

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 5 December 2024

MINUTES

GOVERNORS

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

ATTENDING

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

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and declarations of interest

SJE welcomed all present to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.03pm. She particularly welcomed new Foundation governor IST, and new staff governor JLE, to their first in-person meeting. They introduced themselves. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, JBO, MKA, HMA and HMO. FWI had apologised for a late arrival. 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.

2. Receive chair's report

SJE reported on governor feedback about FGB processes and practices. There had been three main themes: governor links, reviewing policies, and the need for meetings to be more strategic. She would upload to GovernorHub a briefing clarifying the expectations of link governors, with a pro forma for a short report following visits: link governors would be expected to report back to FGB regularly. SJE would nominate a single governor to lead on scrutinising each policy as it came up for review. And finally, she intended to ensure FGB meetings were more strategic.

ACTION	Item 2	<i>SJE to upload briefing on expectations of link governors, with pro forma for short report following visits.</i>
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[NSI joined the meeting with apologies at 5.10pm.]

3. Receive report on safeguarding

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

3.2 The recent (8 and 9 October 2024) Ofsted inspection had deemed safeguarding at William Ellis to be effective, with no areas for improvement identified in the subsequent report.

3.3 However, LSM had completed two actions raised in conversation with the lead Ofsted inspector: to ensure comprehensive safeguarding checks on all staff in student-facing roles, and to complete training as designated safeguarding lead.

3.4 Currently, the number of students tracked in various categories – looked-after children, pupils with a child protection or child in need plan, or receiving support from Camden's Early Help team – were low and relatively stable. Most concerns resulted from neglect and domestic violence, in line with national trends.

3.5 Given that signs of neglect could be missed, LSM was striving to introduce a culture of universal responsibility for safeguarding, and that "it could happen here".

3.6 Camden social services carried out routine checks on William Ellis students: for instance, there had been nine in the past fortnight, none of which had raised safeguarding concerns. They usually resulted from concerns elsewhere in the family.

[FWI joined the meeting at 5.23pm.]

3.7 LSM highlighted some recent safeguarding incidents to give governors a clear picture of the work that happens in WES.

3.8 SJE thanked LSM and called for questions, of which she asked the first, and which LSM answered as follows.

3.9 Could children who raised no safeguarding concerns following a routine check by Camden social services still require school support [SJE]? Potentially: it was a question of identifying the potential need. Camden monitored patterns of neglect.

3.10 What support is available within the school [SSK]? Members of the pastoral team monitored all children who demonstrated signs of neglect and acted accordingly.

3.11 What did you learn from the case of alleged grooming [SHA]? That the school still had a duty of care to the perpetrator of an alleged misdemeanour, not just to the victim, in order to support his or her wellbeing.

3.12 In this case, should the school not have remained concerned, given that our bar is much lower than that of the police [SHA]? Staff had known, and separated, the boys in question, until the school had been assured by the police that there was no case to answer.

3.13 How rarely are students in possession of knives, and what has the school learned from the incident leading to permanent exclusion [CHO]? IJO replied that this was the first occasion of possession of a bladed item in her experience. LSM pointed out that the incident in question had taken place off site, though it remained a safeguarding issue for the school. JLE added that students were commendably quick to inform members of staff of any safeguarding concerns.

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

4. Receive report on attendance

4.1 SJE thanked SNU for her report, which she introduced as follows.

4.2 Feedback from Ofsted inspectors during the recent (8 and 9 October 2024) inspection had recognised that the school was doing all it could to improve attendance, which currently stood at 90.7 per cent, compared with a Camden average of 92 per cent and a national figure of 92.6 per cent.

4.3 Attendance by students with special educational needs (SEND) and those in receipt of the Pupil Premium was above the national average for those cohorts.

4.4 Maintaining the current robust and thorough systems was crucial, including recognising students with 100 per cent attendance, and those whose attendance had improved. One focus was students at risk of poor attendance.

4.5 The aim was to ensure that attendance was the business of all staff. Of most concern was Y10, and a few SEND students in Y8.

4.6 SJE thanked SNU for her remarks and called for questions, of which she asked the first, and which SNU answered as follows.

4.7 How is the attendance of the new Y7 [SJE]? A consistent 94 per cent compared to a national figure of 95 per cent.

4.8 Given that more than half of William Ellis students receive the Pupil Premium, shouldn't the school focus on them, even though they attend relatively well [SHA]?

The attendance of Pupil Premium students was already a priority.

4.9 How does the attendance of Parliament Hill students compare [SHA]? IJO answered this and subsequent questions: Parliament Hill had more pupils, fewer Pupil Premium students, and a more generalised approach to encouraging attendance. For William Ellis, support for students on an individual basis made more sense.

4.10 How well do boys attend in Camden co-educational schools [SHA]? Often, worse than boys at William Ellis. Attendance data by gender could usefully direct staff to learn from schools with the best practice in encouraging boys to attend.

