

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 4 July 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)	✓ ²	
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	✓ ³	
	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 Bernie Lane (BLA) **Deputy head**
Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) **Acting deputy head**
Mr Karl Altmann (KAL) **Assistant head**
Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) **Clerk**

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

SSK welcomed everyone to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.01pm. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, JBO, CHO, MKA, HMA and HMO. 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.

¹ By video conference.

² By video conference.

³ By video conference.

2. Receive headteacher's report

2.1 IJO explained that her brief report was in two parts.

2.2 A list of **staffing changes** had been reviewed by the recent (28 June 2024) Personnel and Resources Committee, at which she had explained that she was exploring solutions to fill a science teaching post.

2.3 These included partnering with other schools, and advertising a vacant head of year post with a note that to be a science teacher would be an advantage.

2.4 A **list of websites** showed those to which student access had been blocked. However, the list included no information about the pages accessed.

2.5 SSK thanked IJO and called for questions, of which she asked the first, and which IJO answered as follows.

2.6 Who provides this data [SSK]? LGfL (London Grid for Learning), through the school's Camden IT consultancy, SITSS, who she had asked for more information

2.7 Are all YouTube videos blocked or only certain ones [DNE]? Only certain ones. For instance, BBC Teach videos remained unblocked.

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

2.8 Could the data more informatively specify student requests to access "x" number of YouTube pages, of which 34,500 requests were denied, with reasons [SHA]? That was a limitation of the report. It did not say which videos had been blocked, only that 15 per cent of requests denied were on the YouTube platform. IJO promised regular monitoring and reporting, with better data if available.

2.9 SSK thanked IJO for her report, and for answering questions.

3. Receive report on attendance

3.1 SSK thanked SNU for her report on attendance and invited IJO to introduce it.

3.2 Poor student attendance continued to be frustrating. At this time of year, even persistent absentees whose attendance record was improving would find it impossible to reach more than 90 per cent attendance by the end of term.

3.3 The previous (20 June 2024) School Improvement Committee had discussed the issue in detail, particularly the impact of Y11's exam study leave. This had caused Y11's attendance to drop 2 per cent below that of all other years this term, where previously it had been more than a percentage point above, at 90.1 per cent.

3.4 Y11 students' persistent absence (less than 90 per cent) now stood at 48 per cent. Of these, 13 had left for other schools and 11 were being taught off-site. Six had been recently bereaved. Two were affected by a parental court case. Many students' absence was due to medical issues or unauthorised holidays.

3.5 A number of persistent absentees with recognised emotional based school avoidance (EBSA) – children who had severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors – were receiving mental health support or counselling, or both.

3.6 The 100 Club, for Years 7-10 students at risk of persistent absence but with the potential to improve their attendance, was increasingly effective. The club encouraged students to achieve 100 per cent attendance over ten weeks, incentivised by an Amazon voucher for up to £48 depending on days attended.

3.7 The unfortunate interregnum between one attendance officer leaving and the appointment of her successor had resulted in a marked dip in attendance.

3.8 SSK thanked IJO for her summary and called for questions, of which she asked the first two, and which IJO, BLA and FWI answered as follows.

3.9 Could the 100 Club launch immediately on return to school in September 2024 [SSK]? That was the plan. The school needed to celebrate attendance and address absence from the very first day of term. Staff knew the top 15 at risk in each year. School should also be attractive: rewarding and punishing students only went so far.

3.10 What is the parents' role [SSK]? Assistant heads had been consulted about a fuller parental engagement strategy, with earlier engagement and more resources. Parents could be reluctant, or felt disempowered, to address their son's poor attendance. Support was on offer where poor attendance emerged as a risk.

3.11 Could you commit to ensuring no future interregnum between attendance officers [SJE]? On this occasion, the appointee had failed to turn up for her week's handover, leaving the school in the lurch. Camden, which had promoted the original attendance officer, had refused to release her to mentor her successor.

3.12 What is the feedback from members of the 100 Club [SSK]? Mostly about correctly identifying potential members: one student had complained that he had been invited to join the club after being off for a fortnight with a broken leg.

