

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL



MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY held at the school on Thursday 21 May 2026

MINUTES

GOVERNORS

		Present
Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓
	Mr Charles Bridge (CBR)	✓
	Mr Paul Clark (PCL)	✓
	Mr Sean Harford (SHA)	✓
	Ms Baldeep Hothi (BHO)	x
	Mrs Sophie Jenkins (SJE) Chair	✓
	Mr Daniel Needleman (DNE)	✓
	Mrs Nicola Sinclair (NSI)	x
	Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) Vice chair	✓
	Mr Ian Stanlake (IST)	✓ ¹
Local authority	Cllr Anna Wright (AWR)	✓
Parent	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✓
	Mr Jeff Boudens (JBO)	✓
Staff	Mr Joshua Levitt (JLE)	x

ATTENDING

Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) **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 5.04pm. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, BHO, JLE, NSI and assistant head Lisa Smith (LSM), who had contributed three reports to the meeting. SSK apologised for an early departure. 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.

¹ By video conference.

2. Receive update from chair

SJE pointed out that as of 19 July 2026 she would have completed two four-year terms as a governor; in September she would have been chair for two years. Accordingly, she had asked the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust to re-appoint her for another four years as a Foundation governor, but hoped to relinquish the chair at some point in the school year 2026-27. She urged all governors to consider taking on the role, or standing as vice chair with an eye to chairing in due course.

ACTION	Item 2	All governors to consider standing as chair, or as vice chair with an eye to chairing in due course.
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3. Receive headteacher's report

3.1 SJE thanked IJO for her report and invited her to introduce it. IJO noted that her report consisted of two papers, an updated School Development Plan for 2025-6, and success criteria for the forthcoming 2026-27 iteration of the plan.

3.2 School Development Plan 2025-26 This was governors' last chance to review this plan as a working document. It sat alongside the self-evaluation which had been presented to the previous (7 May 2026) School Improvement Committee, and reflected data and analysis presented to that and earlier committee meetings on such topics as teaching and learning, attendance, pastoral care and inclusion.

3.2.1 The one topical issue missing from the plan was the move to mixed-age tutoring, as the year had been spent planning for it.

3.2.2 Generally, senior leaders' evaluation was that the school had progressed in all key areas, although the school's strategic objectives had not always remained front and centre, partly due to changes in the Ofsted framework.

3.2.3 There were areas of continuing development. Gains in student attendance had been small; there was more work to do here. There was a need to manage the impact of a changing demographic; in other words, filling the school roll.

3.2.4 Managing the budget was a perennial challenge. Work on teaching and learning, and particularly literacy and adaptive teaching, had progressed, but needed further nuance.

3.2.5 IJO reminded governors that, along with other Camden schools, William Ellis had signed up to study best practice in a range of issues at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch. This would showcase high-quality inclusive and proactive practice to make learning a positive experience for students and support their attendance.

3.3 Success criteria 2026-27 These success criteria were amended versions of those in the three year strategic plan 2025-8, as seen by governors at their 10 July 2025 FGB meeting. Amendments had been informed by progress against 2025-6 criteria; changing school priorities, for instance due to financial pressures; and a greater understanding of the demands of the revised 2025 Ofsted framework.

3.3.1 The criteria were sustainable, but "achievably ambitious". For instance, a student attendance target of 92 per cent might seem modest, but was higher than that generated by the Department of Education, based on similar schools.

3.4 SJE thanked IJO for her introduction and called for questions, which IJO and FWI answered as follows.

3.5 Why the focus on GCSE resit results, and how is the school addressing them

[JBO]? The results of GCSE resits in English and maths had been historically poor and, given that William Ellis offered many vocational courses at sixth form, they involved a not insignificant number of students. Perhaps a third of Y12 William Ellis students were taking a resit in either English or maths, sometimes both. The October 2024 Ofsted inspection had highlighted the need to improve outcomes for resit students.

3.6 Should the school be reteaching the English and maths curriculums from scratch, rather than have students revise imperfect learning

[SHA]? The school assessed students' readiness to resit. Previously, all students resat GCSE English or maths in November. Now, only those assessed as close to a Grade 4 were entered in November, following intensive coaching. Others were held back to the following June. Yes, there was a need to review the learning for those taking June resits.

3.7 How many students are involved **[JBO]?** There were 46 students in the LaSWAP sixth form consortium, of which William Ellis is a member, who were taught at William Ellis and who were resitting maths. Fewer were resitting maths.

