

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 19 March 2026

MINUTES

GOVERNORS

		Present
Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓
Foundation	Mr Charles Bridge (CBR)	x
	Mr Paul Clark (PCL)	✓
	Mr Sean Harford (SHA)	✓
	Ms Baldeep Hothi (BHO)	✓
	Mrs Sophie Jenkins (SJE) Chair	✓
	Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)	✓
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	x
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) Vice chair	✓
	Mr Ian Stanlake (IST)	✓
Local authority	Cllr Anna Wright (AWR)	x
Parent	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	x
	Mr Jeff Boudens (JBO)	✓
Staff	Mr Joshua Levitt (JLE)	✓

ATTENDING

Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) **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 second William Ellis School FGB meeting of 2026, which began at 5.04pm. She particularly welcomed JBO, congratulating him on his election as parent governor. For his benefit, all others present introduced themselves. He explained that two Boudens boys attended William Ellis, in Years 9 and 11; he volunteered for WESPA, the school's parents' association. His skills lay in organisational consulting, coaching and mentoring. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, CBR, CHO, NSI, AWR and Flora Wilson (FWI), who as assistant head usually attends these meetings. SHA 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 the agenda. All papers had been circulated in advance.

2. Receive update from chair

SJE noted that the role of vice chair of the School Improvement Committee remained vacant; she urged members of the committee to consider filling it. Following discussions about potentially recruiting a project manager to implement the Langbrook Report on a three-year plan – to be discussed later in the meeting – IJO had assured her that there were more practical solutions to support her.

3. Receive headteacher's report

3.1 SJE thanked IJO for her report and invited her to introduce it. IJO noted that her report was in two parts: this part, which was not confidential, and a second part, which would follow in the confidential section of the meeting.

3.2 This part, following an introductory paper, consisted of strategic items.

3.3 She was looking to submit a planning application on the following day (20 March 2026) for the dedicated Send (special educational needs and disabilities) unit.

3.4 The school's response to a consultation on mixed-age tutoring and a refreshed House system, one of this FGB's papers, had been circulated to all staff.

3.5 The latest iteration of the School Development Plan had been circulated for information.

3.6 Send capital development plans SJE invited questions on the Send capital development plans, which IJO answered as follows.

3.6.1 What will be the impact on teaching and learning of office moves, and works continuing into the autumn term [IST]? The current priority was to apply for planning permission, due within eight to ten weeks, by which time a contractor would have been appointed: the tendering process had already begun. Sequencing of works would follow. The most disruptive process, the restructuring of internal spaces, would hopefully start in July and finish by September. Initially, the Send team would be relocated to classrooms vacated by Years 11 and 13, who would be sitting exams. There were risks, but any delay would mean waiting another 12 months.

[SHA joined the meeting at 5.15pm.]

3.6.2 Given specific Camden funding of no more than £470k, is there any financial buffer [SJE]? Contingency had been built in to each of the spending lines. A cost consultant would scrutinise the accuracy of costs and help to minimise spend. Any overrun would be the responsibility of the school, for which it would use some of its School Condition Allocation (SCA), which replaced LCVAP to support Voluntary Aided (VA) schools like William Ellis. But clearly that would be undesirable.

3.6.3 What will the new space offer which isn't currently available [JBO]? Four things: an accessible toilet, two dedicated small-group teaching spaces, a wheelchair-accessible external area not currently available to students, and an intervention room without the paper-thin walls of the current facility.

3.6.4 SJE added that it would also demonstrate visible investment in the school.

3.6.5 IJO turned to the perimeter of the facility. After consultation with a small number of students, the school had opted for a hedged fence, which was cheaper than high iron railings and felt less penal, both from inside and out.

3.6.6 Given some SEND students' unpredictability, it was also necessary to have visibility of the drive and front gate beyond the facility. Generally, IJO would act on professional advice. She thanked PCL for his support and expertise.

3.7 Mixed-age tutoring and House system SJE invited questions on the response to the consultation on introducing mixed-age tutoring and refreshing the House system, of which she asked the first, and which IJO answered as follows.

3.7.1 How would you characterise engagement with staff [SJE]? Constructive.

Roughly a third of respondents were strongly or quite supportive of the proposal; a further significant cluster were cautiously supportive or undecided; and a meaningful minority were slightly or very unsupportive: they mistrusted big change.