3.13 SSK thanked all concerned for answering questions.

4. Receive report on behaviour

4.1 SSK thanked KAL for his report on behaviour and invited him to introduce it, which he did as follows, pointing out that he had submitted papers on the results of a Student Voice exercise; on suspensions and exclusions; and on a proposal to encourage disruption-free learning.

4.2 Student Voice Overall, a June 2024 survey suggested that students' perceptions of behaviour and attitudes had become more positive since previous surveys in June and October 2023, and were similar to responses to a February 2024 survey.

4.2.1 One innovation had been to identify, for certain questions, the percentage of students responding who were in receipt of the Pupil Premium. A new question in the previous (February 2024) survey on a novel behaviour practice had been repeated.

4.2.2 The response to another question, on whether line-ups promoted positive corridor behaviour and calm, purposeful starts to lessons, had been omitted in error. KAL reported that 68 per cent of students surveyed thought that this initiative did.

4.2.3 The survey demonstrated that many students attended the wide choice of extra-curricular sports clubs, particularly sports clubs.

4.2.4 The survey suggested a series of next steps. Work with staff on behaviour in lessons and in corridors, ensuring they consistently applied the school's Behaviour Policy: several members of staff had agreed to be behaviour champions, leading on classroom behaviour management training for all staff.

4.2.5 Ensure staff consistency in offering praise and rewards, and continue to develop initiatives to promote students' physical and emotional wellbeing, and encourage them to engage in extra-curricular enrichment activities.

4.2.6 SSK thanked KAL and called for questions on the Student Voice survey, which KAL answered as follows. Governors consistently recognised the progress made.

4.2.7 Isn't it worrying that 22 per cent of student respondents failed to agree that there was an adult at school they could talk to if something was worrying them [SHA]? Few disagreed with the suggestion; most others answered "maybe". It was frustrating, because the school had done a lot of work to ensure students knew that there was always an adult to whom they could turn, including posters of the safeguarding team in every classroom. Nevertheless, this was concerning.

4.2.8 And similarly, don't responses suggest that one in five students negatively views bullying at the school [SHA]? Just 7 per cent of respondents replied that bullying happened and teachers didn't deal with it, but that was not good enough. Governors should take into account that a minority of Y10 friends had collaborated in providing flippant answers to questions. Replies were not anonymous.

4.2.9 If responses aren't anonymous, could staff reassure the students in question that there is a named adult to talk to [SJE]? If that what they are saying, their concerns have to be recognised so that the school can appropriately address them.

4.2.10 What was the incentive to respond to the survey [SJE]? Tutors stressed its importance. There was no carrot as such, but equally no stick.

4.2.11 Could the survey be completed in tutor time [SSK]? Yes, or on students' own phones, although some Y10s had taken that route, with (as above) frustrating results.

4.2.12 Shouldn't all students who responded to the survey feel safe at school all the time, rather than fewer than half of them [DNE]? IJO explained that the school clearly wanted all students to feel safe all the time. But some never felt safe, anywhere. To some students – often those facing safeguarding issues – feeling safe was foreign. KAL agreed: the school needed to explore concerns. One Y8 had felt unsafe in school without his phone. Two others had felt unsafe coming to school on the 88 bus.

4.3 Suspensions and exclusions Given time constraints, KAL suggested moving straight to governor questions, which he answered as follows.

4.3.1 In the table of exclusions so far this year, shouldn't the number of Pupil Premium be more than those in receipt of free school [SJE]? KAL to correct this error.

ACTION *Item 4.3.1 KAL to correct error in Pupil Premium and free school meals numbers in first column of Exclusions Contextual Summary 2023-24 (autumn to June) table.*

4.3.2 Are you comfortable with the fact that students with special educational needs and disabilities are proportionately more likely to be excluded [SJE]? IJO assured her that she was not, but that the statistic linked to the next proposal.

4.4 Disruption free learning proposal KAL introduced two initiatives to further improve behaviour for learning in lessons.

