WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
held at the school on Thursday 2 July 2026

MINUTES

GOVERNORS			Present
	Headteacher	Ms Izzy Jones (IJO)	✓
	Foundation	Mr Charles Bridge (CBR)	✓[1]
		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)	✓
		Ms Selina Skipwith (SSK) **Vice chair**	✓
		Mr Ian Stanlake (IST)	✓
	Local authority	Cllr Anna Wright (AWR)	✓
	Parent	Mr Carlton Hood (CHO)	✓
		Mr Jeff Boudens (JBO)	✓
	Staff	Mr Joshua Levitt (JLE)	✓

ATTENDING

Mr Bernard Lane (BLA) **Deputy head**
Ms Lisa Smith (LSM) **Assistant head**
Ms Flora Wilson (FWI) **Assistant head**
Mr Mike Hutchinson (MHU) **Clerk**[2]

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

SJE welcomed all present to this William Ellis School FGB meeting, which began at 5.02pm. Apologies were received from, and permission for absence granted to, PCL. AWR apologised for an early departure. DNE 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 item on the agenda. All papers had been circulated in advance.

[1] By video conference.
[2] By video conference.

2. Receive update from chair

SJE welcomed the fact that governors had positively challenged the school's senior leaders over the past school year. IJO's review of that year, to follow, would provide an opportunity for governors to demonstrate their appreciation of the school's progress. She urged governors to celebrate the school's positive outlook.

3. Receive headteacher's report

3.1 SJE invited IJO to introduce her report, which IJO and other senior leaders of the school did as follows.

3.2 Review of the year IJO introduced a review of the year, highlighting aspects of which the school was particularly proud. Given that the document had been a collegiate effort, she invited other staff to comment as appropriate.

3.2.1 Every student is encouraged to succeed, is known and valued BLA noted substantial progress here. High-quality teaching and a strong reading culture had made a measurable difference to students' learning. A more coherent curriculum, stronger adaptive teaching, an increased focus on literacy and more effective support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (Send) were helping students to achieve to the best of their abilities, to participate confidently in lessons, and to leave William Ellis ready for the next stage of their lives.

3.2.2 Students demonstrate good citizenship LSM highlighted strong engagement in enrichment activities, including outdoor education, overseas residentials and careers activities. The Hamlet workshop with UCL Institute of Education, with high participation of disadvantaged students, had been a particular success. William Ellis students had represented the school in London-wide debating, sport and reading events. Students' pride in the school and their sense of belonging was growing: 89 per cent of students had reported feeling safe, and enjoyment of school had risen by 14 per cent. Staff development and a focus on positive masculinity and respectful relationships had underpinned this progress. LSM added that she would be delighted if governors became more involved in enrichment activities.

ACTION	***Item 3.2.2***	***All governors*** *to consider becoming more involved in students' enrichment activities.*

3.2.3 Strong relationships IJO noted that this year, staff and student feedback had highlighted how the strong relationships nurtured within the school were a real strength. The message to parents was: if you send your son here, he will be known, by name, by almost every member of staff. That was the heart of the school's ethos. Work on student behaviour – focusing on responsibility – had helped. Relations between staff, middle leaders and senior leaders; with parents; and with the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust, were all positive.

3.2.4 SJE thanked BLA, LSM and IJO for their contributions and called for comments and questions, to which IJO and BLA responded as follows.

3.2.5 Had you expected to achieve so much, given the challenges [IST]? IJO admitted that this had crept up on her. Historically, there had been a feeling that William Ellis's best days were in the past, when it was a grammar school. This was no longer the case, thanks to a strong narrative about the school's strengths.
3.2.6 BLA had been struck by the confidence of the staff team. They were never complacent. Challenges lay ahead, but they were looking forward to September.
3.2.7 CHO noted the school's positive media profile, which the boys clearly felt proud of, and felt a responsibility to uphold. SSK noted that the school was becoming better at promoting itself, particularly through the themes of boyhood and positive masculinity. BLA recalled that, at a London-wide running event, a stranger had exclaimed of William Ellis: "Wow! That's such a great school!".
3.2.8 SJE highlighted how even boys at risk of permanent exclusion, who faced difficulties and were in trouble, had a relationship with the school, thanks to the patience and kindness of the staff. CHO thought it deeply impressive that every boy was known by the headteacher and members of staff. JBO agreed: the staff knew, and cared about, every single boy, in a way that other schools' staff might not.
3.2.9 JLE, as staff governor, confirmed that – for the first time in his six years at the school – he and his colleagues were confident of the school's vision. They all knew the plan, and were invested in it.