3.8 How many are William Ellis students **[PCL]?** FWI to clarify. IJO added that outcomes in GCSE maths and English were strong at William Ellis: 80 per cent of students achieved a Grade 4, compared with 59 per cent nationally. However, many LaSWAP students had been taught KS4 English and maths at non-LaSWAP schools. These needed retesting on arrival to clarify any necessary support.

ACTION	Item 3.8	<i>FWI to clarify how many William Ellis students are retaking English and maths GCSE exams.</i>
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3.9 Could newer Foundation and occupational certificates be an appropriate pathway to A level and L3 courses

[SHA]? The school had to ensure each course offer was right for each student. "Occupational" T levels may be a future option.

3.10 How might current Y6 literacy impact targets **[IST]?** The school had visited all feeder primary schools to gather information about potential pupils. The results of Y6 Sats – standard attainment tests – would be published in September. Camden's transition matrix flagged students whose literacy was below the expected level. All new Y7 pupils were tested on their reading when they first arrived in September.

3.11 How will Y6 literacy compare with the current Y7's **[IST]?** That was yet to be seen.

3.12 Would it help parents to publish a metric like Progress 8 **[P8, a value-added performance measure]** **[PCL]?** Possibly; post-Covid, P8 would return in a year's time. The formula remained under review but William Ellis results would be in line nationally.

3.13 How useful is FFT5 as a target for Y11 **[CHO]?** As measured by the Fisher Family Trust, to be among the top 5 per cent of schools in the country was an ambitious target. Last year the school hovered between the FFT20 and the FFT5. The thinking was to be achievably ambitious. This was the first year Y11 had had the FFT5 target.

3.14 SJE noted that out-of-reach targets could be dispiriting. She thanked IJO again for her report, and her and FWI for answering questions.

3.15 At the suggestion of CHO, IJO agreed to RAG-rate [red, amber and green] the final iteration of the 2025-26 School Development Plan, to be reviewed at the next (2 July 2026) meeting of the FGB.

ACTION	Item 3.15	<i>IJO to RAG-rate next iteration of School Development Plan; MHU to schedule review on agenda of 2 July 2026 FGB.</i>
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4. Receive report on curriculum and staff

IJO explained that this item had been included in Part 1 of the agenda in error. She would be reporting on staffing matters in the confidential part of the meeting.

5. Receive report on safeguarding

5.1 SJE thanked LSM for her report on safeguarding and, LSM having given apologies, invited IJO to introduce it, which she did as follows.

5.2 The rise in the number of students on the school's safeguarding list – up by just one – was the smallest increase this school year. However, there was some kind of safeguarding concern about one in five KS3 and KS4 students, and the safeguarding list had grown from 76 in September 2026 to 118 today.

5.3 The most common safeguarding categories had not changed: domestic violence, child criminal exploitation (including risks of association with anti-social groups or gangs) and neglect. The latter was becoming more prevalent, particularly in Years 8-10. Clearly domestic violence and neglect were linked.

5.4 Successful Y10 workshops with Middlesex University, focusing on the pressures of being a boy in the 21st century, would develop into a work experience project and hopefully a series of podcasts. That said, unacceptable behaviours persisted.

5.5 A challenge was to ensure leadership of PSHCE – personal, social, health and citizenship education – was secure. A new PSHCE platform was due to be launched. More “deep learning” activities would be developed. All Years 8-10 students would be invited to attend workshops on challenging homophobic and racist behaviour.

5.6 SJE thanked IJO and called for questions, which IJO and FWI answered.

5.7 Has a recent staff absence put pressure on the safeguarding team [JBO]? Yes, but the individual in question was expected to return shortly.

5.8 Are there enough staff to maintain the kind of relations with students that help to identify cases of neglect [SHA]? The safeguarding and child protection officer spent half the week in external online safeguarding meetings and on home visits, so maintaining the necessary relations with students could be challenging.

5.9 Does the advent of mixed-age tutoring offer the opportunity to enhance safeguarding [SHA]? Training on mixed-age tutoring included a module on safeguarding. The move could also reset school behaviour management practice. It was a strength of the school that all staff were involved in “looking out” for the boys.

5.10 SJE noted that the recent Camden Learning Governors' Conference had urged safeguarding leads to train regularly on how to ensure students remained safe around artificial intelligence (AI); she would clarify the training involved.