3.7.2 All responses had been useful. Staff with experience of similar other schools had reported mixed experiences. The biggest concern had been that introducing the changes appeared to be rushed. Some misconceptions had had to be addressed.

3.7.3 JLE, as staff governor, agreed that the core concern was that any reorganisation was undertaken properly. The school had to get it right first time. A related question was: why now? It seemed rushed. Staff needed time to prepare.

3.7.4 Governors **AGREED** to a request from IJO to close the school at lunchtime, twice, before the end of year, in order to support staff in introducing the restructure.

3.8 SJE thanked IJO again for her report, and for answering questions.

4. Receive reports on safeguarding

4.1 SJE thanked LSM and IST – the latter in his capacity as lead governor for safeguarding – for their reports on safeguarding issues.

4.2 First, she invited LSM to introduce her report, which LSM did as follows.

4.3 Given that there had been only five school weeks since she had last presented safeguarding data – at the FGB of 5 February 2026 – the figures had changed little.

4.4 A key metric was an increase in students on the school's safeguarding roll, which had risen from 76 in September 2025, to 118 now.

4.5 Not all concerns were high level but all required action. Referrals to Camden's MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, a collaboration between police, schools and social services to assess risks to vulnerable children) were up, as were Section 47 (S47 of the Children Act 1989) referrals, initiated when a child is suspected of being at risk of suffering or being likely to suffer significant harm. This was most concerning.

4.6 That said, most of the suspected risks were due to out-of-school activities, in the community. The school had to respond, but William Ellis was a safe place itself.

4.7 LSM turned to the results of the student survey presented by her fellow assistant head, Karl Altmann (KAL) to the recent (12 March 2026) meeting of the governors' School Improvement Committee.

4.8 It had been gratifying to see students expressing less concern about bullying, and an increased feeling of safety at school. She was concerned, as she knew KAL was, that fewer students than previously felt that there was an adult they could turn to if something was worrying them. This could be felt by boys without a dedicated mentor or support worker. All adults needed to be seen as a resource to consult.

4.9 Returning to her report, LSM observed that the school was strong in reacting to safeguarding issues. However, it should be more proactive. For instance, if vaping was an issue, tutors needed to address it proactively. This would enhance prevention and be less reactive.

4.10 LSM highlighted Y7 and Y8 activities on managing well-being and recognising low mood, and Y10 workshops on discriminatory behaviours and misogyny.

4.11 The school was changing its PSHE (personal, social and health education) provider to one more reactive to world and national events: Wellio would help create the school's PSHE curriculum. She would feed back when it was launched.

4.12 SJE thanked LSM for her introduction and called for questions, which LSM answered as follows.

4.13 Given the recent outbreak of meningitis B, are we educating boys on transmission risks, and if they suspect domestic violence, can they access information to validate their concerns [SSK]? The school needed to improve on both counts. Generally, they knew the routes to support. They could be very open about concerns, which was testament to relations built up over many years.

4.14 Have any students been affected by current events in the Gulf, and would you consider showing the students Louis Theroux's documentary, *Inside the Manosphere*, about proponents of toxic masculinity [DNE]? Eight boys were believed to have family in Iran. These had been interviewed informally with no worries expressed. Toxic masculinity was much less of an issue than previously. Future Men – external facilitators on the topic of positive masculinity – had been impressed by William Ellis boys' maturity. IJO added that she was unsure whether to recommend the Theroux documentary to parents; it could be a useful resource.

4.15 Is it a statutory requirement to report that the school's use of wandung [using handheld metal detectors ("wands") to scan individuals for bladed articles] demonstrates "no pattern linked to ethnicity" [SHA]? No, but it should be clear why wandung was deemed necessary, in case of potential challenge. Who, why, when and where a student was wanded were all logged, to prove that no ethnic profiling was evident and that staff were responding to individual circumstances.

4.16 SJE thanked LSM and invited IST to comment on his report of his visits. With LSM, he had discussed safeguarding generally; the challenges of safeguarding for a small team in a small school; and what more support or challenge governors could offer.

