

Burlington Junior School
Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday 20 March 2024

Governing Body (14)

Co-opted Governors

Stephen Arbuthnot
Stefan Bown
Rebecca Campbell
Simon Gilmour
Mariam Hakim
Julie Hickman
Naveed Shah
Matt West

LA Governor

John Kewley

Parent Governors

Mariam Uteem
Sarah Finch

Staff Governor

Jemima Harris

Ex-Officio

Pip Utting (HT)

Associate Governor

Pam Hall

In attendance was Mr Blow, Deputy Headteacher (DHT)

The Clerk was Miss Aniqua Mir

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Hall, Mrs Finch and Mr Kewley. Governors consented to these absences.

2. Declaration of Business Interests

No business interests were declared.

3. Non-Governor Participants/Observers

Governors agreed that as there were no confidential items, Mr Blow would not be required to leave the meeting.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the governing board meeting held on 31 January 2024 were approved.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Report of the Headteacher

HT addressed her head's report in detail. She explained that there has been a high level of staff absence caused by the possible long term effects of Covid and the recent 100 day cough outbreak/general illness. HT reported that as a result a lot of SLT time is being used to sort out the cover each morning and this has proven to be challenging. Teaching Assistants cannot be used to provide cover. The summer term could see an improvement in this area as the weather improves/less flu like symptoms among the general public.

DHT reported that staff are often keen to return early but may not be well enough to do so.

HT reported that due to the ongoing funding crisis these challenges will continue. There will be less cover available as non class based teachers will be asked to take a class of their own which leaves issues around staffing PPA.

Governors queried about supply cover and the use of staff absence insurance. HT explained that the insurance is in place for absences exceeding 5 days and talked through the costs involved.

Governors queried the rise in numbers of sickness since Covid. HT reported that a SIMS comparison report is currently being looked into which would give us absence figures for 3 years prior and post Covid.

Governors asked if a similar pattern has been noted for the children. HT reported that the children's absence levels are above national figures and maintain similar levels year on year.

Governors asked about the teaching staff pay data figures and if these were standard . DHT explained a comparison with other schools and that our school data is in line with our staff budget figures. The HT continued to talk through the Upper pay structure and the application process. She explained that once a teacher reaches this stage they will remain on it until they decide to move on to a new school.

HT reported that the SATS results were very good and met/exceeded the expected targets.

Governors asked about pupils who do not sit the SATS and how the school manages this situation. HT and DHT reported that in recent years Ofsted have become less interested in SATS results. The HT added that in cases of refusers the school would share two sets of predicted figures with the LA/Ofsted.

Governors asked if mock SATS were offered and what the effects of that was? Mr West reported that more resilient children attempted to answer all or most of the questions. DHT added that challenging behaviours and anxieties were also a factor where some children will refuse papers outright.

Governors asked how Geography was doing? DHT talked about the recent Geography learning walk and how a recent forum was an opportunity to exchange ideas with other schools.

Governors asked about the voluntary contributions. HT reported a slight rise in contributions and explained how the cost of living crisis was affecting most families. There is a strong possibility that in the future the school may consider planning more activities in and around school rather than so many trips out, which will reduce costs and planning time.

Governors reported that some Arab parents did not know how to report their ethnicity because they felt that there wasn't the correct category for them to choose from on the application form - HT explained that the ethnic groups are set by the DFE and not the school. HT made a note to look into ways of resolving this.

Governors queried a rise in the BAME ethnic group figures on the HT's report and asked if there is a possible error in how the numbers are being reported - HT made a note to look into this.

Governors asked how the OPAL set up was working and if there has been a reduction in playtime injuries - HT reported that overall it is going well however there are a small number of children who are struggling to engage and play. There has been a reduction in playtime injuries.

Governors asked if there had been a reduction in the football allocation time - HT explained that there is a games rota in place however there are times when children may get less playtime because of lunch eating times.

Governors asked what Metacognition is and how it is being implemented - Mr West and Miss Harris explained the various methods being used, including deliberate mistakes being made to encourage children to problem solve.

Governors asked how many children recognise the term - Mr West explained that although children may not understand the term metacognition, they would be familiar with different strategies they could use when facing difficulties with their learning. He added that it's often useful for teachers to model this themselves; for example, talking through how to approach difficulties when modelling writing in an English lesson.

7. Resources Meeting

Next meeting will be held on the 22nd March

8. Curriculum Committee

Minutes from the meeting held on the 13th March to be circulated in the next few weeks.

9. Policies

HT advised that the policies for review are uploaded and available to view on the governor hub portal.

Governors questioned if the school has a separated parents policy - HT confirmed that the school has this in place.

10. Governor Visits

HT advised that the next governor week will be week commencing the 17th June.

HT is to confirm the upcoming dates for the governor site visits - aiming for one in July and one in late September.

11. Clasp Building/Permanent Expansion

Governors asked about the recent defunct hand grenade discovery - DHT explained the discovery was not unusual because of the historic link New Malden has with World War 2. The steps that were taken by the emergency services to dispose of the grenade were explained.

Governors asked about the expected delivery date of the MUGA - DHT suggested a possible delivery date in July.

12. What impact are Governors having

HT acknowledged the overall support received from the governors and in particular with the recent Geography learning walk and pupil reviews and the expansion project.

13. Equality issues and issues raised by parents

Governors shared issues raised by parents about the enrichment programme who would like to see more activities organised for the different communities in the school such as visits to places of worship and workshops - HT reported that the head of RE is continuing to look into ways to improve the enrichment programme

Governors asked if any arrangements were in place for children who may wish to perform prayers during residential trips - Mr West reported that a request has not been made previously however this is something that can be looked into and arranged if necessary.

14. Staff Recognition

HT explained that this was a written form of appreciation to recognise the hard work and efforts of our staff.

15. Agenda items for future Governing Board meeting

To be set and circulated before the next meeting

16. Any other Business

Governors spoke about the recent safeguarding audit and the systems the school has in place.

Clerk to check the Governor vacancy numbers with the support team.

17. Dates of next meeting

Wednesday 19 June 2024