4.4.1 The first was to replace the current system of four warnings before removal of a student from class with three.

4.4.2 The second was to replace the current Seclusion and Reflection Centre with two venues: a Reflection and Reintegration Centre, and a Seclusion Centre.

4.4.3 The aim of the Reflection and Reintegration Centre would be to enhance teaching and learning, avoid suspensions, and holistically develop students for reintegration into classes by providing academic and pastoral support.

4.4.4 Separately, after three warnings for serious disruption to learning in the classroom, students would be sent to the Seclusion Centre for the next two periods and break time. A restorative conversation with the referring teacher would follow.

4.4.5 Following referral to both centres, parents would be informed.

4.4.6 SSK thanked KAL for his summary and called for questions, which he and IJO answered as follows. Governors consistently praised the initiative.

4.4.7 Could the initiative be introduced from day one of the autumn term in September 2024, rather than wait for governor approval in October [SHA]? That was the aim, if governors agreed. The proposals would then feature in the next iteration of the Behaviour Policy for approval at the next (17 October 2024) FGB meeting.

4.4.8 Given the potential for inconsistent application, is it wise to launch the new policy on the eve of an anticipated Ofsted inspection [SJE]? SHA, who was formerly one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, thought SJE rightly raised the issue, but the proposals developed the current policy, including the current Seclusion and Reflection Centre.

4.4.9 Who would refer to the Reflection and Reintegration Centre [DNE]? KAL thought that heads of year would have to be careful how and why they referred a boy to the Centre; the referral process would have to be clarified with stakeholders. It may be that referrals would have to be made through him for an initial period.

4.4.10 How quickly would the proposals become standard practice [SSK]? Based on experience of introducing the policies on mobile phones and movement in the corridors, fairly swiftly. Resourcing staffing of the two Centres was within budget.

4.4.11 SJE suggested the policy should encompass "disruption free school" rather than "disruption free learning", as it should equally apply to movement in corridors.

ACTION *Item 4.4.11* **KAL** to consider renaming disruption free learning proposal as "disruption free school" proposal to equally apply to movement in corridors.

4.4.12 SSK thanked KAL again for his reports, and him and IJO for answering questions. Governors **AGREED** the Disruption Free Learning [School] proposal.

5. Receive self-evaluation documents and summaries

5.1 IJO noted that all governors should by now be familiar with earlier iterations of the circulated papers on self-evaluation and specific aspects of the school.

5.2 The **summary self-evaluation** had been updated following review at the previous (20 June 2024) School Improvement Committee meeting.

5.3 Detailed self-evaluations on **quality of education** and **behaviour and attitudes** now followed SHA advice to quantify references to "most", "many", "some", etc.

5.4 Only one-page documents which had been amended – on **formative assessment, safeguarding, behaviour** and **attendance** had been circulated.

5.5 The documents would be reviewed at the forthcoming (15 July 2024) Camden Project Board meeting.

5.6 SSK thanked IJO and called for questions, of which there was one: BLA replied.

5.7 Are strategies to systematically assess and reinforce long-term learning fully understood by all teachers [SHA]? The strategies were there, but some departments were clearer about it than others. All would be ready for implementation in September 2024. Things were improving but there was still more to do.

6. Receive School Development Plan

IJO noted that governors should be thoroughly familiar with this document, which had been reviewed in detail at the previous (20 June 2024) School Improvement Committee meeting. Aspects of the document RAG-rated green would be removed for the 2024-25 iteration: they remained in the current version for governors to monitor completion. With the arrival of a new assistant head, Lisa Smith, senior leader responsibilities had been revised. Governors **AGREED** the School Development Plan. Before leaving, KAL reported that the recent Y7 Induction Day had been a great success, with almost 100 per cent attendance.

[KAL left the meeting at 6.15pm.]