4.17 With business manager Fiona Fraser (FFR), he had discussed maintaining the Single Central Record (SCR), a statutory safeguarding document. This had revealed that the SCR was incomplete as there were some recent governor appointments that FFR had been unaware of, so had not gone through the necessary checks.

ACTION *Item 4.17* **MHU** to ensure FFR is informed of new governors so that she can initiate necessary safeguarding checks for SCR.

4.18 SJE thanked LSM and IST again for their reports, and LSM for answering questions.

5. Receive report on student attendance

5.1 SJE thanked LSM for her report on student attendance and invited her to introduce it, which she did as follows.

- 5.2** This report was short for the same reason as the previous report: there had been only five school weeks since the previous report.
- 5.3** The data was still moving in the right direction. Of the ten state-funded secondary schools in Camden, William Ellis was one of only four to show an increase in attendance, albeit from 91.1 per cent to 91.2 per cent. This compared with a national average of 92.1 per cent. The Camden average was 93.2 per cent.
- 5.4** All Camden secondary schools had effectively stalled on student attendance, even the two which had the best attendance records. All attendance leads were frustrated. Camden appeared to have no strategy for support to address the issue.
- 5.5** One example was the mismatch on attendance between schools and Camden social services. Schools actively promoted it; social services less so.
- 5.6** Given that illness was often cited as a reason for absence, LSM had suggested that school nurses could make home visits; Camden had rejected this idea.
- 5.7** However, there was a growing realisation that the abolition of Educational Welfare Officers had affected attendance; reinstating them would be positive.
- 5.8** LSM added that, in the summer term of 2025, some parents had taken their Y11 sons out of school, ostensibly for "study" leave. This should be addressed this year. Studying in school, with the support available, was more valuable than studying at home, and resulted in better exam outcomes.
- 5.9** Behaviour also impacted attendance, as did consistency of tutoring. Both were being addressed in order to make more headway on improving attendance.
- 5.10** SJE thanked LSM for her introduction and called for questions, which LSM and IJO answered as follows.
- 5.11 How are the needs of student carers being addressed [DNE]?** The school now had a list of the eight boys who were student carers, though there could be more. The launch of a Camden programme to address their needs was awaited.
- 5.12 Do suspensions impact attendance data [SJE]?** Yes, they counted as authorised absence.
- 5.13 How do students living in Islington, Haringey and other nearby boroughs affect attendance data [PCL]?** It was more difficult working across boroughs. Experiences were generally less positive than with Camden. Relations with parents could be more challenging. A student's social worker was always based in his home borough. There could be differences in the support which a student, and the school, could access. Some interventions like the CRiB (Camden Reintegration Base) were only available to Camden residents. Camden students attracted higher Send funding.
- 5.14** IJO added that, with other Camden schools, William Ellis had signed up for enhanced support from Mulberry Academy Shoreditch. This would include support to improve attendance. LSM and KAL would report back on the progress of the support at a future date.
- 5.15** SJE thanked LSM again for her report, and LSM and IJO for answering questions.

6. Receive update on personal development

LSM had nothing to add to her previous (5 February 2026) report, but promised a fuller report on personal development in 2025-26 to the 2 July 2026 FGB meeting.

*A sensitive issue was discussed at this point
which is confidentially minuted as item 14*

[LSM and BLA left the meeting at 6.07pm.]

7. Receive report on curriculum

7.1 SJE thanked FWI for her report on the curriculum and, noting that she had sent apologies for this meeting, invited IJO to introduce it, which she did as follows.

7.2 This time of year was one of deadlines for Y9 GCSE options. The deadline for finalising blocks of subjects, depending on student choices, and from there the final curriculum offer for 2026-2027, was 17 April 2026.

7.3 The school was still actively exploring a L3 vocational art offer. The Department for Education (DfE) had confirmed that BTEC applied science would not be defunded next year, so the school would continue to offer it.

7.4 Teaching supply and demand was being constantly evaluated, particularly in light of various part-time requests. For financial reasons, the aim was ideally to reduce surplus staffing to 2-3 per cent.

