

# WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



## MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 16 October 2025

### MINUTES

#### GOVERNORS

		Present	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓	
	<b>Foundation</b>	Mr Paul Clark (PCL)	✓
		Mr Sean Harford (SHA)	✓
	Mrs Sophie Jenkins (SJE) <b>Chair</b>	✓	
	Ms Mona Kadhum (MKA)	✗	
	Mr Hugh Matheson (HMA)	✗	
	Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)	✓	
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	✓	
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) <b>Vice chair</b>	✓	
	Mr Ian Stanlake (IST)	✓	
<b>Local authority</b>	Cllr Anna Wright (AWR)	✓	
<b>Parent</b>	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✗	
	VACANCY	N/A	
<b>Staff</b>	Mr Joshua Levitt (JLE)	✓	

#### ATTENDING

Mr Charles Bridge (CBR) **Associate**  
Ms Fiona Millar (FMI) **Chair, Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust**  
Mr Will Durham (WDU) **Director, Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust**  
Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) **Deputy head**  
Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) **Assistant 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 first William Ellis School FGB meeting of the school year 2025-26, which began at 5.02pm. She particularly welcomed FMI and WDU, who were to present to governors on the work of the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust. For their benefit, all others present introduced themselves. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, CHO, MKA and HMA. 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, with the exception of a list of proposed governor links and school contacts, and Camden's dedicated scorecard for William Ellis under its School Sufficiency Programme, had been circulated in advance.

## 2. Receive presentation re Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust

FMI and WDU presented on the work of the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust. The Trust aims to fund and help deliver initiatives that enhance the work of the school and the experiences of its students, and helps to inspire more parents to choose the school for their sons. Through the academic years 2025-28 the Trust will focus on three core areas of the school's own strategic plan: boyhood, community, and entrepreneurial skills. WDU encouraged governors to share any potential future initiatives with him at [williamarthurdurham@gmail.com](mailto:williamarthurdurham@gmail.com).

**[FMI and WDU left the meeting at 5.33pm]**

*Annual governance items*

### 3. Elect FGB chair for 2025-26

MHU took the chair and noted that SSK, seconded by AWR, had previously nominated SJE as FGB chair. He called for any other nominations: there were none. SJE confirmed that she was prepared to stand and left the room. Governors **AGREED** to appoint SJE as FGB chair. She returned to the meeting to acclaim.

### 4. Elect vice chair for 2025-26

MHU relinquished the chair to SJE. SJE noted that IST, seconded by MKA, had previously nominated SSK as FGB vice chair. She called for any other nominations: there were none. SSK confirmed that she was prepared to stand and left the room. Governors **AGREED** to appoint SSK as FGB vice chair. She returned to the meeting to acclaim.

## 5. Appoint members of committees and chairs

**5.1 Committee membership** Governors **AGREED** to retain the current membership of committees, with two exceptions:

- SSK to replace HMA on the Pay Committee
- SSK to replace HMA on the Admissions Committee

**5.2 Committee chairs** Governors **AGREED** to the following arrangement for the two main committees:

- School Improvement Committee: SHA to remain chair
- Personnel and Resources Committee: IST to be chair and DNE to be vice chair

**5.2.1** SJE appealed to members of the School Improvement Committee to consider standing as vice chair of the committee and thanked CHO for his service as chair of the Personnel and Resources Committee.

## 6. Agree committee terms of reference

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

**6.2 School Improvement Committee** Governors **AGREED** the terms of reference of the School Improvement Committee as circulated.

## 7. Agree link governor arrangements

**7.1** SJE tabled a proposed list of link governors, which governors **AGREED** as follows – the first three being statutory. Staff contacts are in italics.

- **CAREERS** Mona Kadhum / *Horace Parry*
- **SAFEGUARDING** Ian Stanlake / *Lisa Smith and Fiona Fraser*
- **SEND**<sup>1</sup> Nicola Sinclair / *Flora Wilson and Sel Pomeyie*
- **Achievement** Sean Harford / *Crispin Germanos*
- **Attendance** Mona Kadhum / *Lisa Smith*
- **Behaviour** Sophie Jenkins / *Karl Altmann*
- **Curriculum and teaching** Sean Harford / *Bernie Lane*
- **Digital strategy** Daniel Needleman / *Crispin Germanos*
- **Estate management, inc health and safety** Paul Clark / *Fiona Fraser*
- **LaSWAP**<sup>2</sup> Selena Skipwith and Sean Harford / *Flora Wilson*
- **Literacy** Charles Bridge / *Crispin Germanos initially, then Zoe Guzy Sprague and Mariana Danova-Balabhadra*
- **Pupil Premium** Nicola Sinclair / *Bernie Lane*

**7.2** SJE confirmed that the expectation was that link governors would meet their school contact at least once a year, and report back to all governors.

