she would be conveying the Ofsted inspectors' comments on monitoring sixth form quality of education to the LaSWAP Governors' Forum at its meeting the following week (21 October 2024). This would be the first for the new director of LaSWAP, Anna Rimington, of Acland Burghley. SSK would report back.

## 19. Discuss governor recruitment strategy

SJE explained that she would be recording a short video with the aim of recruiting a key member of the Governing Body, the staff governor. The video would explain the role of the staff governor and how it was crucial to the Governing Body's work. She also reminded governors that, following IST's recruitment, there remained one other vacancy on the Governing Body, for a Foundation governor.

## 20. Receive reports from committees

**20.1 School Improvement Committee** SHA, who chairs this committee, and JBO, as vice chair, having sent apologies, SSK reported that it met on 19 September 2024. Draft minutes are on GovernorHub. The meeting had reviewed exam outcomes at KS4 and KS5, noting that KS5 outcomes for students taught at William Ellis were better than those for students on roll at the school (many of whom were taught at other LaSWAP schools). They had agreed that a common LaSWAP approach to evaluating taught at vs roll outcomes was necessary. Strong KS4 outcomes had been topped locally only by Parliament Hill and Camden School for Girls.

**20.1.4 Progress data** IJO reported on the latest progress data. This identified William Ellis as average for the very first time, with a Progress 8 (a basket of outcomes) of an estimated -0.17, with an upper confidence interval of +0.09. This equalled last year's national progress for boys. English also equalled national boys' progress. This placed William Ellis above many other schools in Camden. The message was that if you were a boy in Camden, you would do best to come to William Ellis.

**20.2 Personnel and Resources Committee** CHO, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 11 October 2024. Draft minutes are on GovernorHub. The committee was carefully monitoring a potential £100k deficit, partly due to a shortfall in central grant funding for the teachers' pay award. Central grants for an IT suite and canteen oven had been inexplicably, and disappointingly, rejected. Plans for outdoor development of the school were exciting. Recruiting staff in areas like science was problematic. The committee had resolved to focus more on staff issues.

**[NSI left the meeting with apologies at 6.48pm.]**

**20.3 Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust** SSK reported that she and her fellow trustees had met on 14 October 2024, and agreed to employ a potentially full-time director of the Trust for an as-yet-unspecified length of time. The role of the director would largely be to fundraise for the Trust, for the benefit of the school.

## 21. Receive updates on training and governor visits to school

SHA, CHO, SJE and SSK had visited the school to meet Ofsted inspectors. SJE had begun a National Governance Association programme of chairs' training.

## 22. Review policies

**22.1 CEIAG<sup>3</sup> Provider Access Policy** IJO reported that members of the School Improvement Committee, at their meeting of 19 September 2024, had asked her to add a programme of careers opportunities to the policy. However, this was more appropriately uploaded to the website. Governors **AGREED**, and **AGREED** the policy.

**22.2 Other policies and documents** Additionally, governors **AGREED** the following policies and other documents, which had been reviewed at committee:

- Teachers' Pay Policy
- SEND<sup>4</sup> Policy
- SEND Information Report

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

**23.1** The minutes of the meeting of 4 July 2024 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign after the meeting. There was one matter arising. All other actions had been fulfilled.

**23.2 Item 10.1** HMA apologised that he had not yet undertaken up-to-date safeguarding training.

**ACTION** *Item 23.2* **HMA** to undertake up-to-date safeguarding training.

## 24. Any other business

There was no other business.

**Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 5 December 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 6.51pm. Confidential items followed. All present remained.

Signed.....

5 December 2024

**Mrs Sophie Jenkins**  
**Chair of the Governing Body, William Ellis School**

<sup>3</sup> Careers education, information, advice and guidance.

<sup>4</sup> Special educational needs and disabilities.

## ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

**ACTION** **Item 4.1** **SJE** to ask **IST** to attend School Improvement and Personnel & Resources meetings before opting to join one.

**ACTION** **Item 5.2** **MHU** to schedule review of the School Improvement Committee's terms of reference on agenda of its next (14 November 2024) meeting, and approval on agenda of the next (5 December 2024) FGB meeting.

**ACTION** **Item 6** **SJE** to canvas governor opinions on potential changes to link governor responsibilities.

**ACTION** **Item 8** **All governors** to undertake appropriate training in 2024-25 and individually log activities on GovernorHub.

**ACTION** **Item 9.4** **SJE** and **HMA** to discuss where and when HMA should have the opportunity to report back on The Mill.

**ACTION** **Item 11** **IJO** to ensure Admissions Criteria 2026-27 includes criteria regarding sisters at La Sainte Union and Parliament Hill.

**ACTION** **Item 13.4.3** **IJO** to tweak post-Ofsted plan to highlight KS5 actions.

**ACTION** **Item 23.2** **HMA** to undertake up-to-date safeguarding training.