ACTION *Item 5.10* *SJE to clarify available training on AI safeguarding.*

5.11 The conference had also urged schools to recommend AI Connect to their students; it was a two-year programme for 30 Camden Y12 students designed to equip them with the skills and ambition to lead and transform the tech landscape.

5.12 SJE thanked LSM again for her report and IJO and FWI for answering questions.

6. Receive report on attendance

6.1 SJE thanked LSM for her report on student attendance and, LSM having given apologies, invited IJO to introduce it, which she did as follows.

6.2 The school was maintaining last year's progress in student attendance, although the current 91.8 per cent attendance was likely to fall in the summer term due to GCSE students revising at home and attending school only for exams: they were expected to attend school full time during this period.

6.3 She would ask LSM to provide two figures: one for whole-school attendance, and one excluding Y11 summer term attendance.

6.4 Partly due to more rigorous monitoring systems, the 26.7 per cent of students who were persistently absent (ie are absent 10 per cent of the time or more) was below the figure for 2024-25 (34.1 per cent) but above the national average.

6.5 Key was to ensure that good student attendance was everyone's responsibility, for instance by addressing poor punctuality, or celebrating good attendance.

6.6 The most recent survey had found that the top three factors encouraging attendance at school were friends, learning and extra-curricular activities.

6.7 The top three factors which made students reluctant to attend school were "some staff", difficulties in learning, and "some students".

6.8 IJO had been surprised that food was not a draw to come to school, because it had previously been on the top three list. Regular Friday fish and chips greatly motivated student attendance.

6.9 AWR added that Camden would be providing support to six previously-unrecognised student carers at the school, as identified by LSM.

6.10 SJE thanked IJO for her summary and called for questions, of which there were two, and which IJO answered as follows.

6.11 Do you support the staff who apparently put students off attending school [SHA]?

Relational practice was now part of the school's teaching and learning framework; it was also included in training on mixed-age tutoring. Boys differentiated between strictness with kindness – drawing boundaries with compassion – and strictness without kindness. No three members of staff were consistently identified.

6.12 If the number of staff is limited, how worried are you [JBO]? Sometimes student misgivings were a question of unfamiliarity with that member of staff. Some staff may only be encountered when on-call, or leading detentions, for instance. What the boy in question didn't like was the on-call system, not the staff member involved.

6.13 AWR warned against explaining absenteeism by reference to individual teachers. Enforcing students' boundaries was necessary and important.

6.14 SJE thanked IJO for answering questions.

7. Receive update on personal development

7.1 SJE thanked LSM for her report on student personal development and, LSM having given apologies, invited FWI to introduce it, which she did as follows.

7.2 FWI summarised six elements of personal development work to date, including tracking take-up of extra-curricular activities, embedding delivery of fundamental British values, improving the PSHCE curriculum, and – as part of that curriculum – achieving UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA).

7.3 Next steps would include using The Mill, the school's outdoor education centre in the Surrey Hills, for learning opportunities in, for instance, KS5 science and KS4 geography. Applied science BTEC revision there had been a great success.

7.4 SJE thanked FWI for her introduction and called for questions, which FWI and IJO answered as follows.

7.5 In answer to the challenge to governors to identify what is missing in the school's personal development provision, could it be spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] education, which remains in the Ofsted framework [SHA]? SMSC education was part of PSCHCE curriculum, but that could be clarified.

7.6 How about personal finance, gambling, cryptocurrency, looksmaxxing and parenting [SJE]? Again, some of these were included in the PSHCE curriculum, though were not necessarily the most popular lessons. FWI to consider.

ACTION	Item 7.6	<i>FWI to consider SJE suggestions for inclusion in personal development provision or PSHCE curriculum.</i>
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7.7 What metrics are in place to ensure that personal development provision is effective [CHO]? SHA answered this question: it was incredibly difficult, as personal development initiatives from ages 11 to 16 may not bear fruit until a student was in his or her 20s, or later. Previously, Ofsted had focused on inputs, not outcomes.

7.8 Is there any targeted provision for children with special educational needs [CHO]? All students were entitled to access the same programme of personal development and SMSC provision, so teachers needed to enable access through adaptive teaching. This could vary, depending, for instance, on supporting a student with high levels of anxiety, or one with significant physical needs, to visit The Mill. Two completely different approaches to overcoming barriers were necessary here. However, IJO would ensure that the issue was made explicit as necessary.