7. Discuss governance issues

7.1 Succession planning SSK referred governors to the circulated table of their terms of office. She recalled that they had agreed that governors should serve no more than two four-year terms: her own eight years as a Foundation governor came to an end in March 2025. She would happily to stay on if governors wished: SJE urged her to do so, given the balance between refreshing the Governing Body and retaining expertise. DNE was happy to remain as Foundation governor for a second four-year period. SSK to send details of potential applicant for one of the two vacant Foundation governor place to SJE, SHA and CHO; a new staff governor had not yet been identified. Governors **AGREED** to appoint SJE as chair as of 2 September 2024, and SSK as vice chair, as of the same date. SJE said she would be happy and proud to represent the school at the Governors' Forum of LaSWAP, the sixth form consortium of which William Ellis is a member, but would stand aside if necessary.

ACTION	Item 7.1	<i>SJE to secure DNE's renomination as Foundation governor from 15 October 2024; SSK to send details of potential Foundation governor to SJE, SHA and CHO; all governors to consider volunteering to be the school's LaSWAP link.</i>
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7.2 Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust update SSK reported that members of the Trust had met earlier that week for a strategy session attended by three new trustees, all alumni of the school. As part of their vision for the future, they had agreed to appoint a part-time Trust director to fundraise and develop its activities.

8. Receive reports from committees

8.1 School Improvement Committee SHA, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 20 June 2024. [Draft minutes on GovernorHub](#). The committee had discussed sixth form outcomes and the learning from interventions for high prior attaining Y11s in receipt of the Pupil Premium and all low prior attaining Y11s.

8.2 Personnel and Resources Committee CHO, who chairs this committee, having given apologies, SSK reported that it had met on 28 June 2024. Draft minutes are on GovernorHub. Apart from staffing (see item 2.2-2.3 above) the committee had discussed three new proposed capital projects: an extended canteen, a SEND outdoor nurture space, and renovations to the school's outdoor spaces generally, all of which Camden was supporting financially or with project management expertise.

9. Approve governor meeting schedule 2024-25

Governors **AGREED** the governor meeting schedule for 2024-25.

10. Review training etc

10.1 Safeguarding training SSK noted that CHO, HMA, HMO, DNE and NSI had not yet undertaken up-to-date safeguarding training; she urged them to do so.

ACTION *Item 10.1* **CHO, HMA, HMO, DNE and NSI to undertake up-to-date safeguarding training.**

10.2 Camden governor diversity survey SSK urged all those who had not yet completed Camden's governor diversity training to do so, using the following link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/QDSDAY/>

10.3 Governor training and visits to school SSK attended a meeting of the trustees of Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust (see item 7.2 above). SSK and SJE attended meetings of the Camden chairs and safeguarding governors networks respectively. JBO, SHA, MKA, SJE and SSK undertook up-to-date safeguarding training. HMA attended a briefing by new Camden SEND co-ordinator Tunde Balogun on plans to improve the school's SEND facilities, including a nurture garden (see item 8.2 above).

11. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 23 May 2024 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SSK to sign after the meeting. There were no matters arising. All actions had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

12. Any other business

Farewell to Matthew Scott SSK reminded governors that senior assistant head Matthew Scott was stepping back from the senior leadership team so would no longer be routinely attending FGB meetings. Governors thanked him for his sterling work for the Governing Body over the years.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 17 October 2024 at 5pm

There being no further business in this part of the meeting, SSK thanked all present for attending. She thanked them for their contributions to the school's governance over the last year, wished them a restful summer break, and closed this part of the meeting at 6.29pm. Confidential items followed, for which all present remained.

Signed.....

5 December 2024

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

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION **Item 4.3.1** **KAL** to correct error in Pupil Premium and free school meals numbers in first column of Exclusions Contextual Summary 2023-24 (autumn to June) table.

ACTION **Item 4.4.11** **KAL** to consider renaming disruption free learning proposal as "disruption free school" proposal to equally apply to movement in corridors.

ACTION **Item 7.1** **SJE** to secure DNE's renomination as Foundation governor from 15 October 2024; **SSK** to send details of potential Foundation governor to SJE, SHA and CHO; **all governors** to consider volunteering to be the school's LaSWAP link.

ACTION **Item 10.1** **CHO, HMA, HMO, DNE** and **NSI** to undertake up-to-date safeguarding training.