## 8. Declare business and other interests and safeguarding update for 2025-26

MHU urged all governors to update their business and other relevant interests on the dedicated school governance platform GovernorHub, as they were annually obliged to do, and to confirm that they had read Part 1 of the September 2025 edition of the Department for Education's *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

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

SJE encouraged all governors to undertake appropriate training and development activities in 2025-26. MHU urged all governors to log such activities on GovernorHub.

**ACTION** *Item 9* **All governors** to undertake appropriate training in 2025-26 and individually log activities on GovernorHub.

<sup>1</sup> Special educational needs and disabilities.

<sup>2</sup> The sixth form consortium of which William Ellis is a member.

## 10. Review key governance documents

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

**10.2 FGB Standing Orders** Governors **AGREED** the current FGB Standing Orders as circulated.

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

**ACTION** *Item 10.3* **SJE** to sign Code of Conduct on governors' behalf.

**10.4 Governing Body workplan 2025-26** Governors **AGREED** the workplan for 2025-26. MHU to add note that the plan is a framework, to be interpreted flexibly.

**ACTION** *Item 10.4* **MHU** to add note to Governing Body workplan 2025-26 to clarify that it is a framework, to be interpreted flexibly.

## 11. Agree governor protocols

**11.1 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.

**11.2 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.

*Specific FGB items*

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

SJE reported that HMA had indicated his wish to step down as a governor in order to spend more time leading the school's rowing and debating clubs. However, she had convinced him to stay on until Christmas given that two permanent exclusion panels were pending and that he had enormous experience chairing such panels. There was clearly a need to cultivate panel expertise among a wider range of governors.

## 13. Receive reports from committees

**13.1 School Improvement Committee** SHA, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 18 September 2025. [Draft minutes are on GovernorHub.](#)

**13.1.1** This first meeting of the school year had focused on exam results. At KS4, outcomes in essential subjects like English and maths gave pupils an excellent grounding. That said, there was a debate whether maths was teaching them "to be mathematicians" or "to pass the maths exam": there was something wrong when GCSE students with good grades struggled with A level maths.

**13.1.2** Staff were targeting disadvantaged and lower-attaining students in science, particularly combined science at GCSE and applied science post-16.

**13.1.3** At KS5, there was need to mitigate identified barriers in particular cohorts to enable them to make better progress. This was something that LaSWAP, the sixth form consortium of which William Ellis is a member, was not doing very well.

**13.1.4** The committee had also received up-to-date behaviour data and reviewed the Behaviour Policy, due later on this agenda (item 17.3).

**13.1.5** FWI stressed the importance of pastoral support to reduce barriers to learning. Staff were also working hard to improve the quality of academic provision.

**13.2 Personnel and Resources Committee** CHO, who chairs this committee, having given apologies, IST reported that it had met on 10 October 2025. Draft minutes are on GovernorHub. The committee had considered three main topics.

**13.2.1** First, it heard of staff concerns over the new timetable; it was important that these were being addressed.

**13.2.2** Second, the committee had monitored income and expenditure, which was broadly in line with budget expectations.

**13.2.3** Finally, it had been updated on the playground project and other initiatives, which IJO would be covering in her report.

## **14. Receive headteacher's report**

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

**14.2 Curriculum and timetabling** Here, finance had the potential to constrain and quality of education. Once leadership and management time was allocated appropriately, there was a very low 2 per cent teaching staff surplus in the timetable, which meant asking more of staff and risked affecting the quality of education received by students. Mitigating measures were in place.