7.5 SJE thanked IJO and called for questions, which IJO answered as follows.

7.6 Why do “LaSWAP principles” prevent William Ellis from teaching PE at A level [SHA]? The sentence could have been better phrased. A level teaching was distributed across the four schools of the LaSWAP sixth form consortium. William Ellis would like to teach PE, but there was currently only demand for a single class, taught by fellow LaSWAP schools Acland Burghley and La Sainte Union. However, newly agreed admissions from a Basketball Academy could generate enough interest to offer a second class of PE students, for which William Ellis could bid.

7.7 How are subjects allocated within LaSWAP [JBO]? Without LaSWAP, William Ellis would not be able run a large enough sixth form to offer enough subjects to attract enough students, which would affect it financially. The school had to work with what it had, trying to influence and manage allocation of subjects. Wide curriculum choice for students meant LaSWAP was a comprehensive sixth form.

7.8 SSK noted that the recent LaSWAP Governors' Forum had heard from a KS5 student on extra-curricular activities. Notably, she had joined LaSWAP from a non-LaSWAP school. The consortium was now a net importer of students, hosting more students from external sources than KS4 students from its constituent schools.

7.9 SJE thanked FWI again for her report, and IJO for answering questions on it.

8. Receive report from School Improvement Committee

SJE reported that she had taken the chair for the meeting of 12 March 2026, as the substantive chair, SHA, had given apologies after being unavoidably detained in the Middle East due to the current conflict. Fellow governors expressed relief that he had returned safely. SJE noted that the committee had received reports on KS5 and Y11 progress; KS5 and Y9 lesson visits; and the results of a March 2026 whole-school survey of students. Compared with an earlier (June 2024) survey, almost all aspects of student life had reportedly improved, from enjoying school and teachers' praise to student behaviour and feeling safe. However, as reported earlier in the meeting, the survey had revealed a dip in the proportion of students feeling that there was an adult at school in whom they could confide. Members of the committee had also reviewed the Provider Access Policy, hopefully to be approved later in this meeting.

9. Receive updates on governor training and visits to school

SJE thanked IST again for visiting the school in his capacity as lead governor for safeguarding. He, along with CBR, PCL, BHO, SJE, JLE, NSI and AWR, had also completed online or other safeguarding training. BHO had completed two out of three units of Camden Learning's live online governor induction programme. SJE had undertaken live online Camden Learning training for governors sitting on exclusion and other panels.

10. Approve policies and other documents

10.1 Health and Safety Policy This statutory policy had been reviewed in detail at the latest (29 January 2026) meeting of the Personnel and Resources Committee, which had recommended its approval. Governors **AGREED** the Health and Safety Policy.

10.2 Critical Incident Plan This statutory document had also been reviewed in detail at the 29 January 2026 meeting of the Personnel and Resources Committee. The committee had recommended its approval, subject to amendments which had not been reflected in the circulated document. Governors **AGREED** the Critical Incident Plan, subject to the addition of the appropriate amendments.

10.3 Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance Provider Access Policy IJO explained that this policy had been adapted from a model on the resource website GovernorHub Knowledge. The latest (2 March 2026) School Improvement Committee meeting had reviewed it and commended it. Governors **AGREED** the Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance Provider Access Policy.

11. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

11.1 Minutes of the meeting of 5 February 2026 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign after the meeting. There was one matter arising.

11.2 SHA, CHO, DNE and SSK had yet to undertake online safeguarding training.

ACTION *Item 11.2* **SHA, CHO, DNE and SSK** to undertake online safeguarding training by next (21 May 2026) FGB; **MHU** to forward link.

11.3 All other actions – on amendments to the School Development Plan, school visit reports and review of the CEIAG Provider Access Policy – had been fulfilled.

12. Any other business

Hybrid meetings SJE noted that it was always preferable for governors to meet face to face. However, online attendance could be arranged, give early enough notice.

ACTION *Item 12* **All governors** to ensure they give early notice of need for online attendance at FGB meetings.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 21 May 2026 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 6.29pm. All present remained. Confidential items followed.

Signed.....

21 May 2026

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

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION *Item 4.17* **MHU** to ensure FFR is informed of new governors so that she can initiate necessary safeguarding checks for SCR.

ACTION *Item 11.2* **SHA, CHO, DNE** and **SSK** to undertake online safeguarding training by next (21 May 2026) FGB; **MHU** to forward link.

ACTION *Item 12* **All governors** to ensure they give early notice of need for online attendance at FGB meetings.