7.9 Does the RRSA stress rights at the expense of responsibilities [SJE]? Responsibilities were appropriately stressed at the school, though not within the RRSA framework.

7.10 SJE thanked IJO and FWI for answering questions, and SHA for his contribution.

8. Receive reports from committees

8.1 School Improvement Committee SHA, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 7 May 2026. The committee had discussed the teaching and learning of students with special educational needs and disabilities (Send), student behaviour and attitudes, KS4 and KS5 attainment and progress, and the school's self-evaluation. Adaptive teaching in particular was becoming a strength. However, KS5 provision was weak. A standardised KS5 report template would help oversight here.

8.2 Personnel and Resources Committee IST, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 1 May 2026. The main areas of focus had included the year-end figures, three-year financial plan, and a lot of policies. Premises development work had proceeded, but frustratingly, given Camden's opaque – at best – processes. Work on the Send redevelopment initiative should start before the end of term.

9. Approve 2025-26 year-end

IST noted that one figure in Camden's 2025-26 year-end reckoning differed by £14k from that in the school's three-year plan due to a late adjustment to reflect monies owed to William Ellis. The three-year plan did not reflect this discrepancy but it did not change the overall story. Governors **AGREED** the year-end figures for 2025-26.

10. Approve three-year plan including 2026-27 budget

SJE explained that this document had been thoroughly interrogated over several months by the Personnel and Resources Committee. IST noted the exceptional effort of staff, particularly in crafting an outcome which would see a small but manageable deficit of £26k by the end of the financial year 2026-27, and a balanced budget at the end of three years. "Achievably ambitious" had been the guiding principle, compared with, as previously, worst-case scenarios. SJE thanked the governors who had supported the school in developing the budget and all involved in achieving a surplus at the end of this year. Governors **AGREED** the plan.

11. Appoint governors to committee

Governors **AGREED** to appoint JBO to the Personnel and Resources Committee and BHO to the School Improvement Committee. BHO is already lead governor for careers; JBO to be new lead governor for Pupil Premium, and the forthcoming Combined Cadet Force (CCF). CHO, who is coming up to the end of his term as a parent governor, had agreed to be put forward to the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust for another four years, as a potential Foundation governor; he will leave the Personnel and Resources Committee to join the School Improvement Committee, and take on lead governor responsibility for Send. SHA, whose term as a Foundation governor is also coming to an end, had also agreed to stay on for another four years. SJE pointed out that LSM reported to every FGB on attendance, where she could be questioned by governors on progress; SJE therefore proposed abolishing the role of lead governor for attendance. Governors **AGREED**.

12. Receive updates on governor training and visits to school

CBR had attended the school as lead governor for literacy, sitting in on several lessons. JBO had completed the final unit of Camden Learning's live online governor induction programme, as well as live Camden Learning safeguarding training. SSK had completed online safeguarding training and attended Camden Learning's governors' conference entitled *Navigating Decline: Governance in Challenging Times*, as had SJE.

[SSK left the meeting at 6.44pm.]

13. Approve policies and other documents

13.1 Staff Code of Conduct This statutory document had been reviewed in detail at the latest (1 May 2026) meeting of the Personnel and Resources Committee, which had recommended its approval. Governors **AGREED** the Staff Code of Conduct.

13.2 Safer Recruitment and Staff Conduct Policy This statutory document had been reviewed in detail at the latest (1 May 2026) meeting of the Personnel and Resources Committee, which had recommended its approval. Governors **AGREED** it.

14. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2026 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign after the meeting. There were no matters arising. All three actions – on safeguarding checks for new governors, refresher safeguarding training for legacy governors, and governors submitting timely requests for online attendance to meetings – had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

15. Any other business

There was no other business.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 2 July 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 6.45pm. All present remained. Confidential items followed.

Signed.....

15 October 2026

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

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

ACTION	Item 2	<i>All governors to consider standing as chair, or as vice chair with an eye to chairing in due course.</i>
ACTION	Item 3.8	<i>FWI to clarify how many William Ellis students are retaking English and maths GCSE exams.</i>
ACTION	Item 3.15	<i>IJO to RAG-rate next iteration of School Development Plan; MHU to schedule review on agenda of 2 July 2026 FGB.</i>
ACTION	Item 5.10	<i>SJE to clarify available training on AI safeguarding.</i>
ACTION	Item 7.6	<i>FWI to consider SJE suggestions for inclusion in personal development provision or PSHCE curriculum.</i>