**14.3 Admissions and marketing** Support from a schools marketing consultancy was proving helpful. Numbers of families attending open events – of which there had been considerably more than in the past – had been encouraging. These included “meet the headteacher” events for four or five particularly engaged families at a time. When every family achieved their preferred option of school, the challenge was how to ensure that William Ellis was listed as their first choice. Changing the Admissions Criteria was an option which would be put to the next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting. IJO invited governors to submit any comments in advance.

**ACTION** *Item 14.3* **All governors** to consider commenting on potential changes to Admissions Criteria, as listed in IJO's report, in advance of next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting.

**14.4 Building project updates and estate management** IJO thanked PCL and IST for their continuing support for the three current premises initiatives: the playground, SEND space and canteen. The good news was that, since IJO wrote this report, Camden had agreed to fund the SEND project in its entirety and to contribute £500k to expanding and improving the canteen. If all went well, both projects could start in 2026. If the school could raise sufficient funding, the playground project could also start then. IJO added that issues raised by the Hampstead Heath's superintendent had restricted the school's use of the Heath. As a result, the school had moved a playground basketball hoop and limited the commercial use of the back gate.

**14.5** SJE thanked IJO for her report and called for questions, which IJO answered; SJE asked the first.

**14.6 How many new pupils would varying the Admissions Criteria bring in [SJE]?** Hard to say, but it would certainly not put anyone off.

**14.7 What would it mean in practice [AWR]?** There were currently six criteria, one of which favoured the brothers of girls at Parliament Hill and La Sainte Union. If that criteria were expanded to siblings of Camden School for Girls students, they would leapfrog the distance criteria. This could encourage families with a boy and girl not to be put off by William Ellis's single-sex status. Expanding the staff criteria could appeal to teachers who lived where there was still pressure on school places.

**14.8 Why are schools chosen before William Ellis seen as more attractive [NSI]?** On the previous occasion families were considering secondary schools, William Ellis had been deemed as Requires Improvement following an Ofsted inspection.

**14.9 Are there any downsides to varying the criteria [AWR]?** SHA answered this question: yes, but only if there were a future physical restraint – for instance smaller premises after the sale of part of the building – on raising the school's Published Admission Number (PAN – the maximum number of pupils an admission authority will admit to a specific year group in a school).

**14.10** SJE thanked IJO again for her report, and for answering questions. IJO to liaise with Camden School for Girls and return formally to the next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting with a proposal to consult on varying the criteria. Consultation was necessary as another Camden secondary school could object to variation.

**ACTION** *Item 14.10 IJO to liaise with Camden School for Girls on reciprocal admissions and return to the next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting with a proposal to vary the Admissions Criteria.*

## **15. Receive reports on attendance, safeguarding and personal development**

**15.1** SJE thanked LSM for her reports on attendance, safeguarding and personal development, which LSM introduced as follows.

**15.2 Attendance** This was currently a welcome 90.9 per cent, compared with 89 per cent at the end of the previous school year; the battle was to ensure that the trend remained upwards. Following improvement in key students, persistent absence had fallen from 34.1 per cent at the end of the previous school year to 24.1 per cent (updated from the report) now. Currently 17 boys were severely absent – attending less than 50 per cent of the time, if at all – compared with 22 boys last year. Where safeguarding permitted, the school was working with Camden to remove them from the roll. The school was determined to improve on all three aspects of attendance. LSM outlined the strategy. A new Camden inclusion officer was making a difference.

**15.2.1** SJE thanked LSM and called for questions, of which there were two.

**15.2.2 How many poorly-attending students are young carers, and could a focus on their responsibilities help [AWR]?** LSM highlighted two Y11 boys whose attendance had improved after the school identified an aunt to help support their mother.

**15.2.3 Could all-year pastoral care groups expose Y7 to bad attendance habits by older students, and could giving poorly-attending students extra roles and responsibilities expose them to peer pressure to attend better [PCL]?** IJO thought that the school could certainly do more of the latter.

**15.3 Safeguarding** The school had received 17 requests for safeguarding information from external agencies so far this term, compared with 29 in the whole of 2024-25, mostly around family and other community concerns. Incidents of cyber bullying – mostly peer-on-peer on social media – had risen. The loss of a dedicated police officer meant that the school no longer received support for student conduct that was not considered criminal. A student had brought a prohibited item into school.