[DNE joined the meeting at 5.30pm.]

3.3 Update on mixed-age tutoring IJO updated governors on progress, over the previous four weeks, towards mixed-age tutoring.
3.3.1 Tutor groups had been refined. House names – Burgh, Keats and Lauderdale, all eminent local houses – had been finalised. Tutor teams had been agreed. All-staff training had focused on safeguarding within a mixed-age context; student relationships and routines within a new tutor group; and student leadership.
3.3.2 Initial communications with parents had been well received. Year-group assemblies had explained the forthcoming changes, the reasons for them and "what's in it for you". Students had been surprised and some had taken time to adjust, suggesting that they valued relationships with their current tutors and group peers. However, they had been overwhelmingly positive about their new tutor.
3.3.3 Earlier work with parents and students would have smoothed the process.
3.3.4 There were no questions.

3.4 Student recruitment IJO summarised a number of recruitment events, including visits to feeder primary schools, led by BLA. For September 2026, 77 Y7 students were expected: lower than the target of 90, but an 18 per cent increase on 2025. The rise put the school in a welcome minority among fellow Camden secondary schools.
3.4.1 The school had welcomed 30 in-year admissions in 2025-26, the majority in Years 9 and 10. This was good for roll numbers and therefore finances, but could be destabilising. Y10 arrivals in particular were not necessarily positive; the students had often been previously home-educated or out of class for long time before arriving.
3.4.2 The induction process was being adapted to account for this. Two in-year admissions who had previously been home educated had been permanently excluded this year. FWI added that sixth form recruitment remained healthy.

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

3.4.4 How do numbers of application compare with previously [NSI]? Applications were significantly higher than before the Ofsted inspection of October 2024, which had judged the school to be Good. The impact of the 2022 inspection, which had judged the school to require improvement, had been markedly negative. Lower recruitment had caused some financial issues, which would be addressed in time.
3.4.5 Given the popularity of the LaSWAP sixth form consortium, should the school stress that a place in Y11 guarantees LaSWAP acceptance [SSK]? Yes.

3.5 Staffing update IJO reported that Jeremy Pratt (JPR), who had served for 42 years in education in inner London, many of them at William Ellis (currently as head of Y11), would be retiring shortly. He would be a loss. He had played a key role in keeping the school viable during a particularly challenging period involving several changes of headteacher. Governors thanked JPR for his contribution to the school.
3.5.1 IJO added that, since her report to the recent (1 May 2026) Personnel and Resources Committee, the school was recruiting for a part-time support instructor for the proposed Combined Cadet Force, a pastoral support assistant, and a temporary KS3 English lead, to cover a maternity leave. Two Teach First trainee appointments in science had been confirmed.
3.5.2 There were no questions.

3.6 School Development Plan 2026-27 IJO highlighted the new School Development Plan for the school year 2026-27, which for the time being included RAG-rated (red, amber, green) objectives for 2025-26. Strategic objectives remained the same.
3.6.1 Objectives around attendance, relations with students, and curriculum and assessment had been particularly strengthened.

3.6.2 SJE thanked IJO for her introduction to the School Development Plan and called for comments and questions, to which IJO responded as follows.
3.6.3 SHA thought that this was a much more strategic document than previously. Implementation – what was to be done, and by whom – was clearer than in the past, though in his opinion there were still too many objectives. He asked a question.
3.6.4 Given that Ofsted is increasingly concerned about teacher workload, should it be referenced in the document, even if there is little to be done to address it [SHA]? IJO thought that the capacity issue was present in the document, in that it ensured all staff were enabled to work as efficiently as possible.
3.6.5 CHO agreed that the document much improved on the previous year's. He also asked a question.
3.6.6 What are your WIGs – "wildly important goals" [CHO]? Attendance, staff-student relationships and the better use of assessment data. It was obvious why the last of these was important but it had not been addressed for too long. Positive results in all three goals would have a positive impact on future GCSE results.
3.6.7 Could AI – artificial intelligence – help [NSI]? It was not currently in use yet, but could in time enable staff to carry out actions more effectively and monitor how well actions had been achieved. It was definitely a question to consider further. CBR, who works in the field, reported that the general consensus in education was not to jump on the bandwagon; it had been tried, and had backfired. DNE made a distinction between AI as an educational, and operational, tool.

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

[AWR left the meeting at 6.08pm.]