4.11 LSM stressed the importance of language in addressing the return to class of absent students: "great to have you back!" rather than "where have you been?"

4.12 SJE thanked SNU again for her report, and for answering questions.

5. Receive draft Pupil Premium strategy

5.1 SJE thanked SNU for her draft Pupil Premium strategy for 2024-2027, which as a statutory document must be approved by governors and published on the school website. SNU summarised it as follows.

5.2 The key challenges to disadvantaged students' achievement that the school had identified remained literacy, attendance, learning behaviours and engagement, and independent learning.

5.3 The intended outcomes by summer 2027 – the end of the three-year strategy – were improvements in literacy and attendance; improved independent learning, including homework and revision; closing the gap in progress and attainment between Pupil Premium students and their peers; and ensuring the vast majority of Y11 Pupil Premium students continued in education or employment with training. Specific success criteria had been identified for each intended outcome.

5.4 SJE thanked SNU for her summary and called for questions, which SNU answered.

5.5 Can parents with poor literacy access their sons' school materials [SSK]? Yes; the school was benefiting from a free year-long trial of the online Sparx Reader programme, which aimed to build confident readers through regular reading practice. There was no reason why parents couldn't use their sons' log-in details. SSK recommended promoting this opportunity to appropriate parents.

ACTION *Item 5.5* **SNU** to consider promoting use of students' Sparx Reader online reading programme to appropriate parents.

5.6 How will you measure the programme's effectiveness [SJE]? Sparx Reader came with a monitoring and tracking programme, with weekly engagement reports. Users received regular acknowledgement of progress, and appropriate rewards.

5.7 Once the free trial ends, what will it cost [IST]? With a "small school" discount, £4k.

5.8 SHA highlighted a series of inconsistencies in the document.

5.9 This was the first year of a three-year plan, not the third. Numbers of Pupil Premium students implied funding figures were adrift by £20k. The librarian's funding seemed to have been double-counted. KS2 tests were suspended during Covid, so could not provide a baseline for progress. Finally, to promote independent learning, should all Pupil Premium students receive a laptop or similar device for use at home?

ACTION *Item 5.9* **SNU** to amend draft Pupil Premium strategy before publication to address inconsistencies identified by SHA.

5.10 SJE thanked SNU again for her report, and for answering questions.

6. Receive headteacher's report, including strategic review of SDP

6.1 SJE thanked IJO for her report, which included a draft strategy document for 2025-28 and an updated School Development Plan for 2024-25. IJO added that she would also update governors on various staffing moves.

6.2 School Development Plan 2024-25 IJO explained that this document had been amended following the October Ofsted inspection and in response to suggestions at the last (14 November 2024) School Improvement Committee meeting.

6.3 Draft strategy 2025-28 This paper consisted of the governors' 2023 strategic plan; the school motto and desired student attributes; and three separate summaries of the strategy to deliver the school's mission, for use with the school's stakeholders.

6.4 Each described three facets of the mission – “successful students”, “good citizens” and “strong relationships” – in a different way.

6.5 IJO asked governors, in groups of three, to identify strengths within the three drafts, and areas for improvement.

6.6 Strengths included:

- a. A single page
- b. Clarity
- c. Bullet points rather than prose
- d. An emphasis on
 - o Kindness
 - o Positive masculinity
 - o Global citizenship
 - o The school as a leading educator of boys
 - o The school as small, friendly and kind

6.7 Areas for improvement included:

- a. Specify secondary education!
- b. Avoid “eduspeak” where possible e.g. “formative assessment” and “WES attributes framework”
- c. Make strapline pithier
- d. Avoid hostages to fortune such as “four forms of entry”
- e. Emphasise progress for *all*
- f. Avoid words like “distinguished”
- g. Include links, for instance for the curriculum and The Mill
- h. Avoid numbered lists, which imply hierarchy – prefer bullets
- i. Ensure the result is distinctive to William Ellis, rather than any other excellent school

6.8 IJO thanked governors for their contributions. She would discuss their suggestions with her fellow senior leaders and return to the next (6 February 2025) FGB meeting.

ACTION Item 6.8 *IJO to discuss results of governor strategy exercise with senior leaders and return to next (6 February 2025) FGB.*

6.9 Staffing IJO summarised staff moves in music, maths, science and PE. She assured DNE that the annual camp at The Mill would go ahead despite PE staffing concerns.

7. Receive reports from committees

7.1 School Improvement Committee SHA, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 14 November 2024. Draft minutes are on GovernorHub. The meeting had discussed student behaviour, quality of education, future departmental presentations, and the School Development Plan. With the deletion of a responsibility to publish targets for pupil achievement, governors **AGREED** the terms of reference of the School Improvement Committee as circulated.

7.2 Pay Committee HMA, who chaired this committee, having given apologies, SJE, who attended the meeting, reported that it had met on 4 November 2024. Draft minutes are confidential. Members of the committee reviewed and constructively challenged IJO's recommendations for performance-related pay progression, informed by some impressive paperwork. All recommendations were agreed. A separate panel had considered IJO's pay (see item 16 in confidential minutes).