**15.3.1** SJE thanked LSM and called for questions, of which there were two, and which LSM answered as follows.

**15.3.2 Does the school respond to incidents of cyber bullying outside school [DNE]?**

Yes, in which case it involved the parents.

**15.3.3 Has the loss of dedicated police support led to an increase in poor behaviour [DNE]?** No, there had been no increase in poor behaviour on site.

**15.3.4** IJO added that Camden headteachers had raised concerns about increasing difficulties with the borough's social care staff, who seldom encouraged students to attend school and were often critical of educational professionals in meetings. LSM had had personal experience of this when meeting families.

**15.4 Personal development** Two members of staff had now been appointed to lead the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The subject now had a higher profile within the school, with consistent branding and delivery. Students were leading efforts to win the Rights Respecting School Silver Award. LSM asked for comments on the personal development action plan within her report.

**ACTION** *Item 15.4* **All governors** to consider commenting on the action plan within LSM's personal development report.

## **16. Receive updates on training and governor visits to school**

SHA had attended school as lead governor for curriculum, focusing on science. His visit had included meeting Y12 and 13 applied science students, who made sensible and practical suggestions for improvement, including asking for mock exams to avoid the risk of having to resit exams. He had also met FWI to discuss KS5 data. SJE had attended school to meet the school's new Camden professional partner Beth Kobel, with whom she discussed standards. PCL and IST had visited on several occasions over the summer to progress the playground initiative. AWR had liaised between the school and the Hampstead Heath authorities.

**[LSM left the meeting at 6.45pm.]**

## **17. Review policies and other documents**

**17.1 Attendance Policy** IJO explained that this item was redundant as the school had not yet received an expected, updated, model policy from Camden. She would return to governors when it had been received and appropriately amended.

**ACTION Item 17.1** *IJO to return to governors with appropriately amended Attendance Policy following receipt of Camden model.*

**17.2 CEIAG<sup>3</sup> Provider Access Policy** MKA, who as lead governor for careers had been asked to review this policy, had given apologies. Consequently, MHU to schedule review of this policy on agenda of next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting.

**ACTION Item 17.2** *MHU to schedule review of CEIAG Provider Access Policy on agenda of next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting.*

**17.3 Safeguarding** SJE, as lead governor for safeguarding, commended this Camden model policy. However, a number of links within it had proved ineffective. IJO to brief AWR on ubiquity of faulty links within Camden model policies: AWR, as a Camden councillor, to raise with Camden officers. With the proviso that links would be restored, governors **AGREED** the school's Safeguarding Policy.

**ACTION Item 17.3** *IJO to brief AWR on ubiquity of faulty links within Camden model policies: **AWR** to raise with Camden officers.*

**17.4 Other policies** Additionally, governors **AGREED** the following policies, which had previously been reviewed at committee:

- Behaviour Policy
- Dealing with Allegations Against Members of Staff Policy
- Teachers' Pay Policy

## **18. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

The minutes of the meeting of 10 July 2025 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign after the meeting. No matters arose. All actions had been fulfilled.

## **19. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 4 December 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 6.52pm. Confidential items followed. All present remained.

Signed.....

4 December 2025

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

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

## ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 9</b>	<b>All governors</b> to undertake appropriate training in 2025-26 and individually log activities on GovernorHub.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 10.3</b>	<b>SJE</b> to sign Code of Conduct on governors' behalf.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 10.4</b>	<b>MHU</b> to add note to Governing Body workplan 2025-26 to clarify that it is a framework, to be interpreted flexibly.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 14.3</b>	<b>All governors</b> to consider commenting on potential changes to Admissions Criteria, as listed in IJO's report, in advance of next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 14.10</b>	<b>IJO</b> to liaise with Camden School for Girls on reciprocal admissions and return to the next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting with a proposal to vary the Admissions Criteria.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 15.4</b>	<b>All governors</b> to consider commenting on the action plan within LSM's personal development report.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 17.1</b>	<b>IJO</b> to return to governors with appropriately amended Attendance Policy following receipt of Camden model.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 17.2</b>	<b>MHU</b> to schedule review of CEIAG Provider Access Policy on agenda of next (4 December 2025) FGB meeting.
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Item 17.3</b>	<b>IJO</b> to brief AWR on ubiquity of faulty links within Camden model policies: <b>AWR</b> to raise with Camden officers.