4. Receive report on attendance

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

4.2 The key point was that the school was going in the right direction. There had been an improvement of +2 per cent from July 2025 (89.1 per cent) to June 2026 (91.1 per cent).
4.3 Y11 attendance data had been discounted for this half term, as it had been for July 2025. The Department for Education's target for this academic year of a 0.5 per cent increase (from 88.5 per cent to 89 per cent) had been exceeded by an approximate, provisional 2 per cent.
4.4 Various initiatives should improve attendance even further.

4.5 SJE thanked LSM and called for questions.
4.6 What was the reasoning behind the decision to keep the school open during the heatwave [CHO]? LSM replied that the decision had been taken for wider safeguarding reasons; the school had no choice. Attendance had fallen to around 50 per cent for w/c 22 June but had since bounced back. IJO thought Camden – and particularly Camden's social workers – needed to stress the importance of attendance. Some parents had been unsupportive, and occasionally abusive, of staff. FWI added that William Ellis had been the only LaSWAP school to remain open.
4.7 Perversely, doesn't keeping the school open mean student attendance at William Ellis falls compared with schools which closed, and how can this be flagged to Camden [IST]? LSM acknowledged that the decision could have up to a 0.5 per cent impact on the data, but would not impact the overall trend for the year.
4.8 Governors also discussed the impact on the school of potentially more frequent higher temperatures, particularly if they fell during exam time. As an operational matter this was left with IJO and senior leader to consider over the longer term.

5. Receive report on safeguarding

SJE invited LSM to update governors on safeguarding issues since the previous (21 May 2026) meeting, which she did as follows. The only substantive changes had been a rise in the number of students on the school's safeguarding list, from 119 to 123, and a spike in anti-social behaviours outside school. There were no questions.

6. Receive report from School Improvement Committee

SHA, who chairs this committee, reported that it had met on 18 June 2026. Draft minutes are on GovernorHub. Over the past year, the committee had reviewed consistent evidence of improvement in teaching, literacy and student behaviour, including feedback from pupils, teachers and parents. As a result, the committee's focus had shifted from scrutinising the actions of senior leaders to what difference their actions were making for the children in the school. The committee would continue to monitor progress in adaptive teaching, and staff's huge efforts to improve students' attendance and literacy. Finally, the committee would scrutinise the introduction of mixed-age tutoring, particularly consistency of implementation.

7. Agree governor meetings calendar for 2026-27

Governors **AGREED** the governor meetings calendar for the school year 2026-27.

8. Receive updates on governor training and visits to school

8.1 IST had completed online Prevent training and attended a meeting of Camden's Safeguarding Governors' Network, which had highlighted that at least 16 Camden students were carers – probably many more. SJE had attended safeguarding training and a meeting of the Camden Chairs Network.
8.2 SSK had attended meetings of the LaSWAP Governors' Forum, the Birkbeck and William Ellis Schools Trust, and the Mill Trust (The Mill being the school's outdoor education centre), as well as the school's International Evening, where she had met a number of William Ellis alumni. She thanked FWI for organising a visit to Talacre Community Sports Centre to meet William Ellis students and their instructors. She had also discussed William Ellis from a parent perspective with the *Good Schools Guide*.

9. Approve policies and other documents

9.1 LaSWAP Admissions Policy SSK reported that this policy had been reviewed and approved at the 15 June 2026 meeting of the LaSWAP Governors' Forum, which she and SHA had attended. Governors **AGREED** the LaSWAP Admissions Policy.

9.2 Camden Post-16 Education & Training Strategy and Implementation Plan 2025-30 SHA explained that this document – which he had co-drafted – was for information rather than approval. He highlighted a useful website on post-16 options in Camden.

9.3 Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities IJO noted that final approval for all off-site visits was delegated to her, with the exception of overseas and residential visits, and "adventurous activity", all of which required Camden approval. Governors **AGREED** the Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities, to be reviewed every two years by the Personnel and Resources Committee.

ACTION	***Item 9.3***	***MHU*** *to add review every two years by Personnel and Resources Committee of Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities to schedule of policy reviews.*

10. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2026 were **AGREED** as a full and accurate record; SJE to sign at a later date. There were no matters arising. All actions had been, or were in the process of being, fulfilled.

11. Any other business

There was no other business.

Next scheduled meeting: Thursday 15 October 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, as which point LSM left. 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 3.2.2***	***All governors*** *to consider becoming more involved in students' enrichment activities.*
ACTION	***Item 9.3***	***MHU*** *to add review every two years by Personnel and Resources Committee of Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities to schedule of policy reviews.*