7.3 LaSWAP Governors' Forum SSK, who is one of two link governors for the LaSWAP sixth form consortium's Governors' Forum (along with SHA), reported that it had met on 21 October 2024. The forum has welcomed LaSWAP's new director, Anna Rimington of Acland Burghley, reviewed KS5 outcomes, and noted that student recruitment remained strong and was growing. The first T level had begun at Acland Burghley. SSK had reported that William Ellis's Ofsted inspectors had commended LaSWAP's moral purpose in accepting students who were not welcomed elsewhere.

7.4 Fundraising Sub-Committee CHO, who sits on the new Fundraising Sub-Committee of the Personnel and Resources Committee, reported that it had met for the first time on 20 November 2024. Minutes were informal. The committee had agreed to regularly review fundraising for the proposed outdoor spaces project, for which IST would be the governor link. The meeting had also reviewed a list of the school's funding requests, and an advertisement for a new director of the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust, who would take much responsibility for fundraising.

7.5 Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust SSK reported that she and fellow trustees would be meeting online on 9 December 2024 to review applications for the Trust director role and discuss the interview process. Interviews were likely to take place in early January 2025.

8. Agree link governor arrangements

SJE reported that she had extensively canvassed governors' views on link governor arrangements, resulting in the following links, which governors **AGREED**. Statutory links are upper case. Staff contacts are in italics.

- **Alumni** Carlton Hood / *Andrew Mangham*
- **Attendance** Mona Kadhum / *Sam Nunnery*
- **Behaviour** Sophie Jenkins / *Karl Altmann*
- **Careers** Carlton Hood / *Horace Parry*
- **Digital strategy** Daniel Needleman / *Crispin Germanos*
- **Estate development, inc playground, dining project and SEND garden** Ian Stanlake / *Fiona Fraser*

- **Estate management, inc health and safety, and The Mill¹** Hugh Matheson / Fiona Fraser
- **LaSWAP** Selena Skipwith and Sean Harford / Flora Wilson
- **Literacy** Jelke Boesten / Sam Nunnery
- **Personal development** Hugh Matheson / Lisa Smith
- **Pupil Premium** Nicola Sinclair / Sam Nunnery
- **Quality of education: curriculum intent and impact** Sean Harford / Bernie Lane
- **Quality of education: implementation** Sean Harford / Crispin Germanos
- **SAFEGUARDING** Hugh Matheson / Lisa Smith and Fiona Fraser
- **SEND** Nicola Sinclair / Flora Wilson and Sel Pomeyie

9. Receive updates on training and governor visits to school

SJE reported that she had attended a recent (21 November 2024) meeting of the Camden Chairs' Network, which had heard about the troubling fall in Camden births; the one Camden school cohort which had risen was that of children with SEND. She had continued with National Governance Association chairs' training.

10. Review policies

10.1 Personal, Social and Health Education Policy SSK, who had been lead governor reviewer of this non-statutory policy, commended it. Governors **AGREED** the PSHE Policy, and **AGREED** that it should henceforth be reviewed by the School Improvement Committee but come to the FGB for final approval.

10.2 Relationships and Sex Education Policy CHO, who had been lead governor reviewer of this statutory policy, had a number of observations. For immediate amendment, he recommended rationalising references to "mixed groups" (relevant to KS5 only) and clarifying how William Ellis's status as a single-sex school informed delivery of relationships and sex education. IJO thought delivery pre- and post-16 could also usefully be clarified. LSM to amend RSE Policy in light of CHO's concerns and return it to IJO and CHO for review; SJE to approve as chair's action. Various other minor concerns to be addressed at the next meeting of PSHE leads.

ACTION	Item 10.2	<i>LSM to amend RSE Policy in light of CHO's concerns about references to "mixed groups" and delivery by a single-sex school, pre- and post-16, and return it to IJO and CHO for review; SJE to approve as chair's action; LSM to ensure CHO's other minor concerns are addressed by PSHE leads.</i>
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11. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 17 October 2024 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign after the meeting. No matters arose. All actions had been fulfilled.

¹ The school's outdoor education centre in the Surrey Hills.

12. Any other business

There was no other business.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 6 February 2025 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 6.59pm. Confidential items followed. All present remained.

Signed.....

6 February 2025

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

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION	Item 2	SJE to upload briefing on expectations of link governors, with pro forma for short report following visits.
ACTION	Item 5.5	SNU to consider promoting use of students' Sparx Reader online reading programme to appropriate parents.
ACTION	Item 5.9	SNU to amend draft Pupil Premium strategy before publication to address inconsistencies identified by SHA.
ACTION	Item 6.8	IJO to discuss results of governor strategy exercise with senior leaders and return to next (6 February 2025) FGB.
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