

Burlington Junior School

Minutes of the Curriculum Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13 March 2024

Present: Mrs Pip Utting (Head of School)
Mr Stephen Arbuthnot (Chair)
Mr Stefan Bown (Vice Chair)
Mrs Julie Hickman
Mr Simon Gilmour
Mrs Mariam Uteem
Mrs Rebecca Campbell
Ms Sarah Finch
Mr Naveed Shah
Miss Jemima Harris

In attendance Mrs Clare Le Voir-Mathews, Head of Year 4
Miss Rebekah Grinsted, Year 4 Class teacher
Miss Dunne, Y6 Class teacher
Miss Anika Mir, Acting Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Kewley, Mrs Hall, Mrs Hakim, Miss Edwards and Mr West.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2023 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Science Curriculum Update

Governors watched a presentation delivered by Mrs Le Voir-Mathews and Miss Grinsted which gave an update on the [Science curriculum](#).

Governors queried how big the Science bag is and what the contents are? Mrs Le Voir-Mathews reported that the bag was approximately the size of a PE bag and the contents were tailored to match each year group's curriculum. There is currently 1 bag available per class. The Headteacher added that this was a pilot test and if it proves to be successful then we can go to the PTA to request more funding to increase the quantity.

Governors asked about the next term's subject? Mrs Le-Voir Mathews reported that they will be looking at Animals and Living Habitats. The contents in the bags will remain the same and will link throughout the curriculum. There is no set plan of what the children have to do and the bag can be used in multiple ways.

Governors asked how are the bags and what the children do with them at home and in the classroom linked? Mrs Le Voir-Mathews reported that the objects are linked to the curriculum and gave examples of this.

Governors asked if it was to be rolled out to other year groups and would the contents remain the same? Mrs Le Voir-Mathews reported that the contents would remain the same and could be used alongside each year's individual curriculums.

Governors asked if the topics covered across the year groups are linked to other subjects? Mrs Le Voir-Mathews gave examples of the link between the topics and subjects.

5. Math Curriculum Update

Governors watched a presentation delivered by Miss Dunne which gave an update on the [Math curriculum](#).

Governors asked when will year 4 do the online assessments and if they get prepared for these? Mrs Le Voir-Mathews confirmed that they will be in the second half of the summer term and both Miss Dunne and Mrs Le Voir-Mathews explained that there is a strong focus on preparation for the tests. They explained the teaching methods used including TT Rockstars. The Headteacher added that Maths was a deep dive during Ofsted and inspectors were very impressed with Miss Dunn's leadership.

6. PSHE Curriculum Update

Governors watched a presentation delivered by Miss Edwards and Miss Whightwick which gave an update on the [PSHE curriculum](#).

The following points were raised and noted:

Opt out of certain RSE lessons - Governors asked if there was an expectation to catch up at some stage and has there been any discussion with parents about the reasons why they are opting out and what sort of numbers are doing so? The headteacher reported that the school does not offer a catch up as parents have opted out which is their right. Ultimately it is the parents decision and this has to be respected until the law changes. The opt out numbers vary from year to year and are between 6-10 pupils out of 120 children.

Reasons - Governors asked if the school was aware of any particular reason for the opt outs and suggested religious grounds? The headteacher invited comments from other board members and a member suggested that some of the opt out cases could be from the muslim community for religious reasons. The headteacher added that families may feel that it is a personal matter and they have the right to choose and unless legislation changes it is hard to enforce.

Governors asked for more clarification on this and if it might lessen concerns by allowing parents access to materials before being presented to the children? The headteacher said parents do access the materials before they are taught and are invited into school. The Headteacher asked Miss Harris to share her view on why parents choose to opt their child out. Miss Harris agreed with the points already raised.

Governors asked if Mr West still did a 'show and tell' where parents are invited in to see what children were accessing? After the meeting, Mr West confirmed that Y6 completed their RSE in October, including a pre-meeting for parents. and Y5 will do theirs in the summer term.

Governors suggested that some parents may find it difficult to raise concerns in a parent forum and asked about the possibility of having a parent focus group? The headteacher agreed that this was doable and suggested that a google survey or a suggestion box could be used for this.

Governors asked about the Rainbow Laces workshop and asked if the school is placing itself at risk for potential criticism if conversations took a change in direction/went off script? The headteacher agreed there is always a risk with sensitive subjects and the teachers are trained to intervene if necessary.

7. Any Other Business

There were no matters arising

8. To be actioned

Headteacher to action suggestions from RSE presentation at the next parent forum in the summer term

9. Date of Next Meeting

5th June at 7.00 pm

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